



SUMMARY REPORT

The SDGs in Chinese Cities: Progress Assessment Report 2020



United Nations Development Programme
Sustainable Development Research Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Acknowledgement

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This report was authored during 2020 and used data up to 2019 from official sources.



ONE

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Introduction



1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030 identify a new direction and pathway for advancing global development with three aims: to end poverty, reduce inequality and protect our planet. Since countries began implementing the SDGs in 2016, a key step has been establishing a global sustainable development indicator framework, allowing SDG progress to be monitored and evaluated. Following nearly two years of work, the global framework was adopted in 2017 at the 48th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. Governments, with the support of United Nations (UN) agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are now complementing the framework developing indicators, regionally and nationally.

The global indicator framework is the basis for the SDG assessment reports that are designed to track and share progress in achieving the SDGs, identifying issues, challenges, lessons and promoting their implementation through international cooperation. The first annual global SDG assessment report was released by the UN in 2016, the latest in 2020. Similar efforts have been replicated at regional, national and city levels. The Chinese Government submitted China's Progress Report on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2017 and 2019¹. These reports reviewed China's achievements and experience in carrying out the 2030 Agenda, analysed opportunities and challenges, clarified its guiding thoughts, general principles, and means of implementation.

At the city level, a few cities, such as San Jose (CA), Baltimore (MD), and New York City (NY) in the United States, Oslo and Stockholm in Europe, as well as Seoul and Shenzhen in Asia, have been actively exploring how to achieve sustainable development, aligning their urban planning and data monitoring systems with the SDGs. In 2019, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network released its third US Cities Sustainable Development Report ranking 105 cities and the SDG Index and Dashboards Report for European Cities ranking 45 capital cities and metropolitan areas on their progress towards the SDGs.

The SDGs in Chinese Cities: Progress Assessment Report 2020²(the Report hereafter) is the first in China to assess and evaluate SDG implementation at the city level. The purpose of this assessment is to understand the current situation, identify gaps and key action areas where special attention is needed, as well as promote the balanced and comprehensive achievement of the SDGs. The methodology and findings of this report, setting clear standards for reporting in the Chinese context, will contribute to implementing and evaluating the SDGs in China. In this note, we summarise the key findings of such assessment.

1. China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "China's Progress Report on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", paper prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, China, October 2017. Available at: [www.chinadaily.com.cn/specials/China%27sProgressReport2\(CN\).pdf](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/specials/China%27sProgressReport2(CN).pdf)
China, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "China's Progress Report on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", paper prepared for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, China, September 2019. Available at: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/2030kcxzyc/P020190924780823323749.pdf
2. For the full report, please see UNDP, 2021, The SDGs in Chinese Cities: Progress Assessment Report 2020

TWO

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The Chinese City SDG
Assessment Index (CCSAI)

