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Sustainability evaluation of products – identifying product related SDGs and indicators

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Research questions in the project

"SDG-evaluation of products"

1. To which SDG sub-goals can a product reference be made?
2. How can a sustainability evaluation of products be made on the basis of the SDGs?

Challenges in using SDGs for sustainability evaluation

- ▶ SDGs are mostly formulated at country level
(e.g. „...correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets...“)
 - ▶ Product references are only possible in some cases
- ▶ Goals are mostly generic
(e.g. „...ensure sustainable food production systems...“)
 - ▶ and are rarely quantified
(e.g. „By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.“)
- ▶ Status quo is not defined

To which SDGs can a product reference be identified?

- ▶ Various impacts in the value chain:
- ▶ Case 1 (C1): Product/service has direct impact
e.g. through emissions or resource use
- ▶ Case 2 (C2): Product/service has indirect impacts
through the activities of the company providing it
e.g. through wages, corruption, occupational safety

Results on product-related SDGs & indicators

- ▶ Following a workshop with stakeholders from NGOs, science, business and politics:
59 of the 169 SDG sub-targets could be related to products and services
- ▶ 45 indicators were defined to measure these sub-targets
- ▶ 25 C1 indicators (direct impacts)
- ▶ 20 C2 indicators (indirect impacts)

What are suitable indicators?

- ▶ Indicators are based on the following frameworks:
- ▶ General Indicator Framework (GIF SDGs) of the SDGs
- ▶ Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) of the European Commission
- ▶ "Sustainable Development Report" (2019) of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Bertelsmann Foundation
- ▶ Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

- ▶ Life Cycle Inventory Indicators, e.g. energy consumption
- ▶ Impact assessment indicators, e.g. global warming potential

How can a sustainability evaluation be made on the basis of the SDGs?

- ▶ +1 : the product contributes fully to the achievement of the SDG
- ▶ 0 : the status quo is maintained
- ▶ -1 : the product has negative impacts

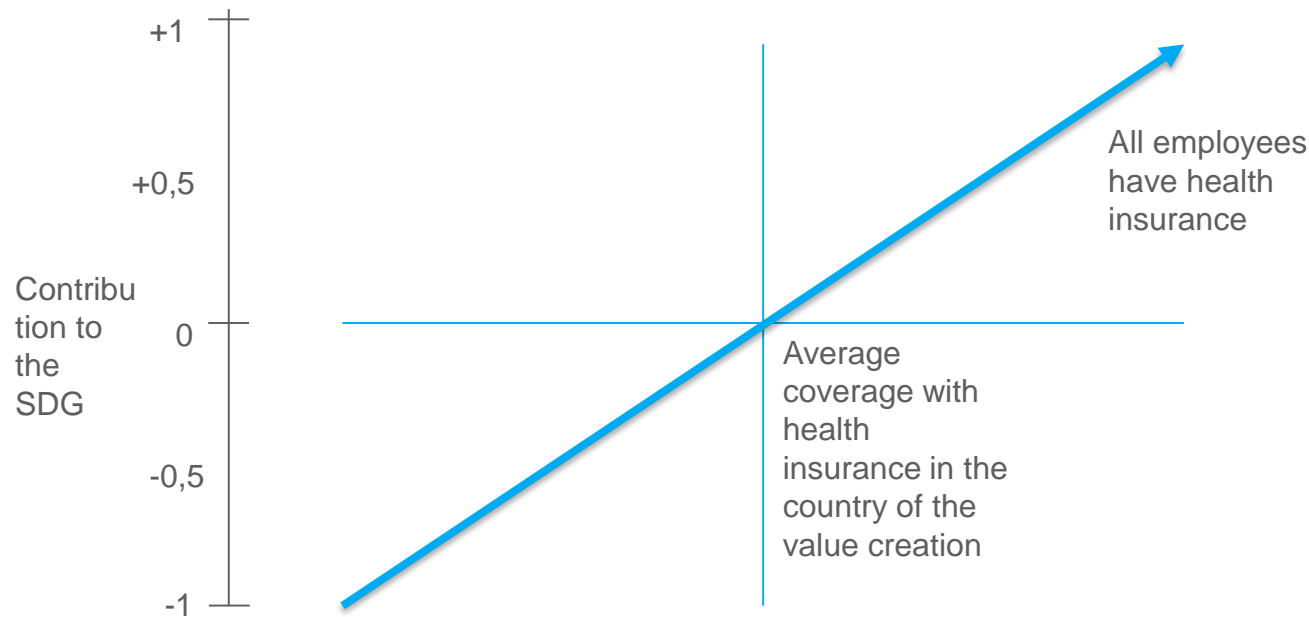
How is the status quo to be measured?

