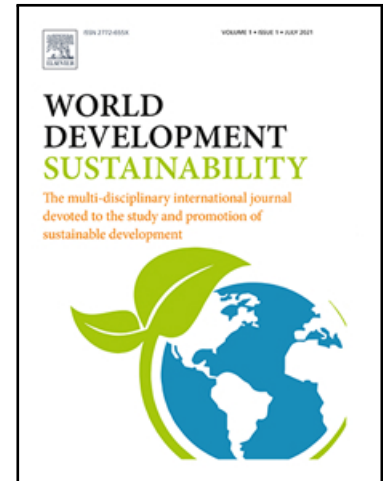


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Linking the UN SDGs and African Agenda 2063: Global goals and local priorities for Africa

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Abstract

The UN 2030 Agenda is a global agenda which brings nations together to address global challenges for sustainable development. It is increasingly expected for bilateral and multilateral development projects and programmes in sub-Saharan Africa to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, Africa's agency in steering sustainable development priorities, notably by proposing its own development

agenda and achievements' visions such as those contained in the African Agenda 2063 (AA2063), must be better recognised. This paper aims to establish converging links between the SDGs and AA2063. The authors used a structured process to identify and 'map' commonalities between all SDG and AA2063 targets. This process involved reviewing 32,617 possible connections between the 169 SDG Targets and 193 Agenda 2063 Targets. Key results identified 4,434 (14%) connections and three approaches for selecting overlapping areas of action: based on strength of connections, number of connections, and a combination of both. By comparing and establishing areas of overlap between the two agendas a discussion around converging and diverging priorities is held, which can in turn inform project design and monitoring and allow development initiatives to consider how they connect with both agendas. The findings could facilitate funders, policy makers and practitioners to leverage multiple benefits through a targeted approach to address both Agendas effectively.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals; African Agenda 2063; Sustainable Development; goal prioritisation, monitoring and evaluation.

1 Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a urgent call for action for peace and prosperity for people and the planet adopted by all United Nation Member States in 2013 (UN, 2015b). The agenda has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) designed to monitor progress for human well-being, environmental protection and partnerships (UN, 2015b, 2021a). The African Union has also defined a set of development Goals targeted for the continent in a longer time frame through the formulation of the African Agenda 2063 in 2013 (African Union, 2015b). There is interest in exploring the linkages between the goals in both agendas, that recognise priorities for Africa while understanding international development conventions and practices.

Work has been done in identifying key links between the UN SDGs and the African Agenda 2063 (AA2063), but these analyses have remained either high-level or country-level specific (Jönsson & Bexell, 2021; NPC, 2021; VNR, 2019). Small organisations and local

organisations may not have the ability to map impact of their projects on both agendas. The purpose of this study is to explore synergies between the SDGs and AA2063 to help define priorities for action in targeted interventions. The aim is to understand whether the two agendas converge, the synergies or differences between them and whether these can help funders, policy makers and practitioners be more effective at achieving both agendas simultaneously, and lastly, whether the SDGs can be grounded in the African Agenda 2063. This paper proposes to comprehensively identify and map converging links between the 169 SDG Targets and 193 AA2063 Targets and presents the structured process that was used to identify and map links between agendas.

Identifying links between two agendas could facilitate funders, policy makers and practitioners, including NGOs and similar organisations, to focus their efforts and prioritisation of action on goals that have the highest convergence by highlighting activities that fall into these areas in their monitoring and reporting. The linkages can also aid in planning and implementation of programmes and projects in Africa, and demonstrate how the African Agenda 2063 aspirations can align with global frameworks like the SDGs while ensuring a basis in an Africa-led vision and goals for development. Although it must be noted that areas that do not have any overlaps does not mean that these areas are irrelevant for sustainable development from an African perspective or should not be considered. We also argue from results that the identified linkages can leverage multiple benefits through a targeted approach to address both Agendas effectively.

2 Background

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are framed around 17 interlinked and integrated goals (UN, 2015c, 2021; see table 1 in Appendix 1). The agenda recognises that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality (including gender equality) and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests with a timeline of action of 2030 (UN, 2021a). The proposal of the SDGs Agenda was developed through a 30-member Open Working Group and builds (UN, 2015b, 2021).

African leaders and policy makers actively participated in debates around the SDGs within the G77+China grouping and the Open Working Group on the SDGs. In 2014, they put together the Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 development agenda to propose priority areas for action (African Union, 2014). A demand for structural change was clearly expressed in the CAP, notably for economic transformation that involves differentiation, industrialisation, infrastructure development, technological upgrading and employment generation. Along with other key individuals who are referred to as “norm entrepreneurs” by Fukuda-Parr and Muchhala (Fukuda-Parr & Muchhala, 2020), representatives of the African Union have also participated in shaping some targets related to international trade and finance, notably to address inequalities emerging from the structure and rules of the global economy.