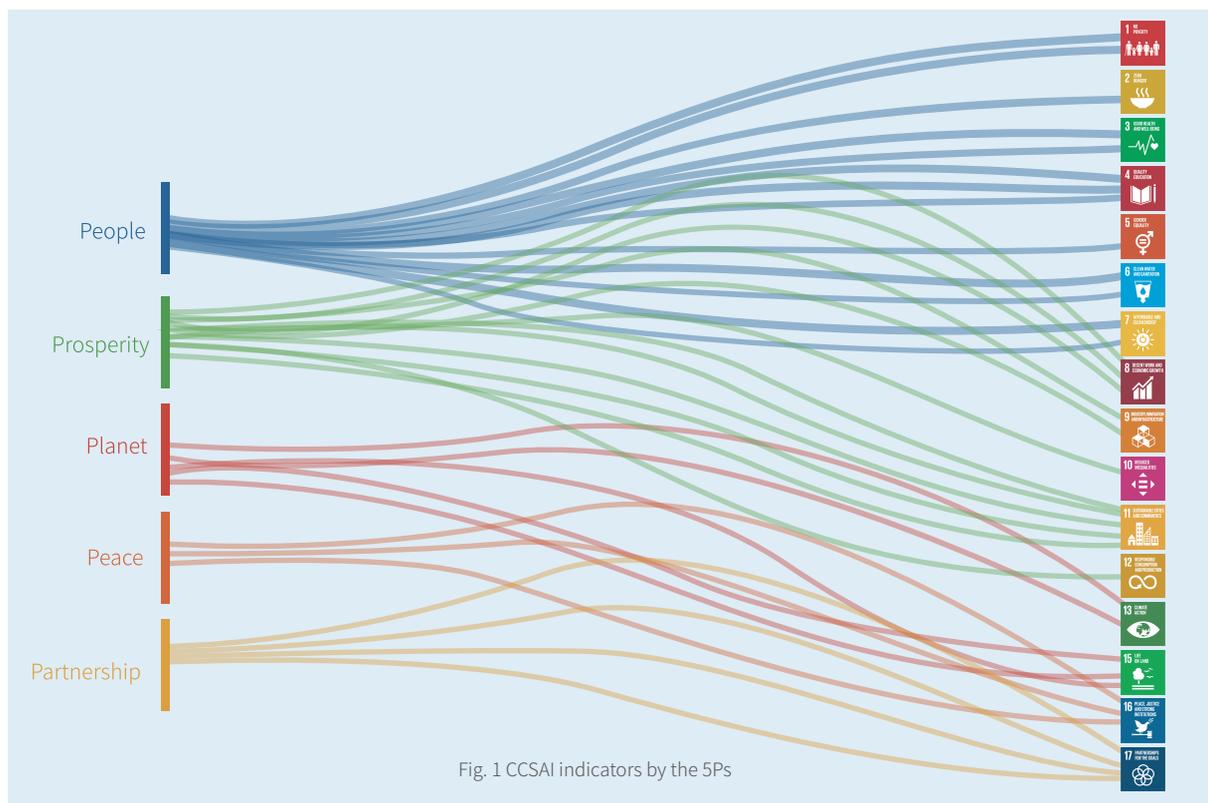


2. The Chinese City SDG Assessment Index (CCSAI)

In China, approximately 848 million people live in urban areas, making up 60.6% of the population in 2019³. The concentration of industries and population that brought prosperity to many cities has also created problems, such as resource shortages, environmental pollution and other issues affecting high-quality, sustainable development. Given their size, Chinese cities are critical actors to effectively and successfully implement the 2030 Agenda locally, nationally and globally, while cities, in the strive to improve people's wellbeing, would greatly benefit by being guided by sustainable development.

The Chinese City SDG Assessment Index (CCSAI) presented in this Report evaluates SDG progress for Chinese cities, identifying gaps and key action areas. The CCSAI is calculated for 90 cities with a gross regional product (GRP) in the top 30%, provinces' capital and major sub-provincial cities with independent planning status, representing urban areas with relatively large economies, high per capita (resident) income and scientific and technological strength. At the same time, these cities suffer from high population density, considerable environmental pressures and governance challenges.

Of the 232 available SDG indicators, the CCSAI is based on 37 indicators covering all five critical dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. These are known as 'the 5Ps', namely People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnership, encompassing all 17 SDGs (except SDG 14, life below water). The following were the indicators' selection criteria: (1) global indicators applicable to urban areas (less than half); (2) indicators used in China's five-year plan or Chinese cities' urban planning processes; and (3) indicators with widely and comparable available data.



3. National Bureau of Statistics of China

The lack of available data, especially in smaller cities, was a key difficulty that resulted in a relatively small number of feasible indicators, limiting the breadth of this analysis. This is particularly the case for Partnership – that counts only four indicators, and Peace – three indicators. Furthermore, the selection criteria for cities mentioned above, including GRP, results in CCSAI being skewed towards richer – and most likely better performing – cities across China.

The evaluation conducts an “implementation progress assessment” and a “target gap assessment,” reflecting the progress of each indicator, along with gaps remaining to meeting the respective 2030 targets.

Report Limitations:

- Indicators and data availability is limited at the city level.
- Comparison with other cities indices is constrained by the lack of a standardised methodology and data comparability.
- The impact of COVID-19 is not included in this Report as data pre-date the pandemic.

Key findings are:

All 90 cities are doing well in carrying out the SDGs, with an overall fulfilment rate of 80.0%. It is important to note, though, that the Report is based on data that predate COVID-19. As such the findings do not reflect the possible negative impact of the pandemic on the indicators’ performance.

Beijing and Hangzhou lead the gains, having met more than 90% of SDG targets. 40 out of the 90 cities score between 80% and 90%, while the top 10 cities - Beijing, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Suzhou, Shenzhen, Qingdao, Wuxi, Nanjing, Jinan and Guangzhou - record an average achievement rate of 88.3%. The 10 lowest-ranking cities - Qujing, Xiangyang, Zigong, Lhasa, Yueyang, Fushun, Shiyan, Anshan, Leshan and Yibin - record an average rate of 73.0%.

City Name	Rank	Implementation Progress	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 AND 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	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOALS
Beijing	01	0.92	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Hangzhou	02	0.91	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Shanghai	03	0.88	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Suzhou	04	0.88	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Shenzhen	05	0.88	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Qingdao	06	0.87	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Wuxi	07	0.87	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Nanjing	08	0.87	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Jinan	09	0.87	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Guangzhou	10	0.87	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Ningbo	11	0.86	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Xiamen	12	0.85	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Dalian	13	0.85	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Changzhou	14	0.85	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Changsha	15	0.85	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Chengdu	16	0.85	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Xian	17	0.84	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green

City Name	Rank	Implementation Progress	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 AND 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	15 LIFE ON LAND	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOALS
Zhengzhou	18	0.84	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Dongguan	19	0.84	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Shaoxing	20	0.84	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Wuhan	21	0.84	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Tianjin	22	0.84	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Shenyang	23	0.83	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Zhongshan	24	0.83	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Nantong	25	0.83	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Foshan	26	0.83	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Yangzhou	27	0.82	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Yantai	28	0.82	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Hefei	29	0.82	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Fuzhou	30	0.82	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Wuhu	31	0.82	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Zibo	32	0.82	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Changchun	33	0.82	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Lanzhou	34	0.81	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Guiyang	35	0.81	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Eerduosi	36	0.81	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Haerbin	37	0.81	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Maanshan	38	0.81	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Zhuzhou	39	0.80	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Xvzhou	40	0.80	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Nanchang	41	0.80	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Mianyang	42	0.80	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Panjin	43	0.80	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Tonglin	44	0.80	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Chongqing	45	0.80	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Taiyuan	46	0.80	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
Kunming	47	0.80	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
Wulumuqi	48	0.79	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Huhehaote	49	0.79	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Liuzhou	50	0.79	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Xiangtan	51	0.79	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Kelamayi	52	0.79	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Yinchuan	53	0.79	Green	Red	Green	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Luoyang	54	0.79	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Nanning	55	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Shijiazhuang	56	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Yingkou	57	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Beihai	58	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Changde	59	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Bengbu	60	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Ganzhou	61	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Guilin	62	0.78	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Baotou	63	0.78	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Xining	64	0.77	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Haikou	65	0.77	Green	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Jiujiang	66	0.77	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Panzhihua	67	0.77	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green
Daqing	68	0.77	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green
Tangshan	69	0.76	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Xinxiang	70	0.76	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Ezhou	71	0.76	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Yichang	72	0.76	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
Datong	73	0.76	Green	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
Baoji	74	0.75	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Xianyang	75	0.75	Green	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green