- ▶ Periods (e.g. SDG horizon: 2015-2030)
 - ▶ Life cycle assessment always reflects a point in time, not time periods
 - ▶ Data collection could be difficult
- ▶ Status quo in the specific country
 - ▶ Assessment possible at any time and compatible with life cycle assessment
 - ▶ Continuous adjustment of the status quo
 - ▶ In some countries, data may still be scarce, but may become increasingly available in the future

SDG 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

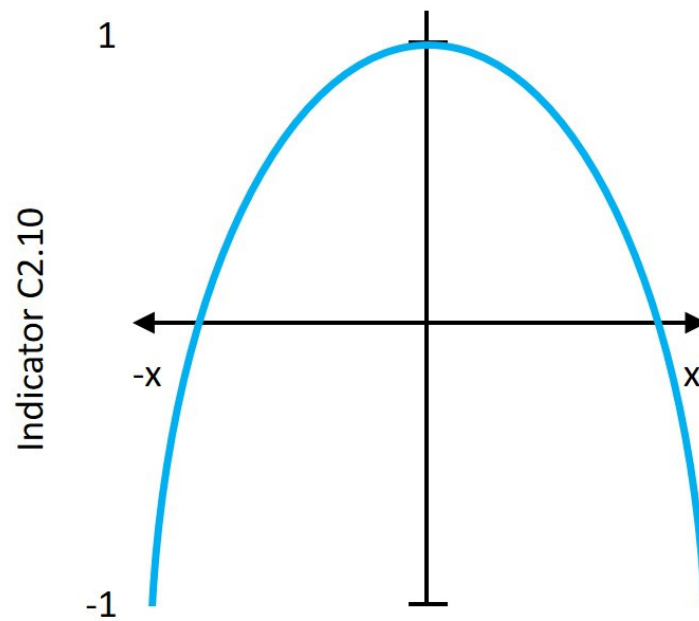
- ▶ Indicator (amended) from GIF-SDGs „Health Insurance“

Explicit SDG



SDG 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

- ▶ Indicator (amended) from GIF-SDGs:
„Equal pay for woman and men“



Explicit SDG

Methodology for setting the target

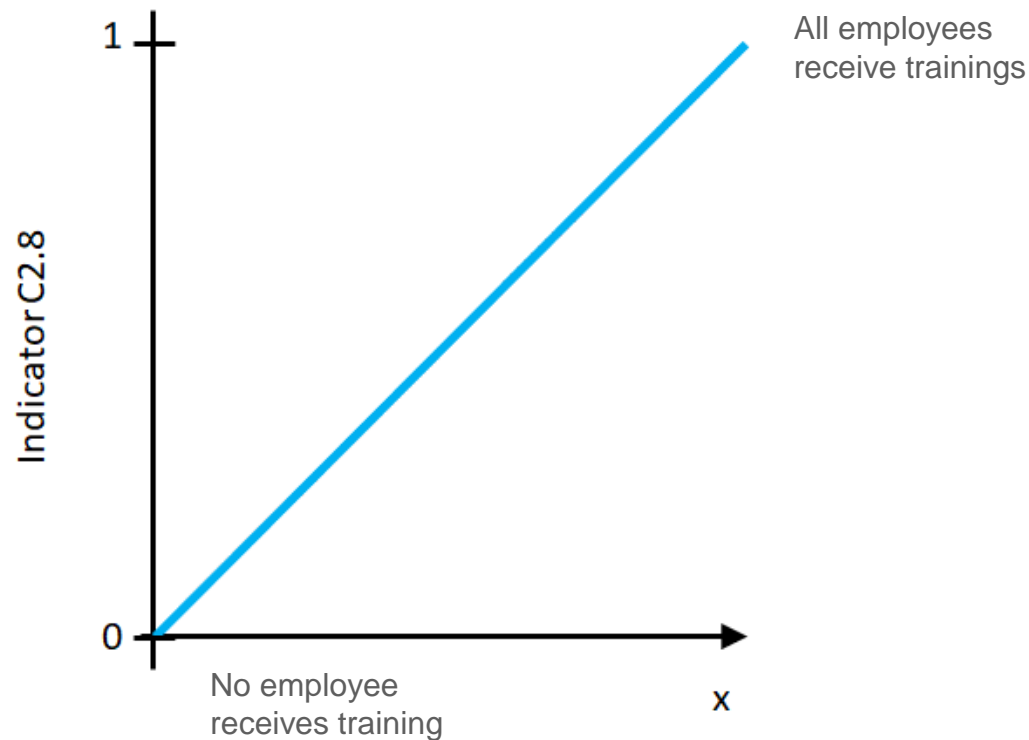
1. Explicit SDG
2. „Leave no one behind“
3. Average of the top 3 companies in sector/ OECD countries
4. Inclusion in sustainability/risk management