Despite the aim of shaping a global vision for all, many have also pointed out that the SDGs contain a range of positions and assumptions which overlook diverse epistemological positions and values (e.g. Barnett & Parnell, 2016). The critical literature on the SDGs points out that the agenda risks driving mainstream notions of green development and conservation that fail to address the structural causes of inequalities, and that these driving forces act to

reproduce global power asymmetries (Tobias Haller & Larsen, 2020). Such asymmetries could affect African countries which suffer from the pervasive narrative of the period of the MDGs that Africa is “lagging behind” (Easterly, 2009; Georgeson & Maslin, 2018). Critical perspectives also point out the need to better acknowledge the colonial legacy of the finance flows and structures embedded in global economic and political dynamics. Although discourses highlight the need to ‘localise’ development and shift power towards local actors (Hartley, 2022; Jönsson & Bexell, 2021; Pieterse et al., 2018a), decision-making tends to remain concentrated in the Global North, rooting projects in Western values and continuing to devalue or unacknowledge local knowledge (Peace Direct, 2021).

While the SDGs have been recognised as a framework that could guide national governments towards sustainable development, the framework has also been criticised for being inadequately transformative (Fukuda-Parr & Muchhala, 2020). Research has demonstrated inherent tensions between goals and targets (e.g., Kroll et al., 2019; Nilsson et al., 2018), thereby demonstrating fundamental challenges in achieving policy coherence and integrated action (Georgeson & Maslin, 2018). The SDGs reflect the difficulty of establishing a universal agenda that embraces multi-scalar complexity, and successes will therefore depend on the way the agenda is localised (Butcher et al., 2021). This requires an unprecedented level of collaboration and participation at multiple levels for which the agenda does not set up a clear path – particularly regarding local bottom-up capacities and initiatives (Barnett & Parnell, 2016; T Haller et al., 2018). A key question has therefore emerges from these concerns: how can the localisation of the SDGs help meet African nations’ development needs?

2.2 African Agenda 2063 (AA2063)

Adopted in 2013, i.e., before the adoption of SDGs in 2015, the African Agenda 2063 has

reflected African leaders' desire to frame their own national and regional development priorities. The African Agenda 2063 (AA2063) describes itself as “the continent’s shared strategic framework” for sustainable development and inclusive growth (African Union, 2015b). The Agenda is made up of 20 Goals (see table 2 in Appendix 1) that are clustered into 7 Aspirations. According to the AA2063, the shared framework was designed around the identification of “past achievements, challenges and opportunities at the national, continental and global levels”, which also provided the basis and context for design and implementation measures of the continent’s transformation (African Union, 2015b).

The AA2063 was developed by the African Union through an extensive consultation process that included various stakeholder groups such as Government planners, the Forum for Former African Heads of State and Government, Research Institutions, Private Sector, African Think Tanks, the African media, the Diaspora, inter-faith leaders, Civil Society Organizations, as well as youth and women’s groups, among others (African Union, 2015b). The preparation of the AA2063 also included a review of research material and publications as well as development experiences in Africa, technical studies, continental and regional frameworks and national plans of the continent (African Union, 2015b).

The Agenda 2063 is embedded on the Constitutive Act of the African Union Vision (c.f. *Constitutive Act of the African Union*, 2000), the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration (c.f. African Union, 2013) and the African aspirations (African Union, 2015b). It also builds upon national, regional and continental priorities reflected in these plans and frameworks (African Union, 2015, p. 103; see **Error! Reference source not found.**). But it was also designed with ideas of ‘Pan Africanism, political liberation, decolonization and independence as a basis, including “the various strands of Pan-Africanism [that] converged into the founding of the OAU in 1963” (African Union, 2015b). The Agenda's guiding vision seeks to build “an

integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven and managed by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena” (African Union, 2015a, p. 2), where the concepts of integration, citizen participation and the role of robust infrastructure systems in enhancing continental competitiveness can be highlighted.

The AA2063 is a long-term 50-year development agenda starting from 2013, envisioned to be implemented through successive 10-year implementation plans. The AA2063 has a different, broader definition of ‘goal’ than the SDGs, stemming from its 50 year horizon, where the goals are fixed but “the priority areas and their associated targets can change over the various ten year plan cycles” (African Union, 2015b). The short term projection of the Agenda placed emphasis on key flagship programmes¹, accelerating the implementation of key continental frameworks and fast tracking of regional integration (African Union, 2015, p. 103).

AA2063 voices how African countries have been in a consistent search for political unity and economic emancipation since early post-colonial times (African Union, 2013). This search arises out of the need for self-determination, including through reduced reliance on donor funding and provision of African solutions to African problems, as well as the need for the African continent to assert its competitive position in the international arena (African Union, 2013). Similar argument was made by Tikly (2019) who found that the agenda is articulated around economic transformation, with the key aim of poverty eradication and driving its own regional development. According to the African Union, the AA2063 should be examined in

¹ Integrated High Speed Train Network; an African Virtual and E-University; a commodities strategy; an annual African forum; the Continental Free Trade Area by 2017; the African Passport and free movement of people; the Grand Inga Dam Project; the Pan-African E-Network; Silencing the guns by 2020; Africa Outer Space Strategy; a single African air transport market; and establishment of the African financial institutions.

the context of this search (African Union, 2015b). Most importantly, Agenda 2063 particularly reflects African leaders' own views of what 'sustainable development' entails, including their ambition to create structurally transformed economies. As highlighted in Aspiration #1:

African economies by 2053 will be structurally transformed to ensure equitable growth, fair distribution of opportunities and decent employment, labour standards and safe working conditions for all, including enhanced women's productivity, access to basic services and commodities and income distribution (African Union, 2015b).