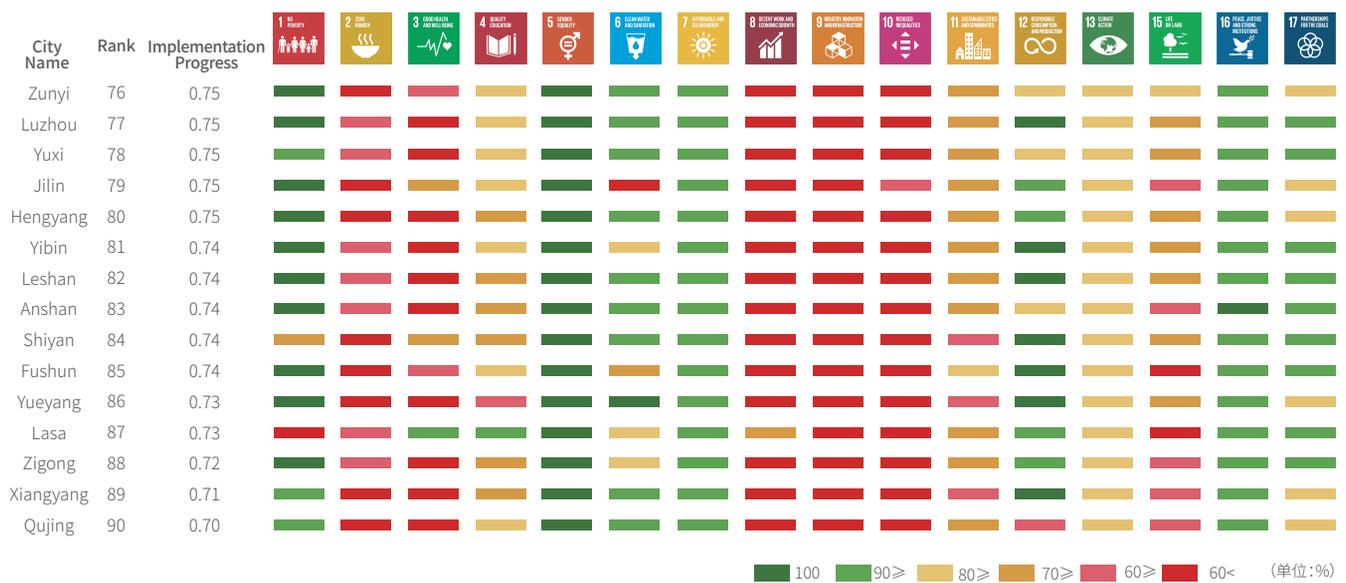


Fig. 2 CCSAI progress rates by cities

Fulfilment rates across the 5P dimensions vary. Partnership recorded the best implementation rate, at 95.4%, followed by Peace (93.1%), People (84.4%), Planet (80.9%) and Prosperity (66.4%). Economic indicators, in particular the ones related to SDG 9, promote sustainable industrialization, and SDG 10, reduce inequality within and among countries⁴, performed poorly relative to others.

