

Driving the 2030 Agenda: A PRISMA-Guided Systematic Review of Public Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals (2010–2024)



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ABSTRACT

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This study systematically synthesises how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are implemented in government by integrating governance determinants, public governance mechanisms, contextual moderators, and multidimensional impacts within a single analytical framework. Using a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)-guided systematic literature review (SLR) combined with bibliometric and theory-based thematic analyses, the study consolidates fragmented evidence from Scopus-indexed literature published between 2010 and 2024. The findings suggest that SDG implementation is shaped by institutional, digital, economic, environmental, and socio-political determinants operating through public governance mechanisms such as coordination, accountability, policy integration, and digitalisation. These mechanisms are prominently associated with planning processes, policy alignment, and implementation across national and local government contexts. The impacts of SDG implementation are shown to be multidimensional, encompassing performance measurement, governance and implementation outcomes, as well as broader social, environmental, and value creation effects. In addition, the review reveals persistent thematic and geographical imbalances in the literature, particularly limited attention to outcome-oriented and context-sensitive dimensions of SDG implementation. By accounting for contextual factors such as level of development, institutional maturity, and geographical setting, this study advances a more context-sensitive and policy-relevant understanding of how public governance shapes SDG implementation towards the 2030 Agenda.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are rooted in longstanding global discussions on sustainable development, which were formally articulated in the 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*. The report emphasised the need to meet present development needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, thereby establishing a foundational conceptual basis for sustainable development [1]. This framework subsequently informed a series of international development agendas that ultimately culminated in the adoption of the SDGs. Among these, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represented an early attempt to operationalise sustainable development principles through eight goals focused on poverty reduction, health, education, and environmental sustainability [2]. Building on both the achievements and limitations of the MDGs, the international community adopted the SDGs in 2015 as a more comprehensive and inclusive global development agenda [3-6].

The transition from MDGs to the SDGs was formally initiated at the RIO + 20 Conference in 2012, where United

Nations (UN) member states recognised the need for a broader and more integrated development framework that emphasised universal participation and policy coherence [4, 7]. The UN General Assembly subsequently adopted the SDGs in 2015, establishing 17 goals and 169 targets grounded in the principle of universality [5, 6]. Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs require development strategies to simultaneously address economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability, thereby transcending sectoral and policy silos [4, 6, 8, 9].

Within the sustainability literature, the SDGs have increasingly been recognised as an overarching framework for articulating shared development priorities across economic, social, and environmental domains. Unlike narrower sectoral or organisational approaches, the SDGs provide a globally recognised policy architecture that emphasises universality, interdependence, and long-term coordination across multiple levels of governance [4, 6, 10]. In this sense, the SDGs do not merely define substantive development goals, but also establish a common reference point for aligning policy agendas, institutional action, and implementation efforts towards the 2030 Agenda. Table 1 presents the 17 core objectives of the SDGs.

Table 1. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

No.	Goal
1	No poverty
2	Zero hunger
3	Good health and well-being
4	Quality education
5	Gender equality
6	Clean water and sanitation
7	Affordable clean energy
8	Decent work and economic growth
9	Industry, innovation, and infrastructure
10	Reduced inequalities
11	Sustainable cities and communities
12	Responsible consumption and production
13	Climate action
14	Life below water
15	Life on land
16	Peace, justice, and strong institutions
17	Partnerships for the Goals

Source: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

Despite their global scope, the successful implementation of the SDGs depends heavily on how governments prioritise, integrate, and operationalise the goals within national and local policy contexts. Research on SDG implementation has therefore become increasingly important for understanding how governments across different countries allocate resources, formulate policies, and respond to local challenges [11-13]. In practice, governments often prioritise SDGs that align with national development agendas or existing institutional capacities. However, selective or disproportionate prioritisation of certain goals risks undermining the core principle of indivisibility that underpins the 2030 Agenda [14].

Public policy plays a central role in translating SDG commitments into actionable strategies. Governments are responsible for embedding SDGs into policy planning, implementation, and evaluation processes to ensure alignment between national development objectives and global targets [13, 15]. National integration of the SDGs enables countries to align domestic priorities with international development commitments, while local governments serve as critical actors in adapting global goals to community-specific needs [11, 16, 17]. Through their proximity to citizens, local governments are uniquely positioned to promote inclusive and equitable development outcomes, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction, health, environmental sustainability, and urban development.

Nevertheless, the implementation of SDGs through governmental institutions faces significant challenges. Developing countries, in particular, encounter institutional constraints related to limited capacity, inadequate resources, and bureaucratic structures that hinder cross-sectoral coordination. These challenges underscore the need for innovative and integrated governance arrangements capable of addressing the complexity and interdependence of the SDGs [11, 18, 19]. Despite the growing importance of these issues, comparative assessments of SDG governance across countries remain limited, restricting systematic insights into global implementation patterns, barriers, and enabling factors [20-22]. Existing evidence suggests that governance configurations vary considerably: for example, Malaysia has demonstrated progress through strong political leadership and public private partnerships, while India has applied systems thinking to integrate health, education, gender equality, and economic development into coherent policy frameworks [23,

24].

Despite these important contributions, the existing literature has not yet produced an integrated, government-focused synthesis of SDG implementation. Previous studies, notably those by Nilsson et al. [8, 9], Stafford-Smith et al. [6], Allen et al. [25], and Gupta and Vegelin [5], have significantly advanced understanding of SDG interactions, policy integration, implementation progress, and inclusive development. However, these studies do not specifically synthesise how SDGs are implemented in governmental contexts through the interaction of governance determinants, implementation mechanisms, contextual conditions, and multidimensional outcomes. As a result, the government-focused SDG literature remains fragmented, with existing studies often addressing determinants, implementation challenges, or thematic developments in isolation rather than within a unified analytical perspective.

This study addresses that gap by conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) combined with bibliometric and thematic analyses to develop an integrated framework for understanding public governance and SDG implementation. Specifically, the study synthesises the key determinants shaping SDG implementation in government, examines the multidimensional impacts associated with these processes, and analyses the thematic evolution of the literature across governmental contexts. In doing so, the integrated SLR provides data-driven and theory-informed insights to support more effective, context-sensitive, and inclusive governance strategies for accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a SLR methodology to synthesise existing knowledge on SDG implementation in governmental contexts. The review was designed to ensure methodological transparency, reproducibility, and a rigorous synthesis of the extant literature. The search was conducted using the Scopus database because it offers broad multidisciplinary coverage and a structured source selection process [26, 27]. The study selection process was conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The PRISMA methodology guides the multi-stage filtering process to produce a final set of relevant literature that meets recognised methodological standards [28, 29].

The Scopus search was undertaken between 18 February 2025 and 3 March 2025, whereas the review itself was restricted to studies published between 2010 and 2024. Thus, the search dates indicate when the database search was performed, while the publication-year window defines the time span of the studies eligible for inclusion. The search period was set from 2010 to 2024 to allow the inclusion of literature published around the emergence and early institutionalisation of the SDG agenda. However, because the search strategy used SDG-specific terms, this review does not claim to capture the full conceptual history of sustainable development governance prior to the formal adoption of the SDGs in 2015.

A systematic literature search was conducted in the Scopus database using the search string "sustainable-development" AND (SDGs OR "sustainable-development-goals") AND (government OR governmental), applied to the Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields. The final search string was

retained after re-checking alternative query formulations in Scopus. This process indicated that hyphenation did not materially affect retrieval results in the search context used, whereas the use of quotation marks improved the focus and relevance of the retrieved records. This initial search yielded 10,170 records. The results were subsequently restricted to the

subject areas of Social Sciences and Environmental Science, which reduced the number of records to 6,078. The search was then further limited to publications at the final publication stage, resulting in 5,939 records. Thereafter, the records were refined using the keywords SDGs and Government, leaving 817 records for screening.

Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria applied during the study selection process

No.	Criterion	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria	Records Remaining
1	Identification	Records identified through a Scopus search using the search string "sustainable-development" AND (SDGs OR "sustainable-development-goals") AND (government OR governmental) in the Article Title, Abstract, and Keywords fields	–	10,170
2	Subject area	Records classified under the Social Sciences and Environmental Science subject areas	Records outside the Social Sciences and Environmental Science subject areas	6,078
3	Publication status	Records at the final publication stage	Records not at the final publication stage	5,939
4	Keyword-relevance	Records aligned with the SDGs and government-related keywords	Records not sufficiently aligned with the SDGs and government-related keywords	817
5	Title and abstract screening	Records considered potentially relevant after title and abstract screening	Records deemed irrelevant during the initial title and abstract screening	125
6	Initial eligibility assessment	Records meeting the full-text eligibility requirements after detailed full-text review	Records not meeting the full-text eligibility requirements after detailed full-text review	73
7	Time frame	Records published within the 2010–2024 time frame	Records published outside the 2010–2024 time frame	73
8	Document type	Articles and conference papers	Publications other than articles and conference papers	64
9	Language	English-language publications	Non-English-language publications	61
10	Topical focus	Direct public-governance studies and governance-adjacent SDG implementation studies	Studies unrelated to direct public-governance or governance-adjacent SDG implementation	60

Note: The table summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied throughout the study selection process, together with the number of records remaining after each stage. The study selection process began with 10,170 records identified through the Scopus database search and culminated in a final analytical corpus of 60 eligible studies included in the review.

An initial screening was then undertaken through a rapid review of titles and abstracts, resulting in 125 potentially relevant records. These records were subsequently assessed in greater detail for relevance and eligibility, yielding 73 records. No additional records were excluded on the basis of the 2010–2024 publication period. The subsequent exclusion of publications other than articles and conference papers reduced the number to 64 records, while the removal of non-English-language publications further reduced the total to 61 records.