Methodology for setting the middle and lower range

1. 0 = Country/industry average
2. (0 = Only one sustainability dimension is considered)
3. 0/-1 = „worst case“

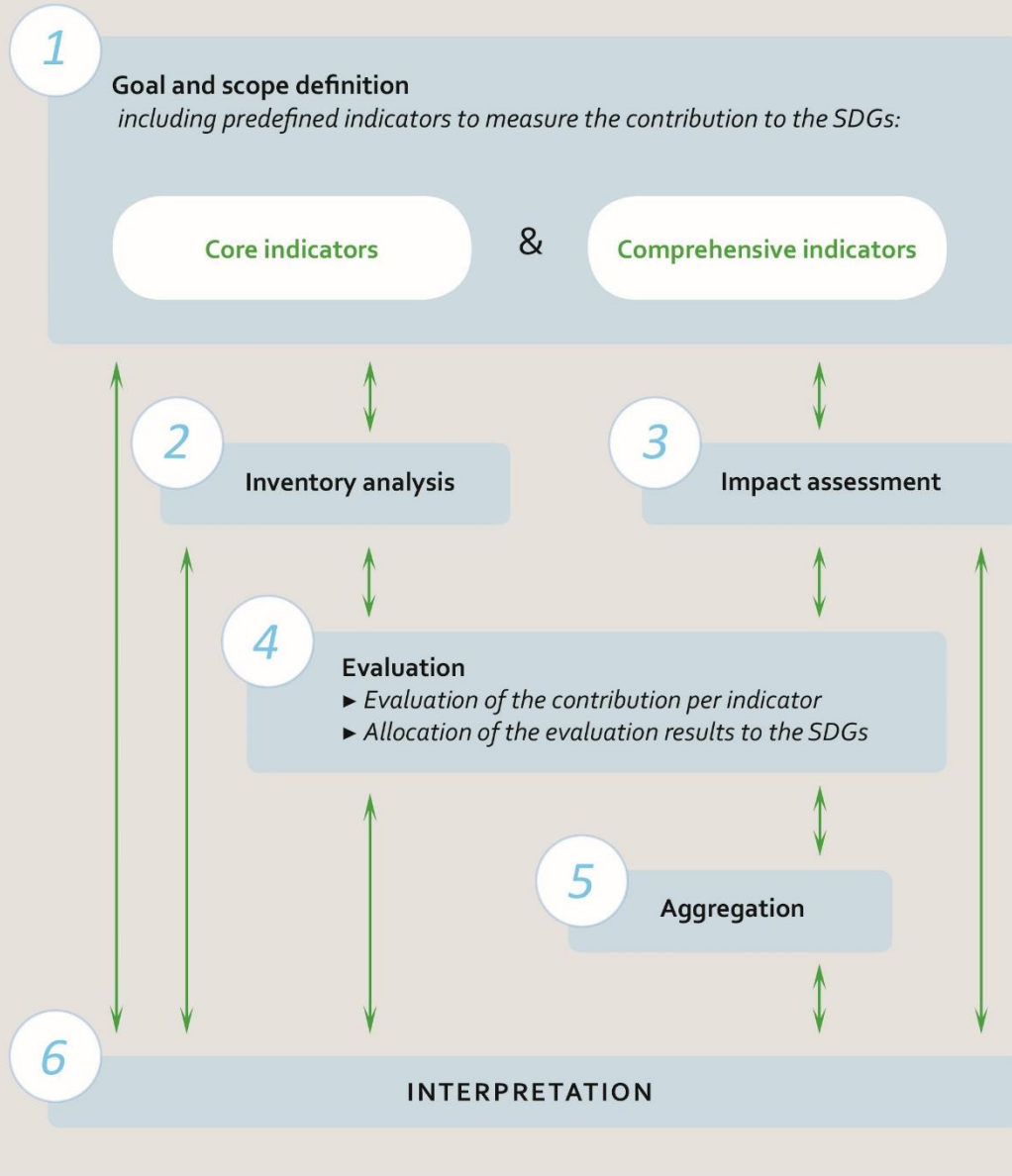
SDG 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

- ▶ Indicator (amended) from GIF-SDGs:
„Training regarding climate change“



„Leave no one behind“

SDG-EVALUATION OF PRODUCTS — SEP



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