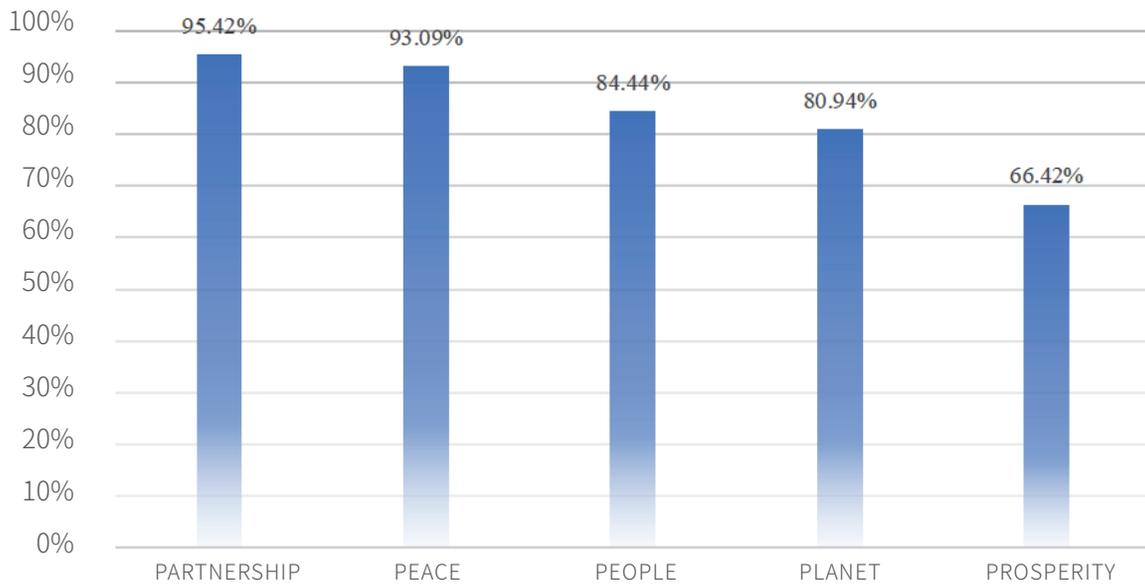
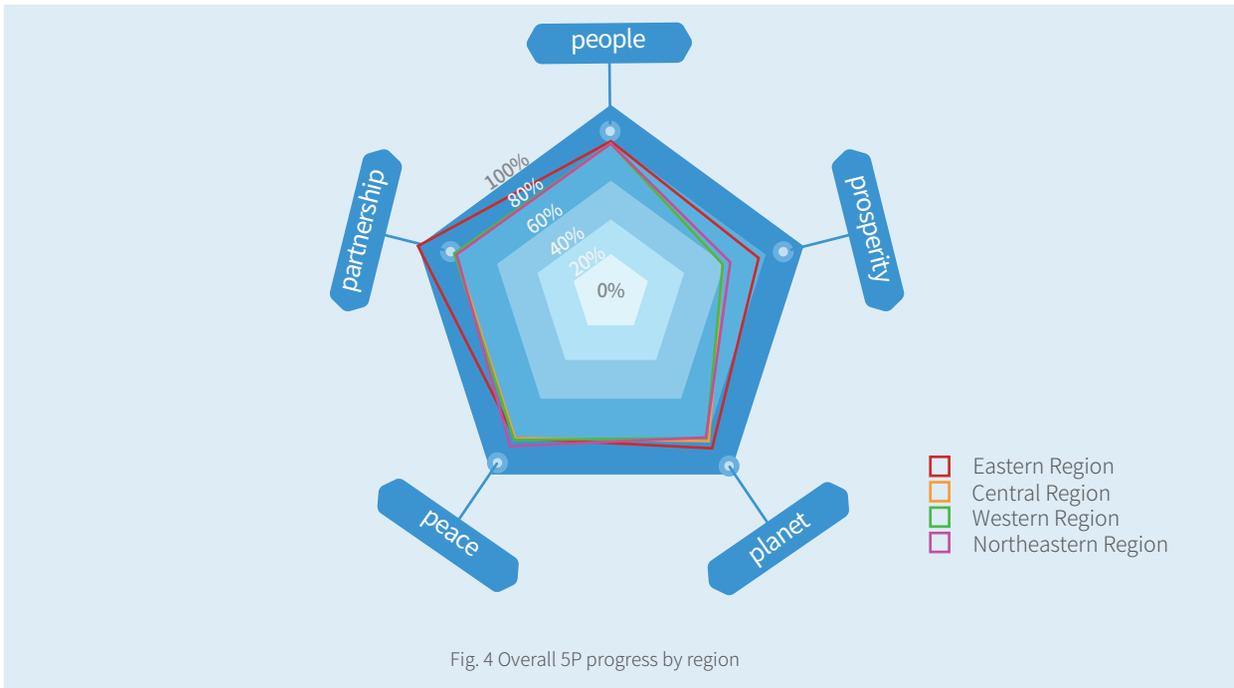


Fig. 3 5P dimensions performance

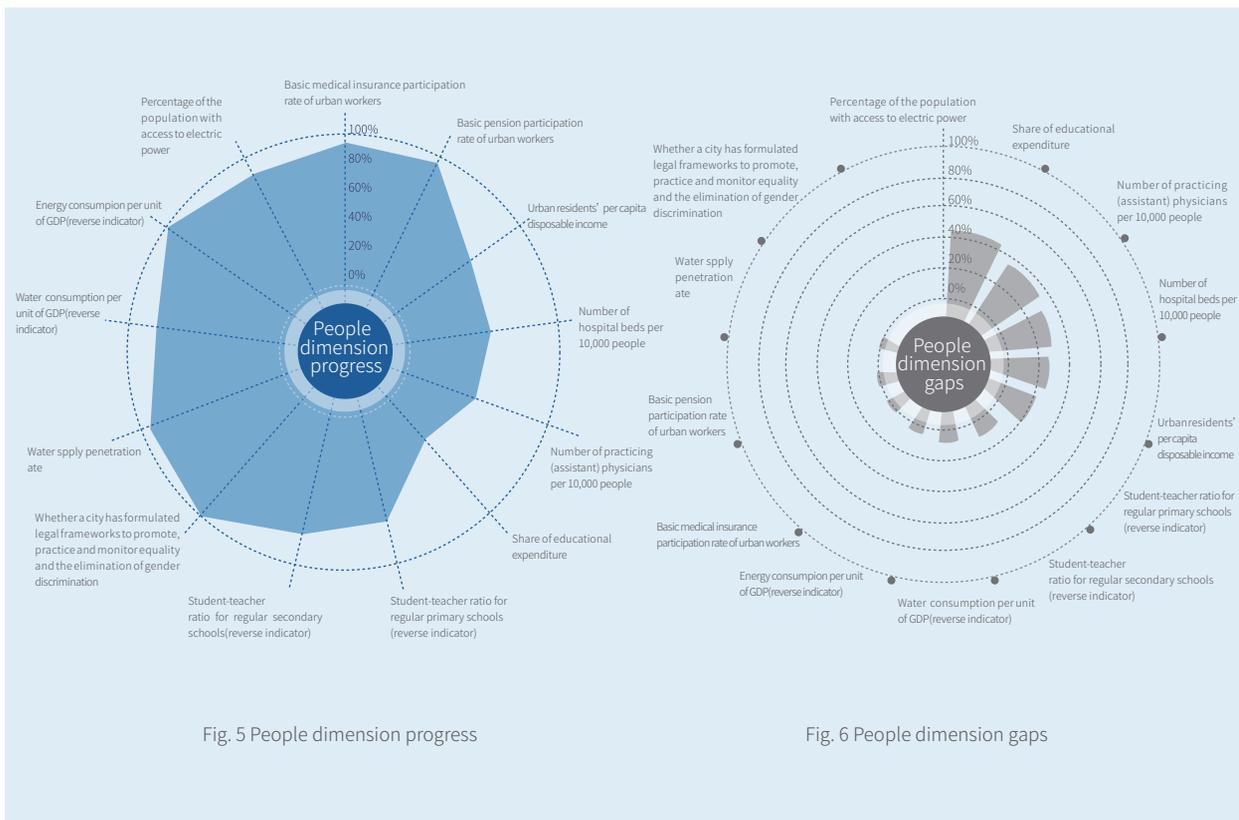
Fulfilment rates also vary geographically. Cities in east China recorded the highest fulfilment rate (84.4%), while cities in west China recorded the lowest (77.6%). This corresponds with other indicators of sustainable development, such as the Human Development Index, showing that northeast and eastern regions enjoy relatively developed economic and social conditions, while the central region lags behind