The eligibility of studies was governed by a single principle, namely that public governance constituted an explicit analytical focus within the study, rather than appearing merely as a contextual background or peripheral reference. Accordingly, mere SDG relevance was not sufficient for inclusion unless linked to identifiable public governance or public policy processes. Based on this principle, the review applied a two-level eligibility filter. At the first level, studies were included when public governance was the primary object of analysis, including those examining public policy design, implementation, or evaluation; public-sector accountability, transparency, and reporting systems; and intergovernmental coordination or institutional governance structures. Studies meeting this criterion were classified as direct public-governance studies. At the second level, studies were included

when governance was not the primary focus but explicitly analysed as a governance mechanism in SDG implementation, particularly through public policy instruments, regulatory interventions, government-led service delivery systems, or institutional arrangements enabling SDG achievement. Such studies were classified as governance-adjacent SDG implementation studies. Studies were excluded when government institutions, public policy, or the public sector were mentioned only as contextual factors without substantive analytical engagement, when the primary focus was on NGOs, civil society organisations, corporate or SME practices, or supply-chain management without substantive governance analysis, or when SDG outcomes were examined without explicit linkage to public governance mechanisms. This framework ensured that inclusion decisions were based on governance as an analytical construct rather than the presence of government-related variables or organisational context alone.

Finally, the full-text assessment led to the exclusion of one boundary-case study entitled “Streamlining non-governmental organizations’ programs towards achieving the sustainable development goals: A conceptual framework”. Although the study addressed the SDGs and discussed cross-sector partnerships [30], it was not retained in the final analytical

corpus because its primary analytical focus was on NGO programme streamlining and civil-society roles, rather than on government institutions, public policy instruments, public-sector accountability, or government-led SDG implementation. The study therefore did not meet the eligibility criterion requiring a substantive public-governance analytical focus within SDG implementation.

The exclusion of only one record at the full-text stage reflects the sequential strictness of the screening process, as the earlier filtering and title-and-abstract screening stages had already removed the majority of records that were not closely aligned with the review scope and eligibility criteria. This process resulted in a final review corpus of 60 eligible studies, which were synthesised to address the research questions of this study. To improve the transparency and clarity of the study selection process, Table 2 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied at each stage, together with the number of records remaining after each step.

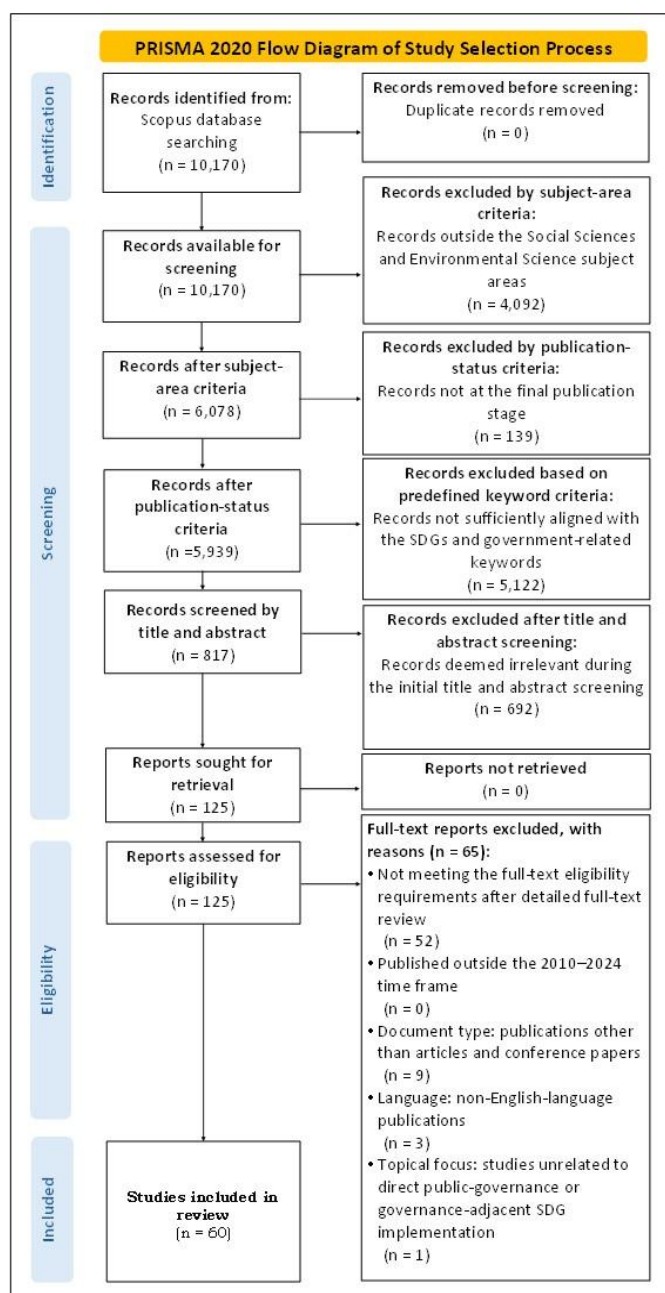


Figure 1. PRISMA-guided study selection flow diagram
Source: Authors' own work

To further strengthen the transparency of the final analytical corpus, a corpus justification table is provided in the Supplementary Material. The table covers all 60 studies included in the review and presents each study's main focus, study classification, and inclusion justification. The classification framework distinguishes between direct public-governance studies and governance-adjacent SDG implementation studies. An additional entry is included for the boundary-case study excluded during full-text assessment to clarify the rationale for exclusion. The inclusion decision was therefore based not only on the organisational unit of analysis, but also on whether public governance or public-policy processes constituted a central analytical mechanism.

Study selection and data extraction were conducted by three researchers with expertise in public policy, sustainable development, and research methodology. Prior to screening, the research team undertook a calibration process in which the inclusion and exclusion criteria were jointly discussed and defined to enhance consistency. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa based on the independent eligibility decisions of two reviewers for the 125 records subjected to detailed review. This assessment yielded a kappa value of 0.78, indicating substantial agreement. Disagreements regarding record inclusion, exclusion, or coding were resolved through group discussions with a third researcher, resulting in 73 records being retained for the subsequent eligibility stage. Throughout the review process, objectivity and transparency were maintained through systematic documentation of all methodological decisions, while the collaborative approach contributed to consistent and reliable results. While Table 2 presents the full study-selection process and associated eligibility criteria, Figure 1 presents the complete PRISMA-guided study-selection flow from the initial Scopus search to the final analytical corpus of 60 included studies. The figure illustrates the progression of records retained and excluded at each stage of screening, eligibility filtering, and full-text assessment of public-governance relevance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Development of SDGs research topics in government

This study began with an analysis of previous research focusing on SDG implementation in government institutions. The analysis was conducted through a review of studies that explicitly examined SDGs 1 to 17 as their primary research objectives. Table 3 presents the synthesis of the identified studies to provide a clearer overview of the scope of this review.

The majority of research on SDG implementation in government institutions is conducted at the macro level. This is evidenced by the fact that 43 out of 60 studies examine all SDGs collectively. The prevalence of such comprehensive studies indicates a tendency among researchers to address sustainability principles in a general manner rather than examining the dynamics and implementation challenges of specific goals [14]. Research attention is most frequently directed towards SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 13 (Climate Action). These goals closely align with national development priorities and are supported by quantifiable indicators, including food

security, urban governance, and environmental resilience [16].

By contrast, the absence of studies that focus primarily on SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) reveals a significant research gap. This is particularly notable given that the successful achievement of all SDGs depends heavily on effective cross-sector partnerships [31, 32]. These findings are consistent with global bibliometric studies, which indicate that SDG 17 often functions as an enabling framework across multiple SDG-related analyses but is rarely examined as a primary research theme. This is largely due to its process-oriented indicators and cross-sectoral nature [25, 33].

Despite its critical role in advancing sustainable development, SDG 17 remains underrepresented in empirical research. This situation underscores the need for further studies aimed at developing robust assessment frameworks capable of capturing partnership outcomes. Such methodological advancements would help establish SDG 17 as a core analytical dimension, comparable in importance to other SDGs [25, 33].

Table 3. Synthesis of main SDGs

No.	Description	Number of Studies
1	No poverty	3
2	Zero hunger	5
3	Good health and well-being	4
4	Quality education	2
5	Gender equality	2
6	Clean water and sanitation	3
7	Affordable clean energy	3
8	Decent work and economic growth	2
9	Industry, innovation, and infrastructure	2
10	Reduced inequalities	2
11	Sustainable cities and communities	5
12	Responsible consumption and production	2
13	Climate action	4
14	Life below water	2
15	Life on land	3
16	Peace, justice, and strong institutions	2
17	Partnerships for the Goals	0
18	All (SDGs 1-17)	43

Source: Authors' own work

3.1.2 Determinants of SDGs implementation in government

Building on the mapping of SDGs research topics in the previous section, this study further synthesises the literature to identify the key determinants influencing SDG implementation in government. In line with the research questions outlined in the introduction, the first research question examines the factors influencing the implementation of the SDGs in government. Table 4 summarises the determinants identified in the reviewed studies.

The following table presents a range of determinants identified in the literature as factors influencing the performance and achievement of the SDGs, with empirical findings indicating positive, negative, and neutral effects. These determinants encompass a broad spectrum of influences, including government support and institutional capacity, digital transformation and e-government services, economic and resource-related conditions, environmental considerations, and socio-political dynamics.

Given the diversity of these determinants and their empirical outcomes, a conceptual approach is required to organise and synthesise them into a more coherent structure.

Accordingly, the identified determinants are grouped into higher-level categories to facilitate systematic analysis, reveal underlying patterns, and support the development of the more structured research framework. Table 5 presents the categorisation of determinants derived from the previously reported results.