Pieterse (2020) identifies that such transition would enable tackling a range of growing issues, including that of high and increasing levels of unemployment (i.e. Pieterse, 2020). With regard to cities in particular, a structural economic transition would involve building cities as hubs of cultural and economic activities for the youth, with modernised infrastructure and access to basic services. Institutional capacity will drive the success of an Africa urbanism that enables a transition towards green economies. Particularly attention to the spatial dimensions of structural transformations can help enhance livelihoods, public health and create further urban opportunities. To Pieterse, discussions combining structural transformation and green economy will enable macro-political economy questions that resonate with the current economic conditions of African countries (Pieterse, 2019).

2.3 *Similar work and gaps*

Considering these key debates, this study aims to explore commonalities and differences between the SDGs and AA2063. Findings aim to contribute to the identification of ways through which the two agendas can be integrated and thereby support research on pathways towards the localisation of the SDGs. This builds on relevant research that has explored the way the SDGs have been adopted and applied in practice, in Africa and beyond. With regards to investment for goal achievement, Jiménez-Aceituno et al. (2020) conducted a cluster

analysis to identify the number and frequency of SDG goals and targets addressed by a set of local sustainability initiatives² set in African countries. The authors found that 125 targets (out of 169 targets defined by the 2030 SDG Agenda) were addressed by the 69 initiatives. The remaining 44 targets that were not being addressed were characterised by requiring a national or international scope, which is usually beyond the capacity of local initiatives (Jiménez-Aceituno et al., 2020).

Weitz et al. (2014) conducted a cross-sectoral interactions analysis on the Water-Energy-Food nexus to identify interactions among goals through 3 approaches: relevance to other goals, interactions between goals and shared interests. The authors suggest identifying targets outside of their overarching goals and assessing whether these can be shared across several sectors. The Water-Energy-Food nexus was used by the authors as an example of application to support the SDGs integration across sectors to make them more cost-effective and efficient in their implementation. Other work refers to the direct application and evaluation of case studies focusing on linkages and trade-offs between the SDGs and a specific topic or target, such as energy (Bisaga et al., 2021; Fuso Nerini et al., 2018), forests and forest-based livelihoods (Devisscher et al., 2019), sanitation (Diep et al., 2020; Parikh et al., 2021) and urban ecosystems (Maes et al., 2019).

Comparable academic studies also include the work of Dawes (2020) which provides an assessment of the self-consistency and inter-linkages of the SDG Agenda through self-consistent networks³ and heat maps. The author concluded that the Agenda is not self-

² The authors refer to international network / organisations, African network / organisations or individual local initiatives.

³ Which the author defined as: “A network of directed links between n nodes with weights A_{ij} is self-consistent if the matrix A has an eigenvalue λ_0 that is (a) real, positive, and larger than the real

consistent, which poses challenges for its achievement, including on direct investments. Another approach on interactions among goals of the SDGs includes the work of Nilsson et al. (Nilsson et al., 2016), who developed a 7-point metric to assess interactions through the influence of goals and targets on another. The authors' work aims to identify causal and functional relations that have an impact on progress or achievement of goals (Griggs et al., 2017). The framework is set to be used for organising evidence, informing and supporting decision-making, however it does not conduct a comprehensive mapping of all potential interactions nor is it suggested for priority setting (Griggs et al., 2017; Nilsson et al., 2016). It must be noted that none of the studies discussed here compare links directly between SDGs and the African Agenda.

The work conducted by Kimaro and Fouri (2017) addresses both agendas, however the work discusses how monitoring and evaluation can contribute to the achievement of the goals of the agendas rather than drawing links between agendas. The African Governance Report (2019) also draws overlaps between agendas. The report however does not show the method in which the links were drawn neither does it present a prioritisation of goals that can be used for project application.

The African Union published a draft exercise of mapping the AA2063 to the SDGs in their platform (African Union, 2016a). This exercise maps indicators from an undisclosed country and makes a link with corresponding SDG indicators. The linkage is not exhaustive and the exercise does not map out the links between all the Targets in both the agendas in a comprehensive way. The African Union conducted a Progress Report on the first ten years of implementation of the agenda in 2016 where key challenges regarding the adoption of the

parts of all other eigenvalues and (b) λ_0 has a unique nonnegative eigenvector $v^{(0)}$ " (Dawes, 2020).

AA2063 were found (African Union, 2016c). These included higher visibility and awareness of the SDGs at national level and seeing the SDGs as part of global commitments, which challenged the domestication of the Agenda 2063. This led the African Union to seek for an “integrated framework for implementation of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs” to avoid policy incoherence, encouraging several African countries to map out the parallels between both agendas and how these align with national development plans (African Union, 2016c; UN, 2021b). An example includes the National Development Plan (NDP) of South Africa, which mapped out parallels between both agendas and integrated measures for achieving goals from each agenda (NPC, 2021; VNR, 2019). South Africa’s NDP suggests it has a 74% convergence with the SDGs (NPC, 2021), but it does not state the level of convergence with AA2063 targets. It does however cross-match all its priority areas with both agendas and developed a national coordination mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs and other local agendas, including the AA2063 (NPC, 2021; VNR, 2019).

