

Stockholm Environment Institute is an international non-profit research institute that tackles environment and development challenges.

We connect science to policy and practice to develop solutions for a sustainable future for all.

Our work spans climate change, natural resources, water, air, and health, and integrates evidence and perspectives on governance, innovation, business, poverty, gender and social change.

Our approach empowers people for change for the long term: research excellence and engagement with partners are at the heart of our efforts to set new agendas, build capacities, and support better decision-making.

Environmental policy

Over the strategy period, each centre will develop and implement annual action plans that chart progress on environmental targets and set plans for the year ahead. While the nature of SEI's work means that travel will always be necessary, we must reduce our footprint. Our approach to monitoring and reporting carbon emissions from air travel

encourages each employee to reflect on the need to travel, in what way, and how often. Where possible, online meetings and remote participation in events are prioritized for international collaboration.

And we have set ourselves an emissions reduction target: to reduce the carbon footprint of our travel by 25% per capita by 2024.



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SEI Strategy 2020–24

Knowledge for action



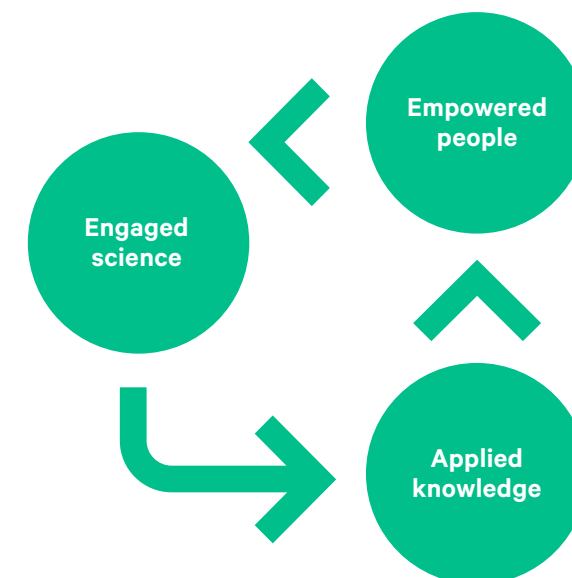
This document highlights the central points from our full-length strategy. It sets out who we are and what we stand for, and what we are aspiring to change. Finally, it highlights how we make change happen. Our renewed theory of change describes how we provide useable, actionable and relevant knowledge for sustainable development.

Our strategy for 2020–24

Scientists and policy-makers agree that what humankind does – or does not do – over the coming five to ten years will define the conditions for sustainable development for decades to come.

The world needs bold political decisions, as well as changes in business practices, resource management, and consumer behaviour. None of these come easy, and they face huge barriers – institutional, social, cultural, economic – as well as a lack of robust, relevant and applicable knowledge.