Table 4. Determinants of SDGs implementation

No.	Determinants	Findings	Source
1	Government support	Positive	[11]
2	Digital government	Positive	[34]
3	Environmental principles	Positive	[17]
4	Socioeconomic	Positive	[35]
5	Environmental	Positive	[35]
6	IT security	Positive	[36]
7	Digital transformation	Positive	[36]
8	Economic growth	Positive	[37]
9	Human Development Index (HDI)	Positive	[37]
10	Environmental quality	Positive	[37]
11	Government effectiveness	Positive	[38]
12	SDG knowledge	Positive	[39]
13	Funding	Positive	[39]
14	Resource capacity	Positive	[39]
15	Subnational activism	Positive	[40]
16	Governance ideology	Positive	[41]
17	SDG disclosure policies	Positive	[42]
18	Policy innovation (Sanpiisan)	Positive	[43]
19	Government ownership	Positive	[44]
20	Pension funds	Positive	[44]
21	E-government services	Positive	[45]
22	Government revenue	Positive	[46]
23	Media campaigns	Positive	[47]
24	E-Government Development Index (EDGI) metrics	Positive	[48, 49]
25	Digital government initiatives	Positive	[48]
26	Governance mechanisms	Positive	[15]
27	National priorities	Positive	[14]
28	Archives	Positive	[50]
29	Top management initiatives	Positive	[51]
30	E-government initiatives	Positive	[52]
31	Conservation policies	Positive	[53]
32	Digital government transformation	Neutral	[22]
33	Housing provision	Negative	[54]
34	Political economy	Negative	[19]
35	Resource allocation	Negative	[19]
36	Federal conflict	Negative	[40]
37	Health expenditure	Positive / Negative	[55]

Source: Authors' own work

Based on the results above, it can be observed that not all previous studies include independent variables in their research models. This is primarily due to the presence of qualitative studies that focus on conceptual discussions of the SDGs, in which explicit independent variables (determinants) are not specified. Such studies are non-empirical in nature. For example, some prior research adopts qualitative in-depth interviews and document analysis [19], qualitative narrative analysis [18], or qualitative phenomenological approaches [54].

Following the identification of the main determinants, attention was subsequently directed towards the research designs underpinning these studies. To provide a clearer overview, the following table presents a synthesis of the research designs represented within the 60 studies included in the final analytical corpus. Records excluded during the full-

text eligibility stage were not included in this table.

The analysis of determinants presented in Table 4 indicates that SDG implementation in government is shaped by multiple, interrelated factors operating within complex institutional systems. Determinants such as government support, governance effectiveness, economic growth, the Human Development Index (HDI), environmental quality, resource capacity, and policy innovation consistently demonstrate positive contributions to SDG achievement [11, 37-39]. These findings reinforce existing literature emphasising the critical role of institutional capacity, political leadership, and policy support in advancing sustainable development [4, 25].

However, the review also reveals that not all determinants exert uniform effects. Several factors produce mixed outcomes, depending on governance arrangements and resource distribution. For instance, progress towards SDG

targets becomes constrained when housing provision is characterised by weak governance structures and inadequate financial support [54]. Similarly, interactions between economic and political systems, combined with unequal resource allocation, generate budgetary tensions between central and subnational governments [19, 40]. Health expenditure likewise yields divergent outcomes, largely reflecting differences in budget allocation mechanisms and spending efficiency.

Comparable patterns are observed for digital-related determinants. Digital transformation produces both positive and neutral effects, with outcomes strongly influenced by institutional readiness and the degree of policy alignment [22, 34, 36, 45]. Conceptually, these findings align with the categorisation of determinants into institutional, digital, economic, environmental, and socio-political dimensions, as summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Categorisation of SDGs determinants

No.	Determinant	Conceptual Description	Included Determinants (from the Table)	Overall Empirical Direction
1	Government and Institutional Capacity	The ability of governmental and institutional structures to support, coordinate, and govern SDG implementation effectively.	Government support; Government ownership; Governance mechanisms; Governance ideology; National priorities; Top management initiatives; Archives	Predominantly Positive
2	Digital Government and Technological Readiness	The extent to which digital technologies and e-government systems are adopted to enhance public service delivery, transparency, and SDG monitoring	Digital government; Digital government transformation; Digital transformation; Digital government initiatives, E-government services; E-government initiatives; EDGI metrics; IT security	Mostly Positive (with some neutral effects)
3	Economic, Financial, and Resource Capacity	The availability and management of financial, economic, and material resources supporting SDG implementation	Economic growth; Government revenue; Funding; Resource capacity; Resource allocation; Pension funds; Health expenditure	Mixed (Positive and Negative)
4	Environmental and Sustainability-Oriented Policies	Environmental principles and policy frameworks guiding sustainable development and resource conservation	Environmental principles; Environmental quality; Environmental factors; Conservation policies; Housing provision	Largely Positive (with identified trade-offs)
5	Socio-Political and Stakeholder Dynamics	Social, political, and stakeholder-related factors influencing SDG awareness, participation, and policy coherence.	Socioeconomic factors; HDI; Political economy; Subnational activism; Federal conflict; Media campaigns; SDG knowledge; SDG disclosure policies	Mixed (Positive and Negative)

Source: Authors' own work

Table 6. Synthesis of research designs in SDGs studies

No.	Research Design	Sources	Quantity
1	Case study analysis	[16, 24, 40, 50, 56]	5
2	Comparative analysis	[20, 34, 35, 42]	4
3	Content analysis	[14, 21, 57-60]	6
4	Mixed-methods approach	[45, 53, 61-63]	5
5	Qualitative study	[11, 15, 18, 19, 39, 43, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 64-70]	18
6	Quantitative analysis	[12, 13, 22, 36-38, 41, 44, 46, 49, 51, 71-80]	21
7	Normative juridical method	[17]	1
	Total		60

Source: Authors' own work

The observed diversity of empirical outcomes is also linked to variations in research design across the 60 studies reviewed, which employ quantitative, qualitative, and mixed or alternative methodological approaches (Table 6). Quantitative studies contribute to the identification of causal relationships and cross-national patterns, while qualitative approaches offer in-depth contextual insights into SDG implementation processes [12, 17, 39, 76]. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of methodological pluralism and extensive comparative analysis to capture the complexity and varied

effects of determinants influencing SDG implementation [21, 22].

3.1.3 Impact of SDGs implementation in government

Building on the analysis of determinants discussed in the previous section, this study examines how the implementation of the SDGs affects government operations. Accordingly, the findings are synthesised in Table 7 to address the second research question concerning the impacts of SDGs implementation in government.

Table 7. Synthesised impacts of SDGs implementation

No.	Impact	Source
1	SDG indicators	[11]
2	SDGs	[22, 36, 37]
3	Achievement of SDG 11	[54]
4	Environmental crisis mitigation	[17]
5	Sustainability performance	[35]
6	Life expectancy	[38]
7	Neonatal mortality rate	[55]
8	SDG localisation	[39]
9	SDG budgeting	[19]
10	SDG progress	[40, 52]
11	SDG 11 progress	[41]
12	Extent of disclosure	[42]
13	Reduction in maternal and child mortality rates	[43]
14	Corporate SDG commitment	[44]
15	SDG performance indicators	[46]
16	Health awareness and behavioural change	[47]
17	SDG performance efficiency	[49]
18	SDG outcomes	[48]
19	Value creation outcomes	[15]
20	SDG 16 targets	[50]
21	SDG practices	[51]
22	Water resource sustainability	[53]
23	SDG achievements	[13, 14, 22]

Source: Authors' own work

This study conceptualises SDG-related impacts as multidimensional dependent variables that capture both the performance and outcomes of sustainable development initiatives. Specifically, SDG impacts are categorised into five higher-order constructs: SDG performance measurement, SDG governance and implementation, urban and environmental sustainability outcomes, social and health development outcomes, and sustainable development and value creation outcomes. Together, these constructs reflect a comprehensive progression from the institutional embedding and governance of the SDGs, through performance assessment and monitoring, to tangible sectoral and societal outcomes. This categorisation enables a holistic evaluation of how SDG-oriented policies and practices translate into measurable performance improvements and long-term sustainable development benefits. Table 8 presents the categorisation of SDG impacts as dependent variables, forming the conceptual basis for the analysis of SDG implementation outcomes in government.

Table 8. Categorisation of SDG impacts as dependent variables

No.	Proposed Dependent Variable	Conceptual Definition	Included Impacts
1	SDG Performance Measurement	The extent to which SDG-related initiatives are assessed, monitored, and reported through indicators, efficiency metrics, and disclosure mechanisms.	SDG indicators; SDG performance indicators; SDG performance efficiency; Sustainability performance; SDG progress; SDG 11 progress; Extent of disclosure.
2	SDG Governance and Implementation	The degree to which the SDGs are embedded in organisational and governmental systems through policies, practices, commitments, budgeting, and governance frameworks.	SDGs (general); SDG practices; Corporate SDG commitment; SDG budgeting; SDG localisation; SDG 16 targets (peace, justice, and governance).
3	Urban and Environmental Sustainability Outcomes	The outcomes of SDG implementation related to sustainable urban development, environmental protection, and natural resource management.	Achievement of SDG 11; SDG 11 progress; Environmental crisis mitigation; Water resource sustainability.
4	Social and Health Development Outcomes	Improvements in population health, well-being, and social conditions resulting from SDG-related interventions.	Life expectancy; Neonatal mortality rates; Reduction in maternal and child mortality rates; Health awareness and behavioural change.
5	Sustainable Development and Value Creation Outcomes	Long-term societal and economic value generated through successful SDG implementation and achievement.	SDG outcomes; SDG achievements; Value creation outcomes.

Source: Authors' own work

3.1.4 SDGs research themes in government

Building on the analysis of SDG implementation impacts discussed in the previous section, this section explores the evolution of research themes and theoretical approaches to SDG governance in government. To address this research question, the analysis synthesises findings according to three key dimensions: the development of SDG-related theories within government studies, the geographical distribution of SDG research, and the presentation of keyword co-occurrence maps generated using the VOSviewer application.

First, a synthesis is conducted on the development of SDG theories in government by identifying the theoretical frameworks applied in previous studies. This approach aims to trace how the use of theory in SDG-related government research has evolved over time (Table 9).