Whilst most reports and studies have attempted to link SDG and African Agenda goals, the mapping of linkages is not exhaustive and the exercise do not map out the links between all the Targets in both the agendas in a comprehensive way.

The findings presented in this paper seek to contribute to the exploration of the overlaps between agendas, especially for use by funders, policy makers and practitioners, including NGOs and similar organisations with limited resources, to aid in the definition of priorities for action in targeted interventions.

3 Methodology

The authors reviewed the possible 32,617 connections between the 169 SDG targets and 193 Agenda 2063 targets through the following process.

The authors firstly examined the differences in structure of both agendas. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are structured in a Goal > Target format. Each goal has a different number of targets, ranging from 5 to 19 targets. The African Agenda 2063 (AA2063) is structured differently than the SDGs. The AA2063 does not follow the Goal > Target format, but an Aspiration > Goal > Priority Area > Target format. The AA2063's format is also customizable, in which each country is encouraged to tailor the targets to make them fit a national and regional agenda. This is done with the aim to encourage countries to have shorter-term goals, such as 2030, 2050 and 2063 targets, in order for these targets to be measurable, and provide 7 Aspirations, 20 Goals and a number of Priority Areas per Goal (ranging from 1 to 5) that the countries must follow. The targets that the Framework document of the AA2063 provides for the 'National level' were used to conduct this linkage exercise (African Union, 2015b, pp. 136–159; see figure 1 in Appendix 1). These targets were added under each Priority Area of the AA2063. The targets for each of the SDGs Goals were also added under their corresponding goal, to develop a comprehensive matrix.

The process was developed through a series of collaborative workshops between the core project team, who are based at a UK university carrying out international development research, and wider stakeholders, including members of a Kenyan-based NGO, industry, practitioners and other academics. The methodology was subjected to discussion and co-development with the partners in Kenya and organisations involved. The lead author identified links between both agendas on a target-by-target basis between each of the 169 SDG targets and 193 targets of the AA2063. A modified approach to Nilsson et al. (Nilsson et al., 2016) was taken for the linkage between Targets. A modified 2-point metric was implemented, where 1 point was given to Targets with either direct links (defined as targets with the same overarching focus) or Targets that support achievement of others (whether enabling, reinforcing or indivisible as per defined by Nilsson et al. (2016); see Table 1), and

no points were given to Targets with no interactions (including Targets that limited, clashed or cancelled the other). These modifications were carried out given that the exercise did not seek to understand the nature of the interactions, but whether the Targets had links. Where there were areas of disagreements on links, these were discussed with the team and resolved within the matrix showcasing the multiple links. The methodology development process included holding several working meetings and co-production workshops during 6 months, where consultation with the wider stakeholders was carried out as well as independent validation of the links from the second and last author.

Table 1. Example of linked targets.

Mutually direct linked targets	Targets that support achievement of others
<p>AA2063, 1.1.1.a - Per capita income is at least 10 times the 2013 level to average values of USD 17-20,000,</p> <p>With</p> <p>SDG 8.1 - Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.</p>	<p>AA2063, 1.4.2.a - The 2013 value of manufacturing in GDP is increased by at least 5 fold and manufacturing absorbs at least 50% of new entrants into the labour market,</p> <p>With</p> <p>SDG 8.1 - Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries</p> <p>OR</p>

	<p>AA2063, 3.11.1.c - All citizens are empowered to hold the leaders accountable and are free from fear of their government by 2030,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With</p> <p>SDG 9.c - Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.</p>
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4 Results

A matrix was developed manually in Excel, containing all the links between the SDG and AA2063 agendas (see figure 2 of Appendix 1). The matrix helped establish linkages (groups of links), which supported the identification of converging areas of action.

Out of all 32,617 possible connections (169 SDG targets x 193 AA2063 targets), 4,434 links between targets of both agendas were identified. This means that 14% of the targets of both agendas link together based on the structured process applied. While all links identified at target level are detailed in Appendix 2, Figure 1 provides a simplified version of the matrix showcasing links at goal level, which was useful to calculate that 212 extra links not previously drawn by the African Union were established at goal level, by assessing goals that had at least one link between targets of each agenda. The links were colour-coded using a traffic light system to include the following:

- Green cells for existing links identified between SDG Targets and the AA2063 by African Union (2016b).
- Yellow cells for additional links identified by the authors using the structured process.

Goal	SDGs																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
3	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
4	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
5	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
6	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
7	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow
8	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
9	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
10	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
11	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow
12	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow
13	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
14	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
15	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
16	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
17	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
18	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
19	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
20	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green

Figure 1. Matrix showing goals with at least one link. Cells marked in green had previously been drawn by the African Union, while the cells marked in yellow indicate the links added by the authors.

To further analyse these results, the team calculated percentages of linked targets at Priority Area level (for AA2063) and goal level (for both AA2063 and the SDGs). This was done by a simple division of the number of targets that were linked by the number of targets with possible connections for each Priority Area and goal respectively. This allowed the creation of heat maps highlighting the Priority Areas and goals with over 30% of targets with

linkages, to quantify the strength of connected targets between two goals (see figure 3 in Appendix 1). This was done with the aim of understanding which goals had the greatest number of connections, as well as to act as guidance on which goals of both agendas to focus for further analysis.