4. SDG 9 indicators are R&D expenditure as a proportion of GDP and the number of patents granted per 10,000 people; for SDG 10 is FDI as percentage of GDP.

them and the western region is relatively underdeveloped. In 2017, the human development level in China's western region was the lowest, while the highest was recorded in east China⁵.

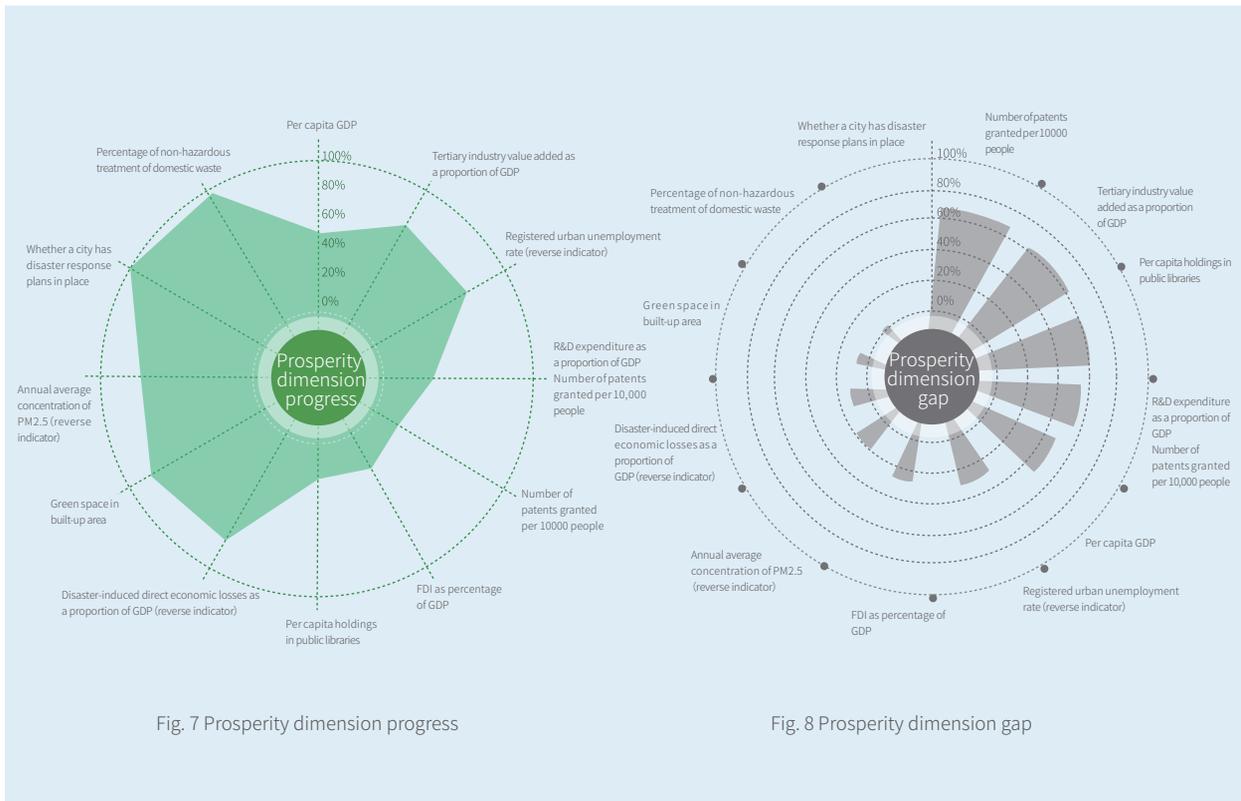


The "People" Dimension:

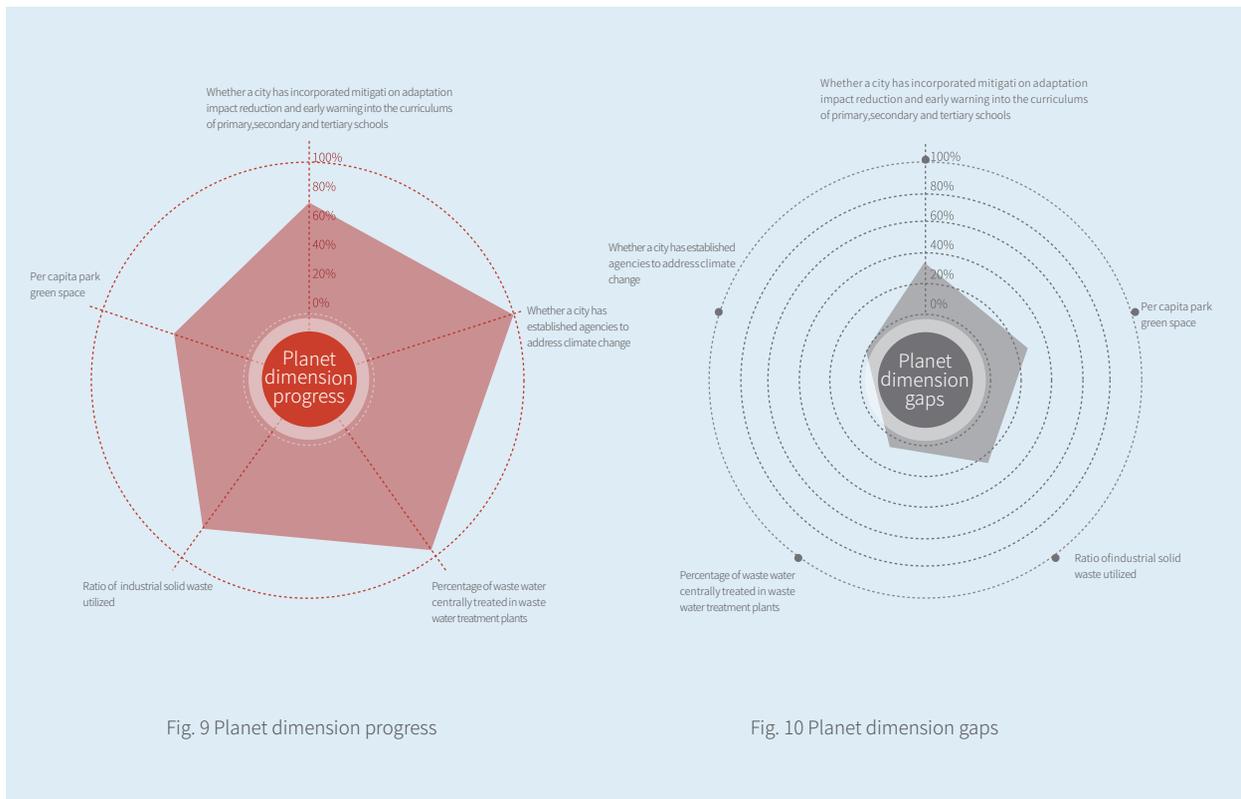


5. UNDP. 2019. China National Human Development Report Special Edition. Available from: [http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/national-human-development-report-2019-china#:~:text=China's%20Human%20Development%20Index%20\(HDI,global%20HDI%20trends%20in%201990](http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/national-human-development-report-2019-china#:~:text=China's%20Human%20Development%20Index%20(HDI,global%20HDI%20trends%20in%201990).

The “Prosperity” Dimension:



The “Planet” Dimension:



The “Peace” Dimension :