The classifications presented in Table 9 include both theories explicitly stated in the original studies and broader conceptual lenses inferred from the analytical framing of the reviewed literature. The findings indicate that existing SDG-related studies are predominantly grounded in governance, accountability, and institutional theories, underscoring the central role of institutional structures, policy coordination, and accountability mechanisms in shaping SDG performance and outcomes. This theoretical concentration closely reflects the dominant determinant categories identified in the literature, particularly government and institutional capacity and digital government and technological readiness, and aligns with the dependent variables of SDG governance and implementation and SDG performance measurement. Consequently, much of the literature prioritises how SDGs are governed, monitored, and legitimised, rather than addressing the broader spectrum of developmental impacts. Although sustainability, health, environmental, and value creation theories are present, their relatively limited application suggests that urban and environmental sustainability outcomes, social and health development outcomes, and sustainable development and value creation outcomes remain under-theorised. This imbalance highlights a clear theoretical gap and indicates the need for future research to integrate governance-oriented perspectives with economic, environmental, and socio-political determinants, as well as sustainability transition and value creation theories, in order to better explain how SDG governance mechanisms translate into tangible and long-term societal outcomes.

Table 9. Synthesis of research theories on SDGs in government

No.	Theory	Source	Quantity
1	Accountability Theory	[78]	1
2	Agenda-Setting Theory	[47]	1
3	Biosphere-Based Sustainability Theory	[63]	1
4	Descriptive Theory	[13]	1
5	Diffusion of Innovation Theory	[43]	1
6	Digital Transformation Theory	[48]	1
7	Economic Development Theory	[73]	1
8	Economic Feasibility Theory	[72]	1
9	E-Governance Theory	[45, 52, 59, 62]	4
10	Environmental Law Theory	[17]	1
11	Governance and Accountability Theory	[50, 59]	2
12	Governance Theory	[61]	1
13	Governance through Goals Theory	[14, 62]	2
14	Health Economics	[55, 69]	2
15	Health System Theory	[67]	1
16	Institutional Theory	[20, 44]	2
17	Legitimacy Theory	[78]	2
18	Local Governance Theory	[57]	1
19	Natural Resource-Based View (NRBV) Theory	[51]	1
20	Political Economy of Accounting (PEA)	[19, 69]	2
21	Project Management Theory	[70]	1
22	Public Finance Theory	[46]	1
23	Public Sector Accountability Theory	[65]	1
24	Public Value Creation Theory	[49]	1
25	Resource-Based View (RBV)	[79]	1
26	Stakeholder Theory	[70]	1
27	Sustainability and Policy Governance Theory	[53, 69]	2
28	Sustainability Transition Theory	[16]	1
29	Sustainable Development Theory	[56]	1
30	Value Creation Theory	[15]	1

Source: Authors' own work

Table 10. Geographical distribution of SDG research

No.	Area	Quantity	Location	Source
1	West Africa	5	Nigeria	[47, 50, 56, 67]
			West Africa	[74]
2	North Africa	2	Algeria	[11]
			Egypt	[45]
3	Latin America	1	Latin America	[58]
4	South America	2	Brazil	[40, 62]
5	South Asia	11	Pakistan	[38, 51, 52, 71, 79]
			India	[18, 68, 69, 73]
			Nepal	[66]
			Bangladesh	[39]
6	Southeast Asia	9	Indonesia	[13, 17, 19, 37, 43, 53, 72, 77]
			Malaysia	[54]
7	East Asia	7	China	[21, 55, 75, 80]
			Japan	[16]
			South Korea	[24, 35]
8	Europe	1	European Union	[65]
9	Western Europe	3	Germany	[59, 61]
			Belgium	[60]
10	Southern Europe	6	Spain	[36, 41, 64, 78]
			Italy, Spain	[20, 42]
11	Northern Europe	1	Norway	[63]
12	Europe-West Asia	1	Turkey	[57]
13	Europe-North Asia	1	Russia	[70]
14	Global	9	Global	[12, 14, 22, 34, 44, 46, 48, 49, 76]
15	Oceania	1	Australia	[15]
	Total	60		

Source: Authors' own work

Second, the synthesis addressing the third research question focuses on the geographical distribution of SDG-related research. This analysis is based on the locations from which research data were collected. The results provide a mapping of

the number of SDG studies conducted in government across different countries, offering an overview of the global distribution of this research. Table 10 presents the geographical distribution of studies included in the final

remain peripheral over time. Moreover, it confirms an acceleration of SDG-related research in government in recent years and reveals a thematic shift that aligns closely with the urgency of achieving the 2030 Agenda. The discussion next turns to Figure 4, which presents the density visualisation.

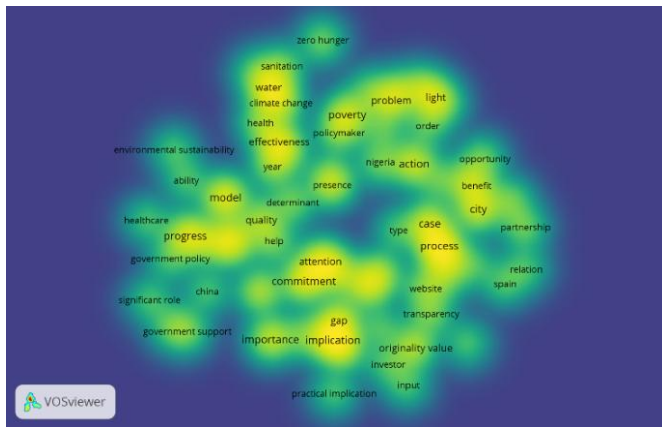


Figure 4. Density visualisation
Source: VOSviewer application tool

Figure 4 presents the density visualisation of the keyword co-occurrence network, highlighting the relative concentration and prominence of research themes within the SDG literature. In this visualisation, areas with higher keyword density are indicated by warmer colours, reflecting themes that are more frequently addressed and more strongly interconnected.

The highest density regions are centred on keywords related to poverty, climate change, water, sanitation, health, and government policy, indicating that these issues constitute the core focus of existing research. Additional dense areas emerge around terms associated with commitment, progress, process, transparency, and policy implications, suggesting sustained

scholarly attention to governance processes and implementation dynamics.

In contrast, keywords located in lower-density areas appear more dispersed and less interconnected, signalling topics that receive comparatively limited attention within the literature. Overall, the density visualisation reinforces earlier findings by demonstrating that SDG governance research is heavily concentrated on development challenges and institutional processes, while other substantively important issues remain less central in the prevailing research landscape. While the predominance of governance and accountability theories underscores the central role of institutional arrangements in SDG implementation, this concentration also narrows the analytical lens through which SDG outcomes are understood. As a result, SDG implementation is frequently assessed in terms of procedural compliance and governance capacity rather than substantive development outcomes, potentially limiting the ability of existing frameworks to capture long-term social, environmental, and value creation effects.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the SLR, Figure 5 presents the conceptual framework of this study as an integrative synthesis of the principal dimensions identified in the literature on SDG implementation in government. Rather than representing a causal model or a uniformly tested set of relationships, the framework is intended to consolidate the main determinant categories, governance-related concerns, theoretical orientations, contextual conditions, and multidimensional impact domains emerging from the reviewed corpus. In this sense, the figure provides an analytical overview of how SDG implementation in government has been framed in the existing literature.

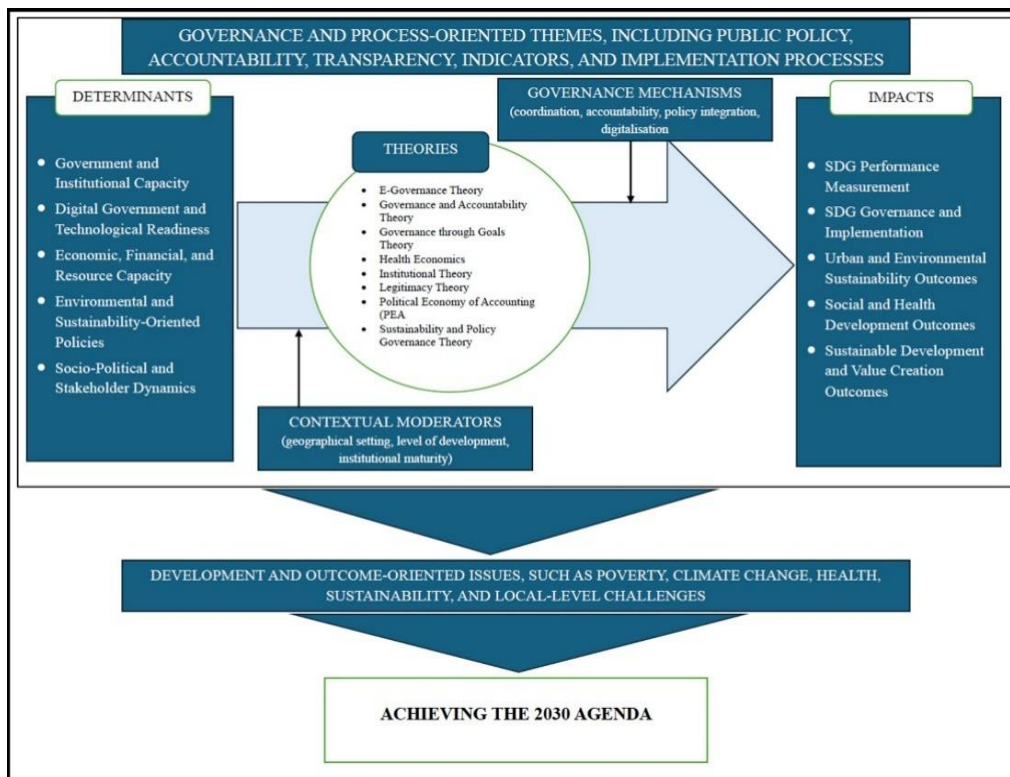


Figure 5. Conceptual framework
Source: Authors' own work

With respect to the first research question, the review highlights five broad categories of determinants: government and institutional capacity, digital government and technological readiness, economic and resource capacity, environmental and sustainability-oriented policies, and socio-political and stakeholder dynamics. Across the reviewed literature, coordination, accountability, policy integration, and digitalisation appear as the governance-related mechanisms most frequently identified in relation to SDG implementation in government (see Table 4 and Table 5). These mechanisms are particularly visible in studies concerned with planning alignment, monitoring arrangements, institutional effectiveness, localisation processes, and public service delivery. However, the reviewed corpus also varies considerably in methodological design and analytical orientation. As a result, these governance-related mechanisms should not be interpreted as uniformly tested causal pathways, but rather as prominent patterns emerging from a diverse body of literature.