Results show that SDG goals 5, 7, 16 and AA2063 goals 13, 14, 17 and 19 were areas of high percentage, with over 75% targets connecting with each other. The team also found that 63% of the Priority Areas had links to SDG targets, with 4 Priority Areas having 100% connections (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Key converging Priority Areas with connections over 75% include SDGs 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15 and 16, and from AA2063 Priority Areas: 1.2, 4.1, 6.1, 14.2, 17.2, 20.3 and all Priority Areas of goals 7, 13 and 19 (see tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 1 for the SDG Goals and AA2063 Goals and Priority Areas). This is further clarified in the maps presented in Figure 2, where cells with goal level linkages with over 30% connections are highlighted, and visualisations at goal level and priority area levels are showcased.

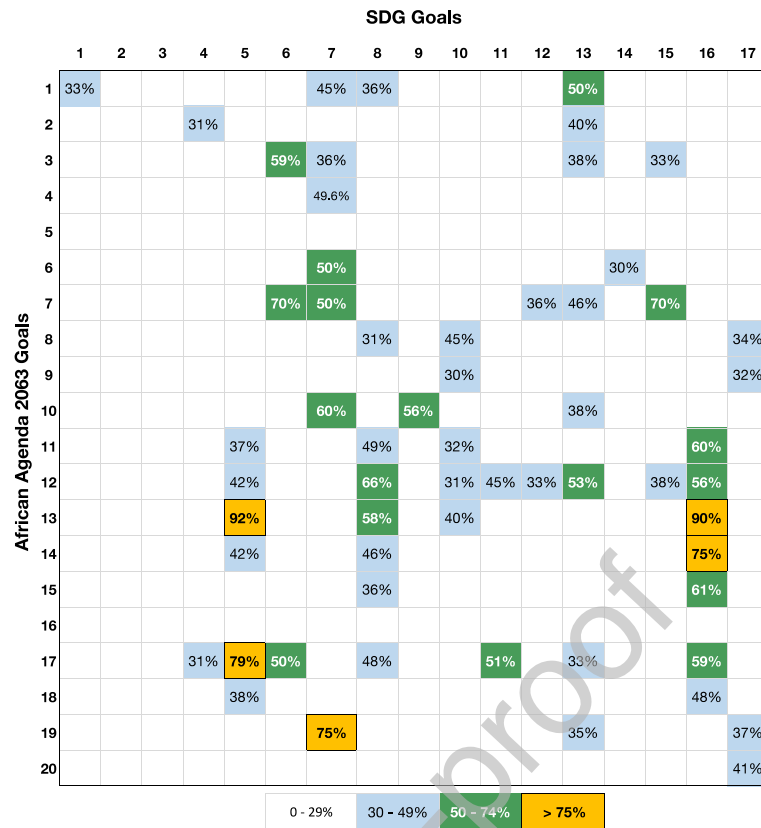


Figure 2. Heat map highlighting Priority Areas (PA) with over 30% of connected targets at goal level.

4.1 Resulting linkages and converging areas of action

The maps of connections allowed to create another diagram based on the infographics both agendas use to represent their goals, in which a dotted grey line was used to represent connections between 30% to <50%, a dotted black line to represent connections between 50% and <75% and a black line to represent connections of 75% and over.