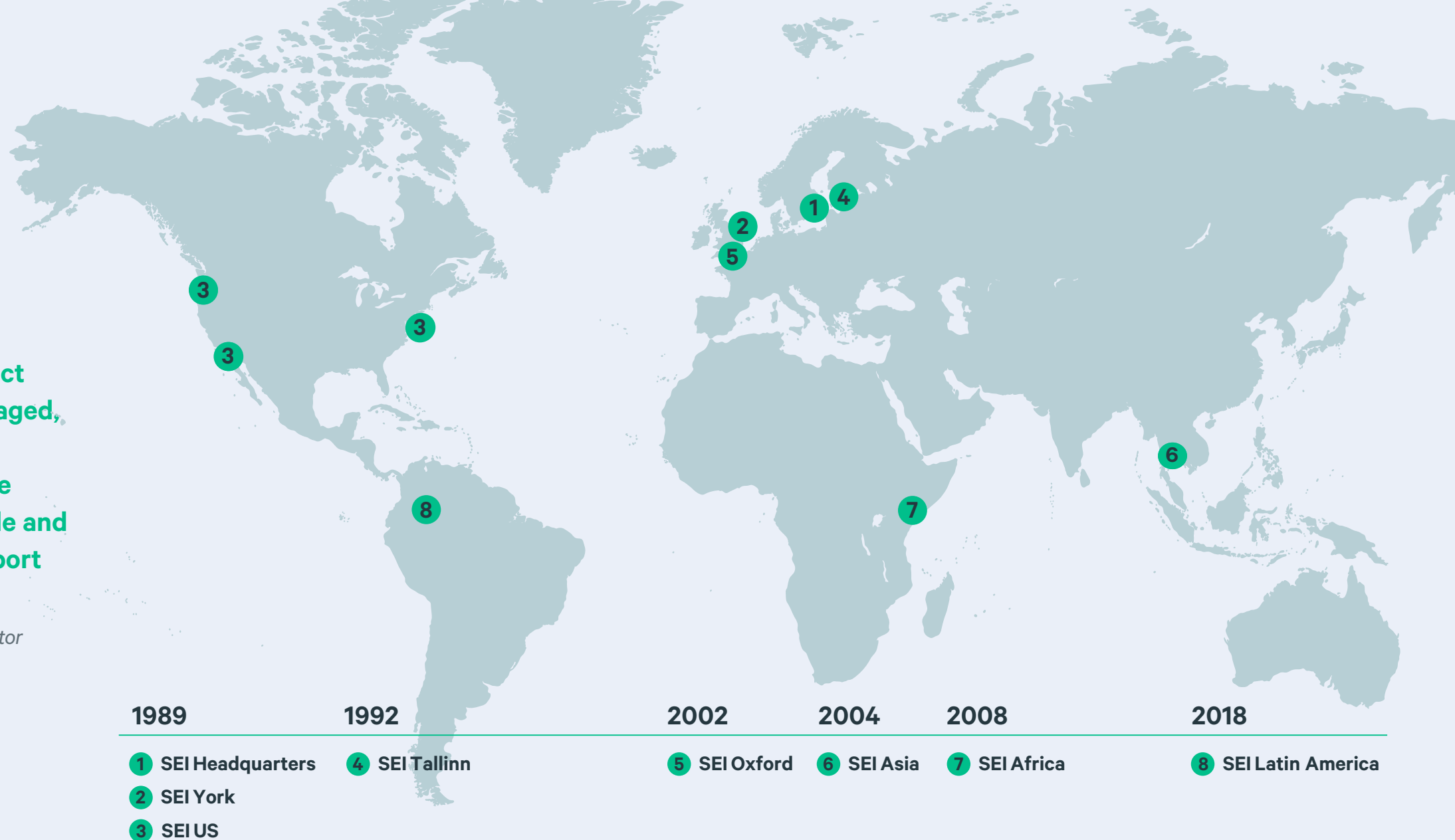
The SEI 2020–2024 Strategy readies us to make a marked contribution in the years ahead to the changes needed in how human society governs and interacts with the environment.



SEI today

“What makes SEI distinct is that we produce engaged, robust science that is applied through useable tools to empower people and institutions and to support decision-making.”

– Måns Nilsson, Executive Director



Our mission, which has been in place since the late 1990s, is more relevant than ever.

We focus on the environmental dimensions of human development and well-being to contribute to better living conditions around the world, including for poor and vulnerable groups. We integrate poverty, gender and social equality across our research.

SEI develops knowledge for change that is based on science. We carry out original applied research as well as conduct synthesis and assessment, and critically analyse evidence to solve problems and address policy agendas.

The issues we address tend to be complex, with difficult trade-offs that need systematic and balanced consideration.

We work through policy, and also engage directly with practitioners and in implementation, with businesses, investors, communities, farmers and households.

The hallmarks of our organization are:

- **A trust-based culture.** Our people breathe life into and carry out our mission.
- **An innovative and adaptive approach.** We link up research areas and competences

in order to anticipate and respond to new challenges.

- **Responsiveness.** We understand that knowledge needs to be grounded in and responsive to context.
- **A solution-oriented mindset.** We design our work to take advantage of opportunities for change and empower the right actors.
- **Partnership.** Typically, SEI projects are carried out in partnership with others. Our focus is on building trust, empowerment, and working with partners to co-create knowledge – an approach that is more likely to result in ownership of results and sustained action.

SEI's mission

To support decision-making and induce change towards sustainable development around the world by providing integrative knowledge that bridges science, policy and practice in the field of environment and development.

Priorities for change in 2020–2024

Over the coming years, we will focus on three areas that are of ongoing and crucial importance and on which we believe we can make a significant impact. These are:

- **Reduced climate risk**
- **Sustainable resource use and resilient ecosystems**
- **Improved health and well-being**

The goals apply to all research and engagement at SEI. They will define and guide our research agenda, and act as yardsticks for monitoring our results and evaluation and learning.

Reduced climate risk

Tackling climate change is critical, given the decadal timeframe available to limit warming to agreed targets. It will involve large-scale and rapid mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonizing our economies while safeguarding carbon sinks. Equally important, it involves adapting to climate impacts and managing loss and damage. Climate action is also necessary to reduce the risk of conflict and enhance human security.