This distinction is important because some mechanisms in the framework appear to be more firmly grounded in the reviewed studies than others. Coordination, accountability, policy integration, and digitalisation are comparatively well represented across the corpus, whereas other mechanisms, particularly those related to cross-sector partnerships and inter-goal interaction, appear to be more strongly developed at the conceptual and normative level than as direct and systematically examined empirical objects. In this respect, the literature appears to have progressed further in identifying governance-related concerns surrounding implementation than in empirically specifying the relational mechanisms through which different goals, actors, and institutional arenas interact.

In this regard, the review broadly supports Stafford-Smith et al.'s argument that integration is an important condition for implementation [6]. Much of the reviewed literature points to the need for alignment across policy domains, administrative coordination, and the reduction of sectoral fragmentation in order to support SDG implementation within government settings. At the same time, the review suggests that integration is more often discussed in administrative and governance terms than operationalised through explicit empirical analysis of interactions among goals. This observation is particularly relevant to Nilsson's interaction framework [8, 9]. Although the language of coherence, interdependence, and integration is clearly present in the literature, government-focused studies more commonly operationalise implementation through indicators, disclosure practices, institutional arrangements, localisation processes, and sector-specific outcomes. Consequently, interaction-oriented perspectives appear to remain more visible as conceptual reference points than as consistently applied empirical frameworks within this body of research.

The findings further suggest that the relationship between determinants and SDG-related impacts is not uniformly linear. Several determinants appear to operate in conditional, uneven, and context-sensitive ways, and may involve trade-offs across institutional settings. Economic and resource-related conditions, for example, may facilitate implementation in some contexts while generating tensions in others, depending on fiscal arrangements, administrative capacity, and the distribution of authority across levels of government. Similarly, digital transformation is associated in the reviewed literature with both enabling and more limited outcomes,

indicating that its effects are shaped by institutional readiness and policy alignment rather than by technological adoption alone. In this sense, determinant–impact relationships may be non-linear, occasionally bidirectional, and at times shaped by competing priorities and unintended consequences.

This point is also relevant to the possibility of over-governance. While coordination, reporting, and accountability arrangements are widely discussed as supportive conditions for implementation, their expansion may also generate administrative complexity and compliance burdens for implementing agencies. In such circumstances, procedural alignment may be strengthened without necessarily improving adaptive problem-solving or local responsiveness. The effects of governance-related reforms should therefore be interpreted with caution and in relation to institutional maturity, governance capacity, and contextual variation.

With regard to the second research question, the reviewed literature indicates that the impacts of SDG implementation are multidimensional, encompassing performance measurement, governance and implementation outcomes, urban and environmental sustainability outcomes, social and health development outcomes, and broader sustainable development and value creation outcomes. At the same time, the literature appears to place greater emphasis on governance and performance-related dimensions than on longer-term developmental transformation, suggesting that some impact domains remain less fully developed in the existing research.

With regard to the third research question, the review also reveals thematic, theoretical, and geographical unevenness across the literature. Governance, accountability, and institutional perspectives remain especially visible, while empirical attention is concentrated in particular regional and policy settings. These patterns underline the importance of contextual conditions such as geographical setting, level of development, and institutional maturity in shaping how SDG implementation is interpreted and assessed.

A particularly important blind spot concerns SDG 17. Although partnerships are widely recognised as enabling conditions for the implementation of the broader SDG agenda, they remain largely absent as a primary empirical focus in the reviewed literature. This absence is noteworthy, given that the indivisible character of the 2030 Agenda would appear to require precisely the forms of collaboration, shared responsibility, and cross-sector coordination that SDG 17 foregrounds. One plausible explanation is that partnerships are often treated as background conditions, governance aspirations, or enabling assumptions rather than as directly measurable outcomes in their own right. In this respect, the limited empirical attention devoted to SDG 17 appears consistent with Gupta and Vegelin's [5] critique regarding the relative neglect of partnership, responsibility, and liability within SDG governance debates.

Taken together, these findings suggest that Figure 5 should be read as a review-derived conceptual framework that consolidates the principal patterns emerging from the literature while also reflecting the unevenness of the evidence base. Its purpose is not to present a fully specified explanatory model, but to simplify and integrate the main determinants, mechanisms, contextual conditions, and impact domains through which SDG implementation in government has been examined in the reviewed corpus. In doing so, it highlights the need for future research to move beyond predominantly process-oriented analyses towards more empirically grounded, context-sensitive, and theoretically integrated investigations

capable of clarifying how public governance arrangements contribute to durable SDG outcomes in support of the 2030 Agenda.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In line with the objectives articulated in the Introduction, this study set out to systematically synthesise how the SDGs are implemented in government, the key determinants shaping this process, the impacts of SDG implementation, and the evolution of research themes and theoretical perspectives underpinning SDG governance. Through a SLR, the study addressed these aims by integrating fragmented evidence into a coherent analytical framework that links determinants, governance mechanisms, and implementation outcomes across diverse governmental contexts.

Addressing the first research question, the findings demonstrate that SDG implementation is shaped by a constellation of institutional, digital, economic, environmental, and socio-political determinants that operate through governance mechanisms such as coordination, accountability, policy integration, and digitalisation. These findings suggest that effective SDG implementation is less a function of isolated policy commitments than a reflection of underlying governance capacity and institutional alignment. In response to the second research question, the study shows that SDG impacts are inherently multidimensional, encompassing performance measurement, governance and implementation outcomes, as well as broader social, environmental, and value creation effects.

With regard to the third research question, the analysis reveals a clear thematic, theoretical, and geographical imbalance in the existing literature, characterised by a strong emphasis on governance and accountability perspectives and a concentration of empirical studies in specific regions. This pattern highlights the limited theorisation of outcome-oriented dimensions of SDG implementation and underscores the need for more context-sensitive and comparative research. The proposed conceptual framework synthesises these insights by explicitly linking determinants, governance mechanisms, and impacts, while accounting for contextual moderators such as geographical setting, level of development, and institutional maturity.

While this study provides a structured and integrative perspective on SDG implementation in government, its conclusions must be interpreted in light of the inherent complexity and contextual variability of SDG governance. Differences in institutional arrangements, policy priorities, and cross-sectoral interactions limit the direct transferability of findings across settings. Nevertheless, the framework offers a flexible analytical foundation for future empirical research. Advancing this agenda will require broader geographical coverage, the application of mixed and comparative methodologies, and stronger integration of governance-oriented theories with sustainability transition and value creation perspectives to better explain how SDG governance can contribute to durable development outcomes in the lead-up to the 2030 Agenda.

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APPENDIX

Supplemental Material: Corpus Justification and Public-

Governance Relevance Classification

This supplementary material provides a transparent audit trail for the final analytical corpus used in this review. Table A1 presents the 60 studies included in the synthesis and classifies each study according to its public-governance relevance classification. The classification distinguishes between direct public-governance studies and governance-adjacent SDG implementation studies. Table A2 presents the boundary-case study excluded during full-text assessment and explains the rationale for its exclusion, thereby clarifying the operational boundary between eligible governance-related studies and non-eligible organisational or civil-society SDG implementation contexts.

Table A1. Corpus justification for the included studies

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
1	[11]	Article	This study examines government support and subsidy policies in Algeria, assessing their long-term effect on SDG achievement from 2000 to 2022 using an ARDL model.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the role of Algerian government subsidy policies and state support mechanisms in advancing SDG achievement. Its primary analytical focus concerns public policy intervention, fiscal subsidy systems, and government-led support arrangements, with state intervention treated as the central explanatory factor influencing national SDG performance.
2	[12]	Article	This study conducts a cross-country analysis of quality of government, democracy, and well-being as determinants of aggregate SDG achievement across 163 countries, using multiple linear regression.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how government effectiveness, institutional quality, democratic governance, and welfare regimes influence progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Its primary analytical focus concerns public governance, institutional capacity, democratic institutions, welfare-state arrangements, and the role of governance quality in shaping national SDG performance.
3	[13]	Article	This study examines SDG reporting and achievement measurement in Indonesian provincial regional governments, using secondary data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency and comparing provincial SDG achievements with national-level SDG achievements.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines SDG implementation, reporting, and performance measurement within Indonesian provincial governments. Its primary analytical focus concerns government-led SDG implementation, intergovernmental coordination between provincial and central authorities, and institutional accountability through public-sector SDG reporting and statistical measurement systems.
4	[14]	Article	This study analyses how national governments prioritise selected SDGs in national implementation, using content analysis of Voluntary National Reviews from 19 countries and qualitative case studies of Bhutan and Vietnam, with implications for global governance.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines national government prioritisation of SDGs and its implications for global governance. Its primary analytical focus concerns national SDG governance, policy coherence, goal prioritisation, governance through goals, Voluntary National Review processes, institutional steering mechanisms, multilevel governance coordination, and the role of international organisations in influencing national SDG implementation through technical and financing assistance.
5	[15]	Article	This study conceptualises how national governments can create social and economic value through SDG implementation, using literature on accountability, public policy, and sustainability together with evidence from the Australian Senate inquiry on the SDGs.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines national governance and accountability processes required for SDG implementation. Its primary analytical focus concerns national SDG governance, public-sector accountability, transparency mechanisms, stakeholder participation, performance measurement, reporting systems, central policy co-ordination, government oversight of business responses, and institutional mechanisms for creating social and economic value through SDG implementation.
6	[16]	Article	This study examines the role of local governments as intermediaries in facilitating	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments facilitate multi-stakeholder and public-private partnerships for SDG localisation. Its