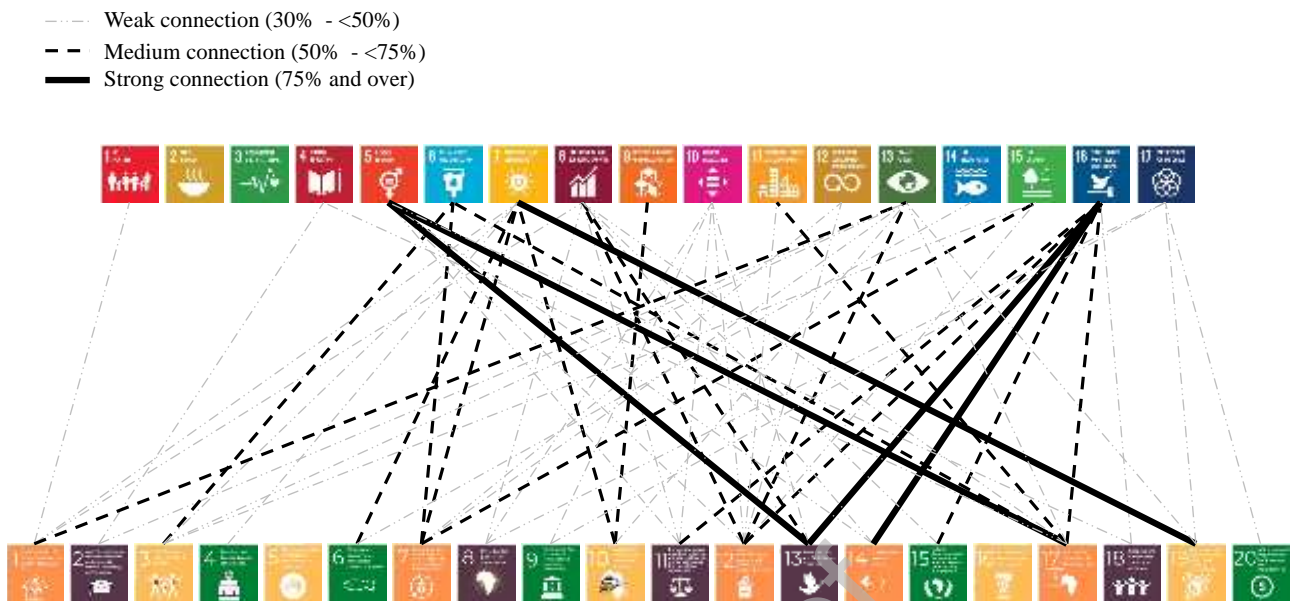


Figure 3. All links found between SDG and AA2063 goals which have over 30% convergence. Grey dotted lines represent weak connections between 30% to 50% linked targets. Black dotted lines represent medium connections between 50% to 75% linked targets. Black lines represent strong connections with over 75% linked targets.

SDG goals 2 and 3 and AA2063 goals 5 and 16 did not have any links over 30%. The SDG goals with more links were SDG 8 and 13 with links to 8 AA2063 goals, followed closely by SDG 7 and 16 with links to 7 AA2063 goals. In the case of AA2063, the goal with the highest number of links was goal 12, with links to 8 SDG goals, followed by goal 17, with links to 7 SDG goals.

The authors found 3 possible ways of highlighting the connections between the agendas, to establish linkages:

- (1) Based on strength of connections, or choosing those goals that have 50% or more connections.

- Weak connection (30% - <50%)
- - - Medium connection (50% - <75%)
- Strong connection (75% and over)

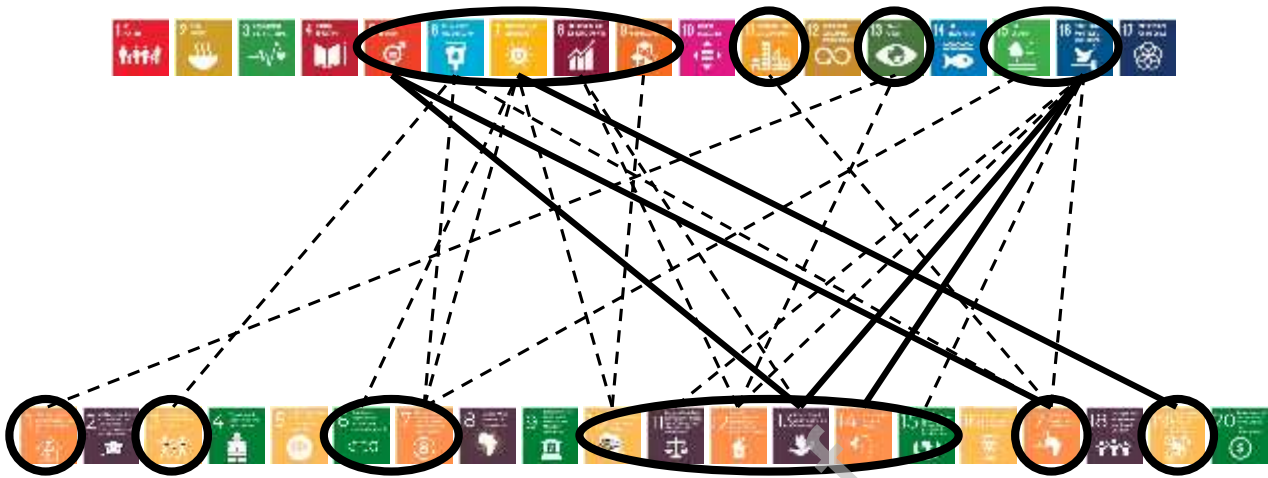


Figure 4. Selection of goals based on strength of connections. Black dotted lines represent medium connections between 50% to 75% linked targets. Black lines represent strong connections with over 75% linked targets.

- (2) Based on number of connections, or choosing goals that have 4 connections or more.

- Weak connection (30% - <50%)
- - - Medium connection (50% - <75%)
- Strong connection (75% and over)

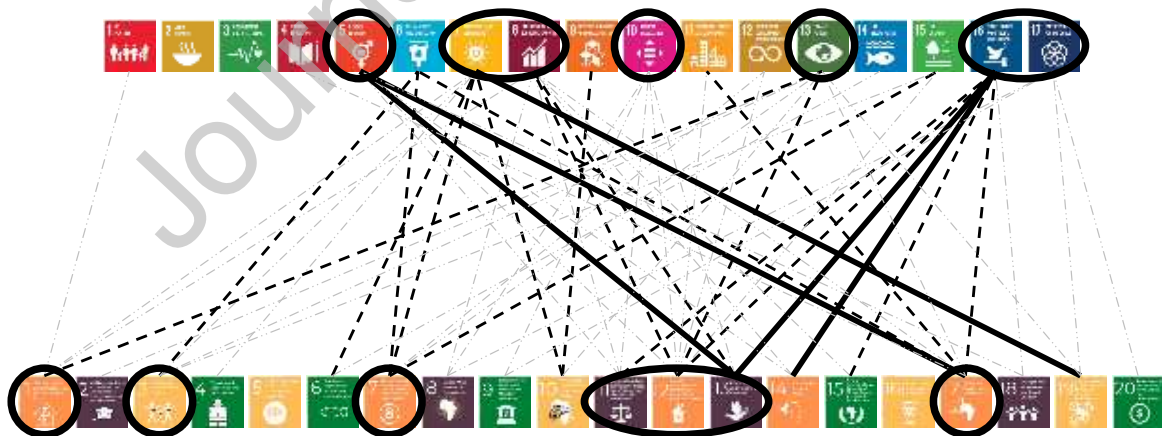


Figure 5. Selection of goals based on number of connections. Grey dotted lines represent weak connections between 30% to 50% linked targets. Black dotted lines represent medium connections between 50% to 75% linked targets. Black lines represent strong connections with over 75% linked targets.