We will work towards:

1. Government plans for low-carbon pathways with multiple benefits
2. Strengthened decision making on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction
3. Innovation and upscaled investment for industrial transitions
4. Transitions from fossil energy that address inequality, poverty and political economy
5. More effective international cooperation on climate change

Sustainable resource use and resilient ecosystems

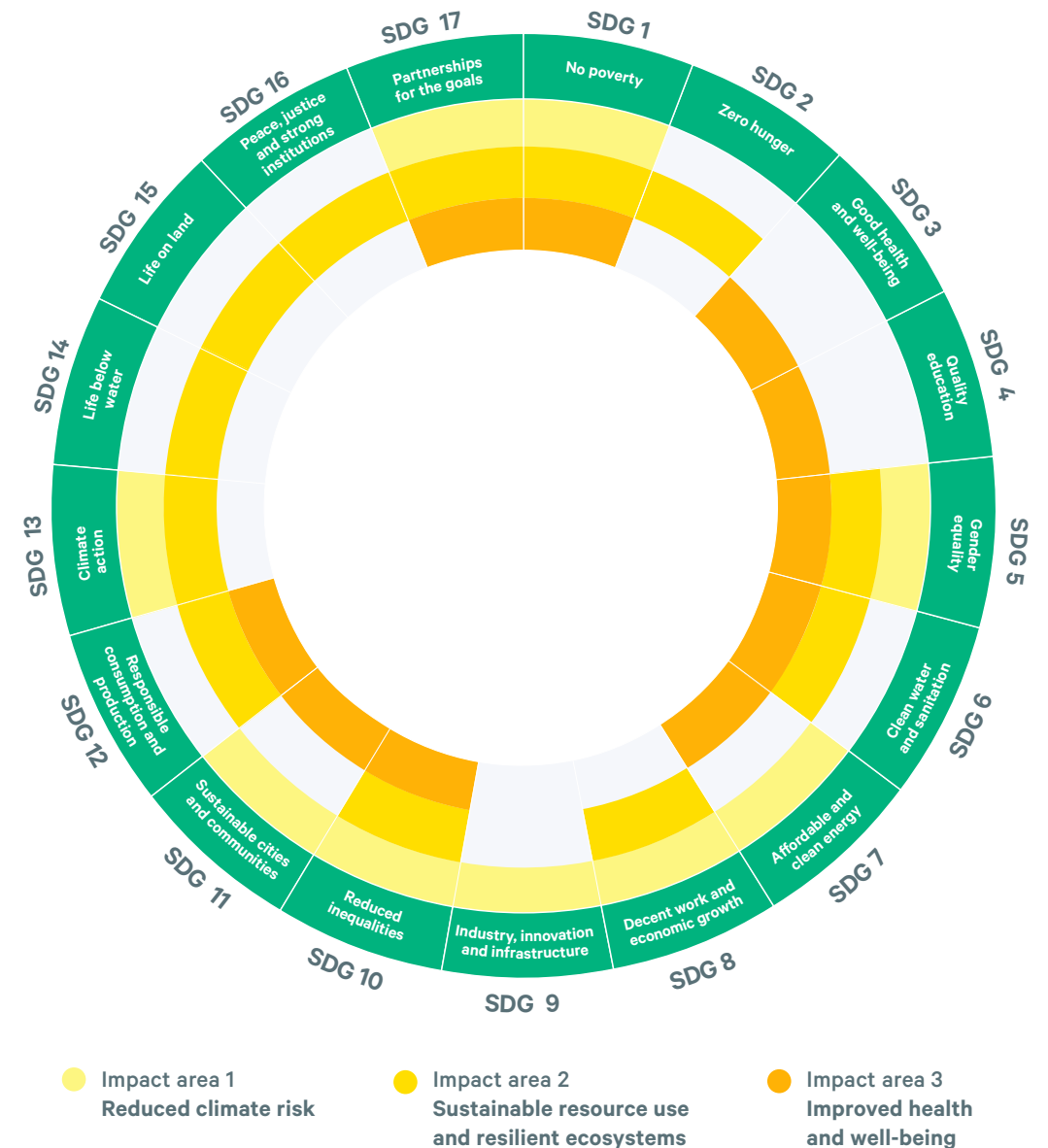
Natural resources are being consumed at faster and more unsustainable rates, and the benefits derived from them as well as from biodiversity and ecosystems are distributed unequally, both within and between countries. SEI will support more sustainable resource use and resilient ecosystems through its expertise in water management, bioeconomy, agriculture, natural resource governance, supply chain management and waste management, working alongside our partners in international organizations, national and regional planning authorities, and the private sector.