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			partnerships for SDG localisation, based on 18 Japanese SDGs Future City case studies, SDG-related policy documents, and interviews with local government officials.		primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, intermediary roles of local governments, SDG localisation, public-private partnerships, stakeholder coordination, policy implementation, resource mobilisation, knowledge sharing, and the role of local governments in enabling sustainable transitions through partnership-based governance. Included because the study directly examines the Indonesian government's legal and institutional responsibilities in addressing environmental degradation within the context of sustainable development. Its primary analytical focus concerns environmental governance, government accountability, regulatory enforcement, and legal reform aimed at strengthening state responsibility and environmental protection.
7	[17]	Article	This study analyses Indonesian government responsibility for environmental degradation and sustainable development, focusing on environmental law, civil liability, government accountability, and legal reconstruction.	Direct public-governance study	
8	[18]	Article	This study examines the problems, challenges, and viable perspectives of Indian rural local governments in achieving the SDGs, with particular attention to Panchayati Raj Institutions, decentralisation, local capacity, financial constraints, human resources, women's participation, and digital access.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the role, institutional capacity, and governance constraints of rural local governments in implementing SDGs in India. Its primary analytical focus concerns decentralised governance, Panchayati Raj Institutions, rural public administration, local service delivery systems, fiscal and institutional capacity, and the localisation of SDG implementation through grassroots government institutions.
9	[19]	Article	This study uses a political economy of accounting analysis to examine how conflicts of interest, actor relations, and resource allocation shape SDG integration into local government budgeting in Indonesia.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines SDG localisation within Indonesian local government budgeting and planning processes. Its primary analytical focus concerns public-sector budgeting, local government governance, intergovernmental coordination, political economy dynamics, resource allocation, and the institutional challenges of integrating SDG commitments into local budgeting and policy implementation systems.
10	[20]	Article	This study examines enabling political and financial conditions for SDG achievement in Italian and Spanish local governments, using a comparative analysis of municipalities based on SDG implementation indicators grouped into the five critical areas of People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership for 2018 and 2020.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments implement and pursue SDGs through political, financial, and administrative enabling conditions. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal administration, SDG localisation, public financial management, political coalitions, fiscal capacity, local policy implementation, and the governance conditions enabling local governments to translate the 2030 Agenda into municipal strategies and sustainable development actions.
11	[21]	Article	This study conducts a comparative analysis of government and public engagement with the SDGs in China, using multi-source data, content analysis, and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to assess SDG priorities and implementation gaps.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines government-led SDG prioritisation, policy attention, and implementation performance in China. Its primary analytical focus concerns governance coordination between government and public stakeholders, policy gap analysis, and evidence-informed assessment of SDG implementation priorities in advancing the 2030 Agenda.
12	[22]	Article	This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of the relationship between digital government transformation and the SDGs, examining the extent to which sustainable development goals are integrated into digital government transformation discourses.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the relationship between digital government transformation and SDG implementation within the context of public administration and governance. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, government transformation agendas, institutional governance capacity, and the extent to which digital government systems support or neglect specific SDGs.
13	[24]	Article	This study examines the role of local governments in SDG localisation and development cooperation, using network governance theory and case studies of Gyeongsangbukdo Province and	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines local-government roles, network governance, and central-local government relations in the SDG era. Its primary analytical focus concerns SDG localisation, multilevel governance, network-based public governance, local-government capacity, decentralised development

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			Daegu Metropolitan City in South Korea.		cooperation, stakeholder partnerships, local ODA governance, central-local policy coordination, and the role of local governments in implementing SDGs through collaborative and network-governance mechanisms.
14	[34]	Article	This study examines how digital government measurement instruments can contribute to monitoring SDG implementation, using an alignment analysis between digital government indicators and selected SDG indicators.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines digital government as a public-governance mechanism and means of implementation for the SDGs. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, SDG monitoring systems, public-sector data infrastructures, institutional measurement frameworks, data-driven decision-making, accountability mechanisms, governance through digital indicators, and the role of digital-government systems in supporting institutional capacity and SDG implementation.
15	[35]	Article	This study develops and evaluates a local SDG indicator index for 31 local governments in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea, using surveys, focus group meetings, indicator standardisation, and fuzzy-set analysis to assess local sustainability performance and policy priorities.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines SDG localisation through local-government indicator development, monitoring, and evaluation in Gyeonggi Province. Its primary analytical focus concerns public governance, SDG localisation, indicator-based governance, vertical policy coordination, local priority-setting, accountability mechanisms, evidence-based policymaking, and the role of local governments in implementing and monitoring sustainable development goals.
16	[36]	Article	This study examines digital transformation in Spanish local governments and its influence on SDG implementation and local-government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, using questionnaire data from 124 local governments analysed through partial least squares structural equation modelling.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how digital transformation, IT skills, facilitating conditions, and IT security within local governments shape public-service delivery, pandemic response, and SDG implementation. Its primary analytical focus concerns local government governance, digital public administration, e-government, IT security governance, public-sector capacity, administrative transformation, service effectiveness, and the role of digital transformation in strengthening local government capacity for SDG implementation.
17	[37]	Article	This study examines Good Government Governance as a moderating factor in the relationship between economic growth, human development, environmental quality, and SDG achievement across 34 Indonesian provinces during 2018–2021.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the role of Good Government Governance in supporting SDG achievement across Indonesian provinces. Its primary analytical focus concerns provincial public governance, governance quality, accountability and transparency mechanisms, and the capacity of governance systems to connect the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development.
18	[38]	Article	This study examines government effectiveness, health expenditure, and SDG achievement as determinants of life expectancy in Pakistan using time-series data for 2000–2020.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines government effectiveness and public health expenditure as public governance mechanisms influencing SDG-linked population health outcomes in Pakistan. Its primary analytical focus concerns public-sector performance, healthcare governance, public resource allocation, and the role of government capacity in improving life expectancy within the context of sustainable development.
19	[39]	Article	This study examines SDG localisation in Bangladesh through local governments, using in-depth interviews with Union Council chairmen, SWOT analysis of local government capacity, and the development of an inclusive framework for SDG implementation at the local level.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the role, capacity, strengths, weaknesses, and institutional constraints of local governments in localising and implementing the SDGs in Bangladesh. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, decentralisation, local government capacity, stakeholder participation, SDG localisation, inclusive governance, local policy implementation, institutional strengthening, and the role of Union Councils in translating national SDG commitments into local development practice.
20	[40]	Article	This study analyses the international engagement and environmental activism of Brazilian subnational governments	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines subnational government action, federal–subnational conflict, paradiplomacy, and intergovernmental governance in relation to the SDG agenda in Brazil.

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			in the SDG agenda during the first year of Jair Bolsonaro's administration, focusing on the Northeast and Legal Amazon Consortia and their conflicts with federal foreign policy.		Its primary analytical focus concerns multilevel governance, subnational environmental activism, interstate cooperation, federalism, international partnership mobilisation, SDG localisation, environmental governance, and the role of subnational governments in challenging and reshaping sustainable development governance under conditions of intergovernmental conflict.
21	[41]	Article	This study assesses the commitment of 58 Spanish local governments to SDG 11 during 2014–2018, using X-STATIS multivariate analysis to examine municipal performance across urban sustainability indicators and the influence of political ideology and intergovernmental ideological alignment.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines local-government commitment to SDG 11 and the political factors shaping its implementation in Spanish municipalities. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, urban SDG localisation, political leadership, intergovernmental ideological alignment, municipal policy implementation, sustainable urban governance, citizen participation, urban security, and the role of local governments in advancing sustainable urban development through SDG-oriented policy priorities and governance practices.
22	[42]	Article	This study examines online SDG disclosure by Italian and Spanish local governments, using manual content analysis of official websites of local governments with more than 100,000 inhabitants and comparative analysis of the extent and quality of SDG-related information disclosure.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments disclose, communicate, and demonstrate accountability for SDG-related actions through official public-sector websites. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, public-sector accountability, transparency mechanisms, online sustainability disclosure, SDG reporting, municipal communication, and the role of local governments in aligning public-sector strategies and public disclosure practices with the 2030 Agenda.
23	[43]	Conference paper	This study examines local government innovation in Kota Semarang to support SDG achievement through the SANPIISAN maternal and child health programme, using qualitative interviews with key policy actors and diffusion of innovation theory.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines a local government policy innovation designed to support SDG-related maternal and child health outcomes in Kota Semarang. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance mechanisms, policy diffusion, stakeholder coordination, integrated programme implementation, and the role of local government institutions in advancing SDG 3 through coordinated maternal and child health services.
24	[44]	Article	This study examines the influence of government and pension-fund institutional ownership on business commitment to the SDGs among 4,089 multinational companies from 2015 to 2018, using panel-data Tobit regression and moderation analysis of firm internationalisation and industry sensitivity to stakeholder pressures.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines government ownership and institutional investor mechanisms influencing corporate alignment with the SDGs. Although its primary analytical focus concerns corporate SDG engagement rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how government ownership, institutional investor pressure, stakeholder pressures, and ownership structures shape business commitment to the 2030 Agenda. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on government ownership influence, institutional investment, corporate sustainability strategies, and SDG-oriented business implementation.
25	[45]	Article	This study proposes and tests a model for enhancing e-government services in Egypt to support SDG achievement, focusing on the National Election Authority's services and a blockchain-based e-voting prototype as a case of digital public-service improvement.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the relationship between e-government services and SDG achievement in Egypt, with specific attention to public-sector digital service provision, the National Election Authority, stakeholder participation, and the improvement of electoral services through blockchain-based e-voting. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, e-government, public-sector digital transformation, electoral-service administration, stakeholder participation, transparency enhancement, public-sector efficiency, and the role of technology-enabled governance mechanisms in supporting SDG implementation.
26	[46]	Article	This study models the relationship	Direct public-	Included because the study directly examines how