- (3) Based on a combination of strength and number of connections, or choosing those goals that combine strength (over 50% of goals are linked) and number of connections (have more than 4 connections).

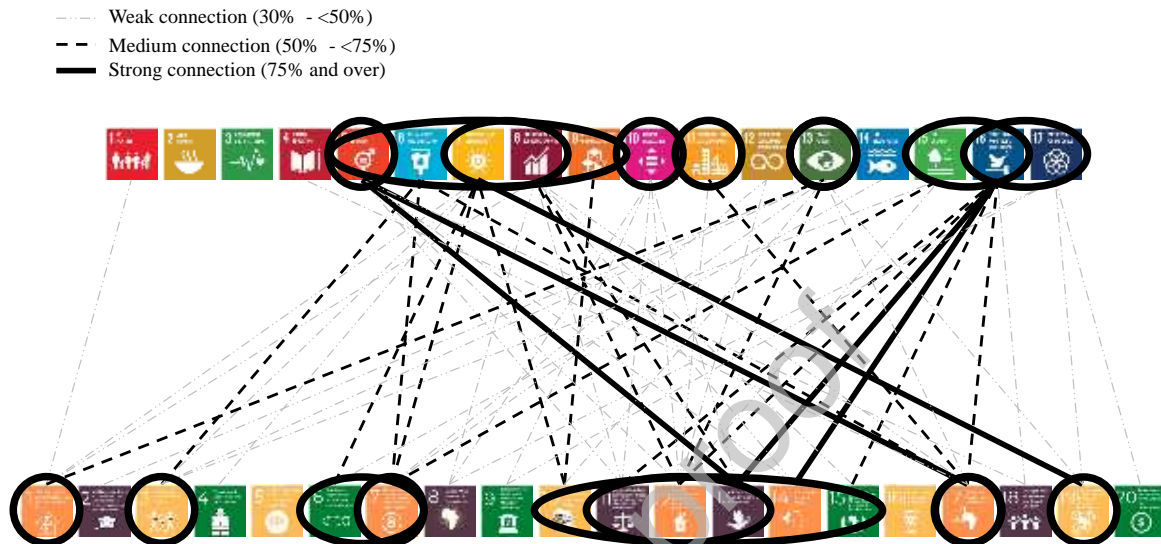


Figure 6. Selection of goals based on combination of number and strength of connections. Grey dotted lines represent weak connections between 30% to 50% linked targets. Black dotted lines represent medium connections between 50% to 75% linked targets. Black lines represent strong connections with over 75% linked targets.

5 Discussion

Based on the structured process it applies, this analysis identifies 4,434 connections representing 14% possible synergistic links between the SDGs and AA2063 agendas. Three possible ways of highlighting the connections between the agendas were also presented to establish linkages: 1) based on strength of connections; 2) based on number of connections; or 3) based on a combination of the above. 14% connections overall may seem low, however over half of the goals of each agenda had medium to strong links to the other agenda – at least 53% of SDG goals and 60% of AA2063 goals had connections to each other if only considering the strength of the connections. One of the main areas of overlap for both

agendas, which was consistently highlighted irrespective of the selection method chosen, was institutional capacity (SDG16 and AA2063-12).

The authors found that SDG16, pertaining to Peace and Justice Strong Institutions, had connections with at least 7 AA2063 goals (AA2063 - 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 18), of which 4 goals had over 50% links and 2 goals had over 75% links. As for AA2063-12 relating to Capable Institutions and Transformative Leadership in Place, this goal had 8 connections to the SDG agenda (SDG 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16), of which 3 goals had over 50% links. It can be noted that both goals connect with each other, with over 50% links. The authors therefore found that both goals (SDG16 and AA2063-12) overlap through targets relating to the creation of policies for sustainable development and development programmes, including building capacity and participatory systems at multiple governance levels. We argue that actions towards institutional capacity could facilitate, or be facilitated by, actions in each of these key overlapping areas.

Economic growth (e.g., SDG8 and AA2063-6), peace and security (e.g., SDG16 and AA2063-15), and reduction of inequalities – including gender inequalities (e.g., SDG5 and 10 and AA2063-1 and 17) were other identified areas of action. The convergence around economic growth is not surprising given the number of AA2063 targets that refer to production, production processes and manufacturing. A further converging area of action was identified around infrastructure development, which reflect African nations' aspirations to address current lack of infrastructure and services, notably in urban settings (Pieterse et al., 2018b). This connection does not only occur through SDG9 ('Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure') and AA2063-10 ('Communications and infrastructure connectivity'), but also through the provision of basic services (including energy and water, sanitation and hygiene) or the reduction of vulnerability (including climate-related vulnerability). Infrastructure

development and service affordability are areas of convergence of the SDGs and African 2063 agendas and where efforts need to be deployed. Addressing infrastructure shortages will be determinant but requires effective and democratic urban governance and management, notably through stronger land-use governance which carries the legacy of colonial and modern planning as well as donor-driven development (Pieterse et al., 2018b). A convergence of targets tackling inequality between the two agendas also mirror African leaders' efforts to advocate for a repositioning of African nations within global power structures.