We will work towards:

1. Effective bioeconomy strategies in national and regional policy and planning
2. Water resource management that is ecosystem-based and holistic
3. Commodity sourcing strategies and standards that address deforestation and biodiversity
4. More productive, resilient and sustainable practices in the agricultural sector
5. More effective governance of the ocean
6. Resource rights given greater priority in government and private-sector decision-making

Improved health and well-being

Some health impacts of environmental change, for example from air pollution and poor sanitation, have been long understood. Now, research points to deeper and more complex effects, including on maternal and neuropsychiatric health. As global warming and change accelerates, impacts are expected to intensify or bring about new challenges.



Together, our three impact areas contribute to all of the Sustainable Development Goals. This diagram shows which of our priorities are linked to which SDGs.

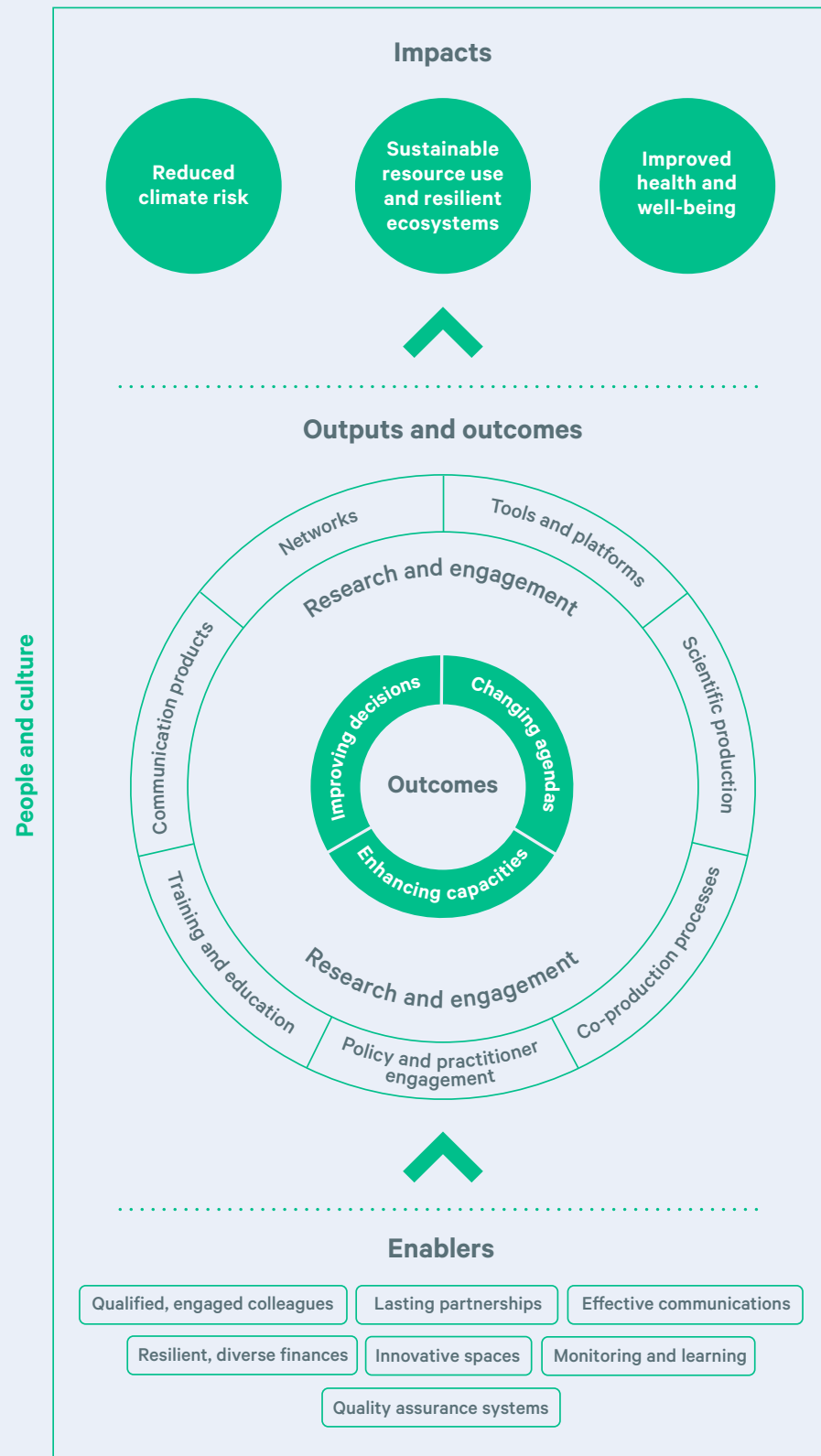
At the same time, the strong connections between health and other priorities in the 2030 Agenda offer opportunities for policy coherence. In the coming years our focus on the health and well-being will take in mental health, stress, safety, life satisfaction and happiness.