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			between government revenue per capita, quality of governance, and progress towards selected SDG targets across 217 countries, focusing on water, sanitation, education, and immunisation as core determinants of health and survival.	governance study	government revenue and governance quality shape progress towards SDG-related public-service outcomes across countries. Its primary analytical focus concerns fiscal capacity, governance quality, government effectiveness, corruption control, regulatory quality, rule of law, and other governance dimensions as mechanisms that influence the achievement of SDG targets. The study is therefore directly relevant to the synthesis of public financing, institutional quality, and governance capacity in SDG implementation.
27	[47]	Article	This study reviews the role of government, mass media, myths, and misconceptions in shaping public awareness of sickle cell disease in Nigeria, focusing on health education and communication barriers to achieving SDG 3 on healthy lives and well-being.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines public communication, government-supported health education, media-governance conditions, and awareness campaigns in addressing sickle cell disease as part of SDG 3 implementation in Nigeria. Although its primary analytical focus concerns health communication and public misconceptions rather than public governance itself, the study analyses government responsibility, media policy constraints, public-interest communication, and awareness-based intervention mechanisms for improving health outcomes. Its relevance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on public communication, health-education initiatives, media-related governance conditions, and governance-adjacent mechanisms supporting SDG implementation.
28	[48]	Conference paper	This study maps digital government research against the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, based on a review of 291 studies, to identify empirical foci, research gaps, and future research questions on digital government for sustainable development.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines digital government as a governance mechanism for supporting the SDG agenda. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, public-sector digital transformation, online participation, public service delivery, policy-making processes, data governance, digital-government platforms, institutional innovation, and the role of digital-government systems in supporting SDG implementation and governance transformation.
29	[49]	Article	This study re-evaluates the Electronic Government Development Index across 193 countries using Shannon entropy, TOPSIS, and data envelopment analysis to assess how digital government performance can support transformation towards SDG achievement.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines electronic government development as a public-governance mechanism supporting SDG implementation across countries. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, public-sector digital transformation, digital infrastructure governance, online public-service delivery, governance benchmarking, administrative efficiency, governance effectiveness, human-capital capacity, and the role of electronic government systems in improving SDG-related public-sector performance and governance outcomes.
30	[50]	Article	This study examines the role of archives in supporting the realisation of SDG 16 in Nigeria, focusing on accountability, transparency, access to information, anti-corruption efforts, and the strengthening of public institutions.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how archival institutions support government efforts to realise SDG 16 on peace, justice, and strong institutions in Nigeria. Its primary analytical focus concerns information governance, records governance, public-sector accountability, transparency mechanisms, public access to information, anti-corruption processes, documentary evidence systems, institutional capacity, and the role of archival institutions in strengthening governance processes and accountable public institutions.
31	[51]	Article	This study examines how top management support influences environmental and community-based SDG practices among 313 Pakistani SMEs, with green supply chain management tested as a mediating mechanism and government support as a	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines the role of government support in facilitating SMEs' adoption of green supply chain management and SDG-related environmental and community practices. Although its primary analytical focus concerns SME management and green supply chain practices rather than public governance itself, the study analyses

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			moderating factor.		government support, regulatory facilitation, public-sector assistance, and institutional-support mechanisms as enabling conditions for private-sector contributions to SDG implementation. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on government-enabled green supply chain practices, public-support instruments, regulatory-support mechanisms, and governance-adjacent mechanisms supporting SDG achievement.
32	[52]	Conference paper	This study identifies e-government services and initiatives in Pakistan that support SDG implementation, focusing on NITB, NADRA, and other government web portals for citizen-oriented public service delivery.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines e-government as a public-governance mechanism for supporting SDG implementation in Pakistan. Its primary analytical focus concerns digital public governance, ICT-enabled public administration, institutional digital-service delivery, government-to-citizen interaction, open-data governance, public-service modernisation, e-government implementation barriers, and the role of digital-government systems in strengthening administrative capacity and SDG implementation.
33	[53]	Article	This study examines local government policy on water resources conservation in Kuningan Regency, Indonesia, using qualitative and quantitative methods to assess conservation-based regulations, development planning, implementation, and community participation in support of SDG objectives.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines local government policy and regulatory instruments for water resources conservation in relation to SDG implementation in Kuningan Regency, Indonesia. Its primary analytical focus concerns local environmental governance, conservation-based regulatory frameworks, water-resource policy, conservation-based planning and licensing, implementation and evaluation mechanisms, sanitation governance, ecosystem-management initiatives, community participation, and the role of local governments in achieving sustainable water and ecosystem management through conservation-oriented governance practices.
34	[54]	Article	This study examines low-cost housing provision in Malaysia as a form of government social responsibility towards achieving SDG 11, based on stakeholders' perspectives across four major Malaysian cities.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the government-led low-cost housing provision as part of SDG 11 implementation in Malaysia. Its primary analytical focus concerns public housing policy, institutional and regulatory constraints, intergovernmental coordination, and state-led implementation mechanisms to affordable housing delivery and sustainable urban development.
35	[55]	Article	This study examines the relationship between government health expenditure and neonatal mortality in China, using graphical, descriptive, and econometric analysis of secondary data for 2000–2021.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because it examines government health expenditure as a public financing mechanism associated with SDG 3 health outcomes. The study does not analyse governance processes, institutional arrangements, or public-sector governance systems; instead, it focuses on the statistical relationship between public health expenditure and neonatal mortality in China. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and is limited to evidence on public financing as a state-led input shaping SDG-related health outcomes.
36	[56]	Article	This study examines transportation challenges affecting agricultural produce distribution and SDG 2 achievement in Esan-West Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria, using questionnaire data from 200 farmers, Likert-scale analysis, and Pearson's product-moment correlation.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines rural transport infrastructure and agricultural distribution constraints as implementation conditions affecting SDG 2 achievement at the local government area level. Although its primary analytical focus concerns agricultural transportation and food-security outcomes rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how transport accessibility, rural infrastructure, market access, and agricultural conditions shape the attainment of zero hunger and sustainable rural development. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on transport infrastructure, rural service accessibility, agricultural distribution systems, and

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
					SDG 2 implementation conditions.
37	[57]	Article	This study examines local government potential for achieving the SDGs in Türkiye, using content analysis of 382 strategic plans from 331 municipalities and 51 Special Provincial Administrations covering the 2020–2024 period.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments in Türkiye translate the SDGs into formal strategic planning priorities and institutional commitments. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal and provincial administration, strategic planning systems, SDG localisation, policy prioritisation, governance practices, and the role of local government institutions in advancing sustainable development governance.
38	[58]	Article	This study examines the determinants of online transparency on sustainability among 200 large local governments in 18 Latin American countries, using content analysis of municipal websites and statistical analysis of idiosyncratic and systemic factors influencing disclosure.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines local-government transparency as a governance mechanism supporting SDG achievement. Its primary analytical focus concerns public-sector transparency, accountability mechanisms, digital governance, sustainability disclosure, transparency legislation, corruption-related governance conditions, local-government capacity, and the role of online public-sector information disclosure in supporting SDG implementation.
39	[59]	Article	This study analyses information dissemination related to the SDGs on the official governmental websites of the 15 largest German cities, using content analysis to examine local commitment, thematic priorities, citizen participation, and partnerships.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments communicate and support SDG localisation through their official governmental websites in German cities. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal digital governance, e-government-based information dissemination, transparency mechanisms, citizen participation, partnership-based governance, public awareness-raising, and the role of local governments in implementing the Agenda 2030 through digital communication and municipal engagement practices.
40	[60]	Article	This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SDG implementation by Flemish local governments, using survey data from 130 cities and municipalities and a counterfactual assessment of SDG implementation before, during, and after the crisis.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments adjusted, prioritised, accelerated, slowed, and postponed SDG implementation activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal administration, SDG implementation processes, crisis governance, public-sector prioritisation, organisational adaptation, institutional resilience, and the capacity of local government institutions to sustain Agenda 2030 implementation during and after the pandemic.
41	[61]	Article	This study examines policy integration through the SDGs in the German Federal Government, using statistical analysis, network analysis of ministerial press releases, and semi-structured interviews to assess horizontal, vertical, and sectoral integration.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines whether and how the SDGs strengthen policy integration within national sustainability policymaking in the German Federal Government. Its primary analytical focus concerns federal governance arrangements, inter-ministerial coordination, policy integration, institutional mechanisms, multi-level governance, participatory governance processes, and the integrative governance effects of the SDGs on national sustainability governance.
42	[62]	Article	This study examines the alignment of São Paulo gubernatorial candidates' government plans with the SDGs, using natural language processing, artificial intelligence, topic modelling, perception analysis, and statistical comparison with the 17 SDGs and 169 SDG targets.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how government plans, electoral policy commitments, and subnational political agendas align with the SDGs in the context of the 2022 São Paulo gubernatorial elections. Its primary analytical focus concerns public policy planning, democratic accountability, subnational governance, electoral policy commitments, SDG localisation, policy prioritisation, and the role of government plans in translating the 2030 Agenda into governance and public policy strategies.
43	[63]	Article	This study examines biosphere-based sustainability, SDG interactions, and sustainability indicators for policymaking in local governments, using a case study of Norwegian municipalities	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments use SDG interaction analysis and sustainability indicators to support policy coherence and SDG implementation. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal sustainability policymaking, SDG implementation,