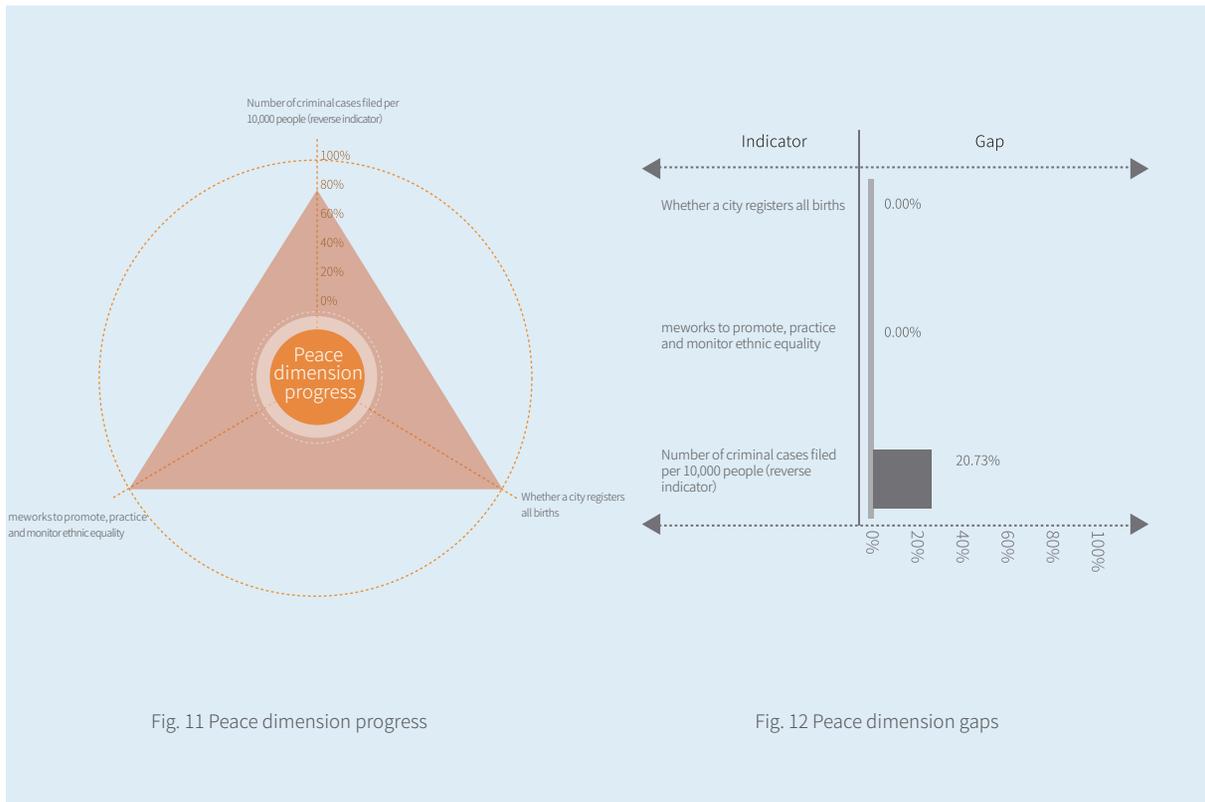


Fig. 11 Peace dimension progress

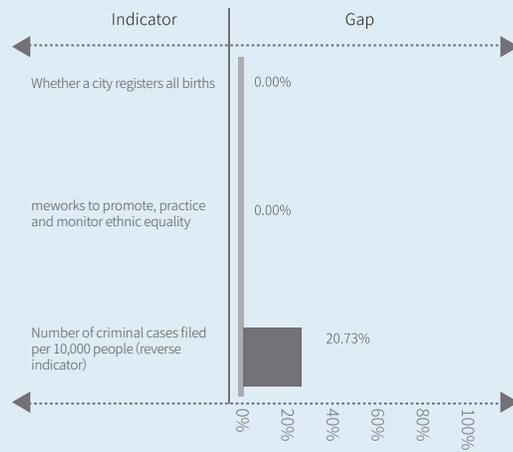


Fig. 12 Peace dimension gaps

The “Partnership” Dimension:

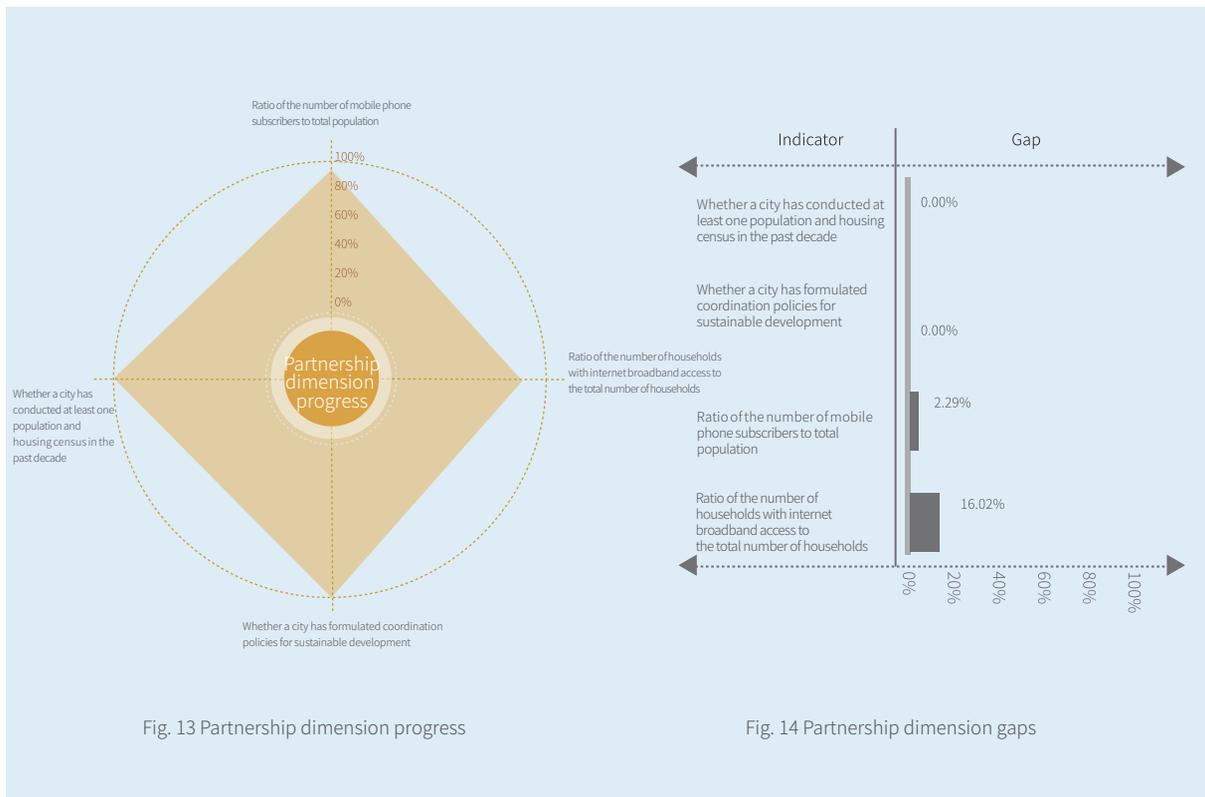


Fig. 13 Partnership dimension progress

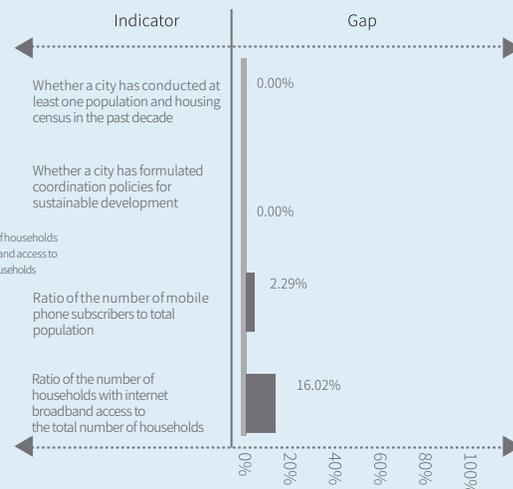


Fig. 14 Partnership dimension gaps

THREE

3

The way forward



3. The way forward

3.1. Key areas to strengthen implementation of the SDGs

One of the key objectives of evaluating progress towards the SDGs in Chinese cities is to identify areas requiring special attention and focus. These are areas where progress towards SDG targets has been slowest, defined by indicators recording larger than 50% gaps. The report identifies six such areas related to efforts and expenditures in education, science and technology, the ability to attract foreign capital and per capita GDP, as listed in Fig. 15.