Some differences between the two agendas identified from this analysis can also be highlighted. This includes goals where no connections or very few connections were identified, such as SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 14 relating to poverty, hunger, wellbeing, education and marine life respectively, and AA2063 2, 4, 5, 9, 16, 18 and 20 relating to education, job creation, agriculture, banking, African culture, youth and development financing respectively. The lack of connections does not reduce the importance of these goals for Africa and African progress, but could be explained by the focus placed on each goal. For example, the AA2063 targets relating to food and nutrition focus on the eradication of diseases. In contrast, the SDG agenda makes stronger emphasis on agriculture and food production on its goal dedicated to hunger and nutrition. Another point of contrast can be noted on the AA2063 emphasis on the need of including citizens of the African diaspora into the agenda of economic development, and a push for culture and art preservation in the proposed targets of the AA2063 which is not strongly identified from the SDGs.

The analysis conducted by the team identified more links across agendas than the analysis published by the African Union (African Union, 2016b). For example, the African Union's own linking of the AA2063 with the SDGs (African Union, 2016b) did not link one of the

peace goals of its agenda to the SDGs, more specifically SDG16, which made the authors further question whether this was the African Union's way of showing its rejection of the way in which the SDGs tackle peace. It is important to nevertheless highlight that the interpretation of some targets and therefore the establishment of connections can be largely subject to biases that relate the broadness of certain targets of the two agendas. Both articulate broadly defined targets, which adds ambiguity in relation to implementation, monitoring and financing aspects. Examples of this include targets mentioning the eradication of slums, eliminating corruption and impunity, reducing local conflicts to zero, silencing guns and ending all forms of violence against women and children. Nevertheless, the exercise presented in this paper should be seen as largely aligning with that of the African Union and as building on it by identifying links in more details.

The points above can therefore be seen as an indication of converging but also diverging priorities between the two agendas, as well as their drivers. The SDGS have been adopted as the international framework for Sustainable Development (Tikly, 2019), where the AA2063 arose as a regional set of priorities. As such, many targets of the AA2063 focus on the "locality" of development and production and stopping 'aid' as an end goal in development budgets, while the SDG agenda is focused on aid and support to 'less developed countries'. These two focuses are found to be in conflict. As explained in part 2.2., these result further highlight the way African leaders seek political unity and emancipation (political but also economic anticipation) which AA2063 symbolises through its set of goals, priority areas and targets articulated around 'Pan Africanism, decolonization, political liberation and independence' (African Union, 2015b).

A key critique of the SDGs is that it therefore seems to be weak in the articulation of goals around local capacity-building, despite the high number of SDG 17 targets, for example on

local participation. While the creation of the SDGs (or its predecessor: the Millennium Development Goals, etc.) allowed for stakeholder engagement and workshops to be held for their formulation, their inception left little to no room for bottom-up formulation of needs, participation and consultation, in the form of tailoring targets to national or more local needs. As a counterpart, AA2063 appears to be more committed to the inclusion of the youth and women groups and Civil Society Organizations in the design and implementation of the agenda (African Union, 2015b), through its extensive consultation process, which allowed to create an agenda that can be tailored to the needs of the national and local population. The value that AA2063 contributes is to allow an Africa-led vision and goals for development while aligning with global frameworks like the SDGs.

Divergences between the two agenda also pose questions around SDGs' recognition of ways to maintain history, culture, narrative and recognition within development. These reveal limitations in the way the SDGs can be localised across African countries. We argue, however, that since the cross-analysis of the two agendas supports the identification of gaps, it can also help identify ways to target synergistic action. In other words, a targeted integration of the SDGs and AA2023 can help achieve locally prioritised targets, and thereby allow for the delivery of both global goals and local priorities.

6 Conclusions

The authors explored the linkages between the 32,617 potential links between 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and 192 targets of the African Agenda 2063 . The aim was to explore synergies between agendas for use by funders, policy makers and practioners, including NGO's and similar organisations with limited resourcing. The identified links could be used to highlight activities that fall into the converging areas to monitor outcomes and reporting of key areas of overlap. The authors showcase the connections between the agendas

to establish linkages based on strength of connections, on number of connections, or a combination of both. They identified 4,434 target connections in total, with 212 additional goal connections identified as a result of this exercise.

Future research could focus on the application of the results shown in this paper for those working with both SDG and AA2063 agendas to identify convergences between agendas, and the potential that this offers for more concerted development interventions that take both global goals and local priorities in Africa into account. Future work should also include testing and applying the approach for context specific case studies to improve monitoring and evaluation. The matrix and initial scoping work have been shared with the hope that organisations will adapt this work to maximise benefits to target interventions and help monitor and reporting on the progress of projects and programmes. This method could facilitate leverage of multiple benefits through a targeted approach to address both Agendas effectively.

Declaration of interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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