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
			based on U4SSC indicators and SDG interaction modelling.		indicator-based governance, governance integration, biosphere-based sustainability, and the role of local governments in aligning sustainability measurement systems with SDG-oriented policy coordination and decision-making.
44	[64]	Article	This study examines the influence of organisational culture in Andalusian local governments on SDG localisation, using questionnaires and focus groups with local government technicians across Andalusia, Spain.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how the organisational culture, internal structure, communication practices, public innovation, and collaborative capacity of local governments shape SDG localisation in Andalusia. Its primary analytical focus concerns local public governance, municipal organisational culture, SDG localisation, public-sector innovation, multilevel governance, collaborative governance, institutional transformation, governance communication practices, and the mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda within local government institutions.
45	[65]	Conference paper	This study examines the role of Supreme Audit Institutions in the European Union in supporting government responses to the SDGs, using an analysis of performance audits, SDG-related reports, SDG implementation scores, spillover scores, and SDG trends across EU member states.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how Supreme Audit Institutions, as public accountability bodies, contribute to government preparedness, audit oversight, transparency, accountability, and SDG implementation across European Union member states. Its primary analytical focus concerns public-sector auditing, government accountability, institutional oversight, performance auditing, SDG implementation monitoring, and the role of national audit institutions in strengthening public governance for sustainable development.
46	[66]	Article	This study examines the integration of the SDGs into local government plans, programmes, and budgets in Nepal, using qualitative case studies of eight local governments.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local governments adopt, localise, and integrate the SDG framework into local planning, programming, and budgeting processes. Its primary analytical focus concerns local governance, SDG localisation, local government planning and budget systems, institutional capacity, intergovernmental coordination, and the governance challenges of translating the 2030 Agenda into local administrative practice.
47	[67]	Article	This study examines the lived experiences of volunteer health workers in Nigerian Primary Healthcare Centres and their implications for SDG 3 and SDG 8, using ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews with volunteers, formal health workers, and health managers.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines governance arrangements surrounding volunteer health workers within Nigeria's public primary healthcare systems, including recruitment practices, workforce informality, institutional incentives, compensation systems, and labour protection. Its primary analytical focus concerns public health governance, health workforce governance, primary healthcare administration, institutional accountability, labour protection mechanisms, and the governance conditions shaping health-related SDG achievement.
48	[68]	Article	This study examines village-level multidimensional poverty reduction in the Indian Sundarban Biosphere Reserve between 2011 and 2021, using primary household surveys, GIS-based spatial analysis, and machine-learning prediction of the MPI in relation to government schemes and SDG achievement.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines how national and state government welfare schemes contribute to multidimensional poverty reduction and SDG-related outcomes at the village level in the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve. The study does not directly analyse governance processes, institutional arrangements, or public-sector decision-making; instead, its primary analytical focus concerns public welfare schemes, policy implementation, targeted government interventions, and access to state-supported services in advancing SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG 7, and SDG 11 in a climate-vulnerable delta region. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to empirical evidence on government-led poverty reduction and SDG implementation mechanisms.
49	[69]	Article	This study examines government interventions and sectoral outcomes in India's agricultural sector in relation to SDG achievement, using a literature	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines government interventions, agricultural policies, and public programmes as mechanisms supporting SDG-related outcomes in India's agricultural sector.

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
50	[70]	Conference paper	<p>review, policy analysis, and an assessment of programmes addressing poverty alleviation, food security, sustainable agriculture, rural livelihoods, climate-smart practices, and agri-food system transformation.</p> <p>This study examines socially oriented government programmes and national projects in the Russian Federation as mechanisms for achieving the SDGs, using an analysis of federal budget expenditure, stakeholder specialisation, and synchronicity of interaction among investment-process stakeholders.</p>	Direct public-governance study	<p>Although its primary analytical focus concerns agricultural sustainability rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how policy reforms, infrastructure investment, natural farming promotion, food distribution schemes, and climate-smart agricultural strategies contribute to SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 8, SDG 12, SDG 13, and SDG 15. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on government-led agricultural interventions, policy instruments, rural livelihood support, food-security mechanisms, and sustainable agri-food system transformation.</p> <p>Included because the study directly examines state programmes, national projects, public investment, and government-led mechanisms for achieving sustainable development goals in the Russian Federation. Its primary analytical focus concerns public-sector programme implementation, national project governance, federal budget execution, stakeholder coordination, state-led socially oriented investment, and the role of government institutions in strengthening SDG implementation effectiveness and sustainable development trajectories.</p>
51	[71]	Article	<p>This study examines how government financial and non-financial incentives influence community development and environmental activities among 263 non-profit organisations in Pakistan, with resource management tested as a mediating mechanism.</p>	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	<p>Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines the role of government incentives in enabling non-profit organisations to contribute to community development and environmental SDG-related activities. Although its primary analytical focus concerns non-profit resource management rather than public governance itself, the study analyses government financial support, non-financial public assistance, public-sector incentives, and resource-management mechanisms that shape SDG-related social and environmental outcomes. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on public-support instruments, public-sector support mechanisms, government-enabled SDG implementation, and governance-adjacent mechanisms supporting sustainable development outcomes.</p>
52	[72]	Conference paper	<p>This study analyses the economic feasibility of palm oil empty fruit bunch pellets as an alternative household fuel in Indonesia, focusing on their potential to reduce the government's 3 kg LPG subsidy burden and contribute to sustainable energy-related SDG objectives.</p>	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	<p>Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines biomass-based alternative fuel as a mechanism for reducing Indonesia's public expenditure on subsidised 3 kg LPG and supporting access to cleaner energy. Although its primary analytical focus concerns techno-economic feasibility rather than public governance itself, the study analyses subsidy reduction, renewable-energy substitution, public financing implications, and potential economic benefits for central and local governments. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on public expenditure reduction, energy policy instruments, renewable-energy implementation, and SDG-related sustainable energy transitions.</p>
53	[73]	Conference paper	<p>This study examines the digitalisation of government financial services and its impact on SDG achievement in India, using panel data analysis of 28 states and 3 union territories from 2018 to 2022.</p>	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	<p>Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines digitalised government financial services as state-led digital public-service delivery and financial-inclusion mechanisms associated with SDG achievement in India. Although its primary analytical outcome concerns the SDG India Index rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how government digital platforms, digital financial services, and public-service digitalisation contribute to financial inclusion, poverty alleviation, corruption reduction, and SDG-related development outcomes. Its relevance</p>

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
54	[74]	Article	This study examines the role of environmental sustainability and government institutions in achieving SDG 2 in West African countries, using panel data for 1990–2021 analysed through Generalized Method of Moments and Two-Stage Least Squares estimation.	Direct public-governance study	to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to empirical evidence on digital public-service delivery, government financial services, financial inclusion, and SDG implementation. Included because the study directly examines how government institutions, institutional effectiveness, environmental regulation, and governance quality shape food security and SDG 2 achievement in West Africa. Its primary analytical focus concerns public institutional governance, governance quality, regulatory enforcement, food-security governance, environmental policy, and the role of state institutions in promoting sustainable agriculture and zero hunger objectives.
55	[75]	Article	This study examines local self-government and sustainable education strategies as mechanisms for advancing SDG achievement, using questionnaire-based regression analysis involving civil servants and education practitioners.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines the role of local self-government in supporting SDG implementation through sustainable education strategies and local education policy adaptation. Its primary analytical focus concerns local autonomy, local government capacity, education governance, decentralised service delivery, resource allocation, and the contribution of local governance systems to sustainable education implementation.
56	[76]	Article	This study examines government quality, institutional quality, and macroeconomic determinants of SDG achievement across 112 countries, using the official SDG Index, World Governance Indicators, income-group classification, and quantile regression for the 2016–2019 period.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how government effectiveness, institutional quality, fiscal expenditure, rule of law, accountability, corruption control, and other governance dimensions shape national SDG achievement across different income groups. Its primary analytical focus concerns public governance, institutional quality, government capacity, fiscal governance, democratic accountability, regulatory quality, corruption control, and the role of governance and institutional systems in advancing sustainable development goals.
57	[77]	Article	This study analyses the impact of local-government characteristics on SDG accomplishment across 34 Indonesian provinces during 2015–2016, using multiple regression analysis to examine region size, regional work units, and local own-source revenue.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how local-government characteristics influence SDG accomplishment in Indonesia. Its primary analytical focus concerns local-government administrative capacity, functional differentiation through regional work units, fiscal capacity through local own-source revenue, decentralised SDG implementation, provincial governance structures, public-sector resources, and the role of provincial governments in implementing SDG-related development objectives and governance priorities.
58	[78]	Article	This study examines the influence of local government transparency on SDG implementation in Spanish municipalities, using the Dynamic Transparency Index and an SDG implementation index for 84 municipalities.	Direct public-governance study	Included because the study directly examines how transparency practices in local governments influence the implementation of the SDGs at the municipal level in Spain. Its primary analytical focus concerns local government transparency, accountability mechanisms, municipal governance, public-sector legitimacy, participatory governance, and the institutional conditions enabling SDG implementation.
59	[79]	Article	This study examines green innovation and SDG-related outcomes in Pakistani SMEs, using empirical evidence from 204 SMEs and SmartPLS analysis to assess how government incentives moderate the relationship between green innovation and SDG-related outcomes.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines government incentives as financial and non-financial public-support mechanisms shaping the relationship between green innovation and SDG-related outcomes in SMEs. Although its primary analytical focus concerns firm-level green innovation rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how government support, public incentives, and policy assistance strengthen environmental practices and facilitate SME contributions to sustainable development goals. Its relevance to public governance is therefore indirect and limited to evidence on government incentive mechanisms, policy-enabled green innovation, SME participation in SDG implementation, and public-sector support for

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Classification	Inclusion Justification
60	[80]	Article	This study examines the relationship between SDG-oriented practices, financial knowledge, investment strategies, government support, and organisational profitability among manufacturing firms in China, using survey questionnaires and Smart-PLS analysis.	Governance-adjacent SDG implementation study	environmental and community-oriented sustainability outcomes. Included as a governance-adjacent SDG implementation study because the study examines government support as an enabling policy and institutional mechanism moderating the relationship between financial knowledge, investment strategies, and organisational profitability in the context of SDG-oriented business practices. Although its primary analytical focus concerns firm profitability rather than public governance itself, the study analyses how government support, regulatory facilitation, and policy programmes interact with SDG-related organisational strategies in the manufacturing sector. Its relevance to public governance is therefore limited to evidence on government support mechanisms, policy-enabled business sustainability, SDG-oriented organisational practices, and public-sector facilitation of sustainable development outcomes.

Table A2. Justification for the excluded boundary case

No.	Ref.	Document Type	Main Focus/Unit of Analysis	Exclusion Justification
1	[30]	Article	This study proposes a conceptual framework for streamlining NGO programmes towards SDG achievement, focusing on cross-sector partnerships, broadening social value, and the role of NGOs in localising SDGs through social, economic, and environmental impacts.	Excluded because the study focuses primarily on NGO programme mechanisms, civil society roles, cross-sector partnerships, and broadening social value in SDG implementation. Although the public sector is mentioned as one actor in a Quadruple Helix framework, the study does not substantively analyse public policy, government support, regulation, public finance, accountability systems, public-sector implementation processes, or other substantive public-governance mechanisms. It is therefore excluded as a civil-society and organisational SDG implementation study without a substantive government-centred analytical focus.