The eastern region has only two indicators where the gap to 2030 targets is larger than 50%. On the other hand, in the north-eastern region, progress across all six selected indicators has been relatively weak. In the western region, implementation gaps are largest, particularly concerning the capacity to attract foreign capital, as well as talent in science and technology, along with building adequate scientific research facilities.

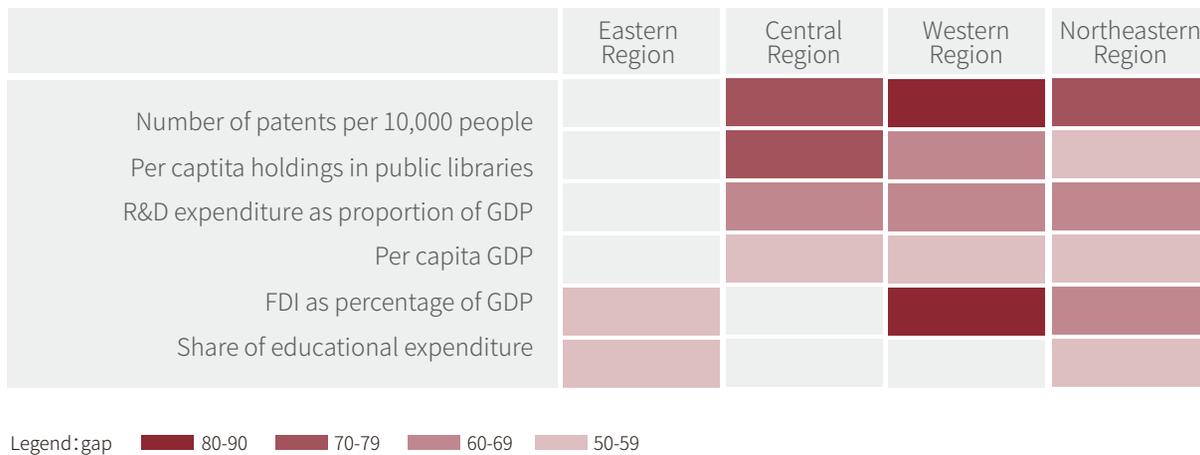


Fig. 15 Gaps in less performing indicators by region

3.2. Key areas to strengthen progress reporting

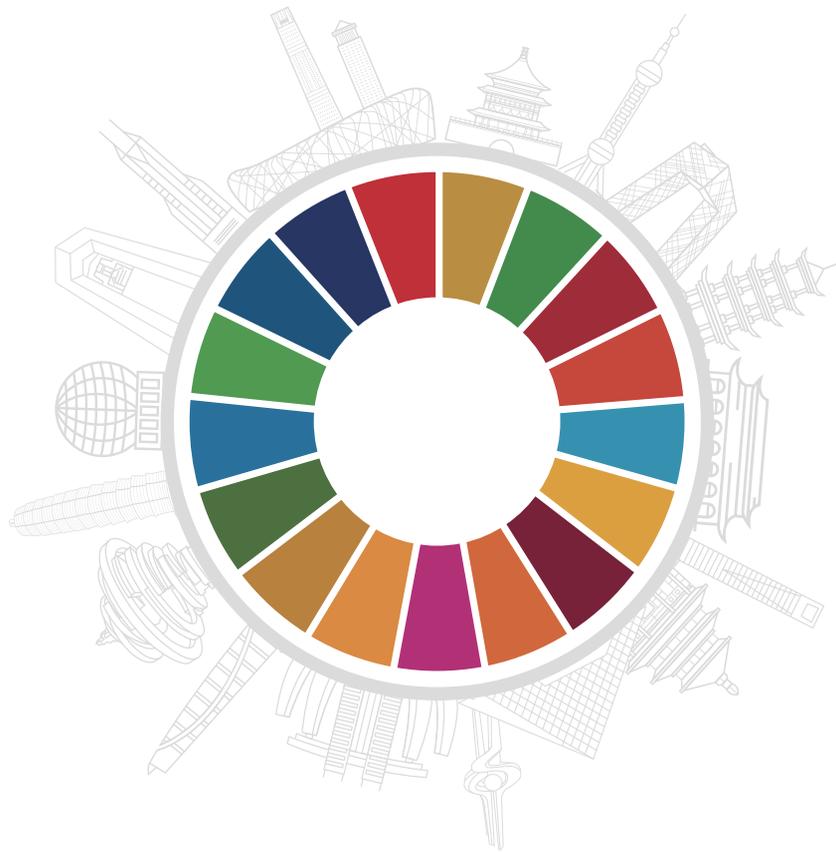
The CCSAI sets the basis for a comprehensive, standardised and evidence-based evaluation analysis of SDG progress in Chinese cities. This is an important first step. Now that the methodology is being formulated and tested, data and indicator availability are key hurdles to overcome for more detailed, comprehensive and effective reporting to support policy making.

Furthermore, the lack of universally adopted monitoring and evaluation standards at present severely limits evidence-based exchanges and makes comparisons across assessment reports not possible. Harmonising methodologies, to the extent that they are compatible with available data, would be another critical step. This would increase the use and replicability of different progress reports' conclusions to better guide effective sustainable development across regions, individual countries and cities in future.

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