We will work towards:

1. Enhanced air quality strategies in low- and middle-income countries

2. Sanitation solutions that are sustainable, healthy and productive, are widely scaled up
3. City planning that improves well-being and environmental health
4. Safer, more effective waste management and circular systems
5. Health and well-being integrated into planning for disasters, migration and displacement
6. Shifts to more sustainable lifestyles and consumption

**Our theory of change:
a sustainable, prosperous future for all**



Pathways to change

SEI’s new theory of change focuses on planning, implementing, and following up on three types of outcome: **changing agendas, enhancing capacities, improving decisions.**

We also work with a clear and traceable pathway to impact that elaborates the type and extent of SEI’s contribution. Our projects and initiatives are designed through the lens of this overall theory, setting out intended pathways and results.

Research and engagement

The knowledge we generate is typically anchored in scientific research within many different disciplines. We build engagement into research, through methods such as citizen science or participatory scenario development, co-production processes and workshops and dialogues of different types, as well as through tools and platforms that users can work with themselves.

Engagement with policy and practice is an activity in its own right. To empower stakeholders, we often engage in or build networks and carry out training.

SEI Initiatives

SEI Initiatives are programmatic hubs of scientific research, policy engagement and capacity development that mobilize researchers and expertise from across the Institute. While they do not represent the full range of our work, they build on our legacy strengths and focus on issues where we believe we can make a unique and integrative contribution.

The following initiatives will be up and running in 2020:

- Gender Equality, Social Equity and Poverty
- Bioeconomy Pathways
- Water Beyond Boundaries
- City Health and Well-being
- Integrated Climate and Development Planning
- Tackling Carbon Lock-in
- Gridless Solutions





Previous page: Volunteers working together in river | Getty.
This page: Aerial view of The Circle Bridge, Copenhagen, Denmark | Getty.

SEI Tools

Our tools support partners, decision-makers, practitioners and others to better understand issues and make more informed decisions.

These tools comprise various desktop or web-based data systems that create, integrate, and disseminate knowledge across a range of issues in sustainable development.

We see such tools as an indispensable way to empower people to make their own decisions.

In the coming years we will:

- Improve knowledge management and build competence by developing tool descriptions and training materials.
- Develop new tools to address sustainable development challenges and decision problems at different scales.
- Leverage adequate funding throughout the life cycle of tool development (i.e. design, prototyping, deployment, maintenance, support, retirement) including through licensing solutions.
- Make our tools open access and free-of-charge for users in developing countries.
- Assure quality through peer review and software quality management.
- Enhance follow up and monitoring on tool

use, user experience and impact.

- Improve design and usability.
- Invest further in workshops and training for users.

Strategic policy engagement

SEI engages with policy and practice at all levels. Over the strategy period we will ramp up support and engagement at the global level, being closer to and proactive in different governance processes and providing science-based knowledge support.

We will focus on the following agendas:

- 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals
- Climate governance
- Financing for sustainable development
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- The ocean

At the regional level, we will deepen our engagement with regional political and economic cooperation bodies. At national and local levels, we will continue to support capacity development and provide actionable insights for government departments and agencies, communities and city administrations.

How do we learn?

We've set up an improved Results and Learning Framework for 2020–24 to more strongly link the monitoring and evaluation of our research and operations to our organizational learning.

Monitoring

The four levels of our strategy – organizational enablers, activities and outputs, outcomes, and impacts – are the basis for our monitoring framework.

Evaluation

Our evaluation is structured around five main activities:

• External evaluations

We invite external critical observers to make recommendations on how we can strengthen our delivery and impact over the longer term.

• The SEI Science Advisory Council

The Council regularly examines achievements and progress in key research areas.

• Partner feedback

We will implement annual surveys of key partners, inviting them to evaluate their institutional engagement with SEI.

• Feedback during projects

We invite stakeholders to give feedback on an ongoing basis during project implementation.

• End-of-project evaluation

All programmes, initiatives and large projects are required to carry out evaluations at their close.

Learning

We make change within the organization based on insights from monitoring and evaluation. This means adapting our focus, our approach and operational processes.

SEI's scheme of learning activities includes:

- end-of-project evaluation sessions
- topical or operational learning seminars
- the SEI Science Forum
- cross-centre meetings on the “what” and “how” of our work
- evidence-based change stories
- assessments of success factors in research and engagement, and
- knowledge sharing through our new online platform.