DSI Scoring Framework

1. Scoring Structure

The GapEdu Development Sustainability Index™ assesses performance through four levels:

Overall DSI Score
→ calculated from the seven pillar scores

Pillar Score
→ calculated from several dimensions within each pillar

Dimension Score
→ calculated from selected quantitative and qualitative indicators

Indicator Score
→ converted to a standardized score from 0 to 100

The basic structure is:

Indicators → Dimensions → Pillars → Overall DSI Score

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2. The Seven Pillars and Core Indicators

Pillar 1: Institutional Sustainability

Measures whether institutions can implement, coordinate, and sustain development policies over time.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Governance Quality	Rule of law, regulatory quality, government effectiveness
Institutional Capacity	Staff capability, implementation capacity, administrative systems
Policy Continuity	Stability of national strategies across political cycles

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Public-Sector Effectiveness	Budget execution, service delivery, project completion rates
Transparency and Accountability	Public reporting, audit mechanisms, procurement transparency
Interinstitutional Coordination	Coordination among ministries, agencies, regions, and municipalities
Data and Monitoring Capacity	Availability, reliability, and use of development data

Key assessment question

Can institutions continue delivering development results beyond political cycles and leadership changes?

Pillar 2: Financial Sustainability

Measures whether development systems can secure, manage, and diversify long-term financing.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Fiscal Resilience	Debt sustainability, fiscal balance, reserve capacity
Revenue Sustainability	Domestic revenue mobilisation and revenue diversification
Investment Attraction	Domestic and foreign direct investment inflows
Public-Private Partnerships	PPP pipeline, regulatory framework, completed projects
Capital Mobilisation	Ability to access development finance, capital markets, and blended finance
Funding Diversification	Balance between public funding, private investment, grants, and loans
Financial Management	Budget credibility, expenditure efficiency, financial controls
Project Bankability	Number and quality of investment-ready projects

Key assessment question

Can development continue without excessive dependence on temporary grants, external aid, or unstable public financing?

Pillar 3: Economic Sustainability

Measures whether the economy can create lasting competitiveness, productivity, employment, and value.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Productivity	Output per worker, sector productivity, productivity growth
Economic Diversification	Dependence on limited sectors, products, or export markets
Employment	Employment rate, quality of jobs, youth employment
SME Development	SME survival, access to finance, contribution to GDP and employment
Export Competitiveness	Export diversity, value-added exports, global market access
Local Value Creation	Domestic supply chains, local procurement, value retention
Business Environment	Business formation, regulatory efficiency, investor confidence
Regional Economic Balance	Distribution of investment and growth across regions

Key assessment question

Is the economic system capable of creating competitive, diversified, and inclusive growth over the long term?

Pillar 4: Social Sustainability

Measures whether development strengthens human well-being, inclusion, capabilities, and community resilience.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Education	Access, completion, quality, literacy, learning outcomes
Skills Development	Workforce skills, vocational training, employer alignment
Healthcare	Access, quality, coverage, health-system resilience
Social Inclusion	Participation of women, youth, minorities, and vulnerable groups
Income and Opportunity	Poverty reduction, income distribution, social mobility
Community Participation	Citizen engagement and local participation in development
Social Protection	Coverage and effectiveness of social safety nets
Quality of Life	Housing, transport, safety, public services, well-being

Key assessment question

Does development improve people's lives while strengthening their capacity to participate in and benefit from future growth?

Pillar 5: Environmental Sustainability

Measures whether development protects natural capital and remains resilient to environmental and climate risks.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Climate Resilience	Climate adaptation plans, risk preparedness, resilient infrastructure
Emissions and Low-Carbon Transition	Emissions intensity, renewable energy, decarbonisation progress
Biodiversity	Protected areas, ecosystem health, biodiversity conservation
Resource Efficiency	Energy, water, land, and material efficiency
Circular Economy	Waste reduction, recycling, reuse, circular business models
Environmental Governance	Enforcement, environmental impact assessment, monitoring
Pollution Control	Air, water, soil, and waste-management performance
Natural Capital Protection	Sustainable use of forests, water, coastlines, and ecosystems

Key assessment question

Can development continue without degrading the environmental systems on which future prosperity depends?

Pillar 6: Innovation Sustainability

Measures whether institutions and economies can adapt to technological change and continuously generate new capabilities.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Digital Infrastructure	Connectivity, broadband access, digital public infrastructure
Artificial Intelligence Readiness	AI strategy, governance, talent, adoption, ethical safeguards

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Research and Development	R&D expenditure, institutions, patents, applied research
Entrepreneurship	Start-up activity, access to capital, business survival
Technology Adoption	Adoption of digital tools by government, businesses, and citizens
Innovation Ecosystems	Universities, incubators, investors, research centres, partnerships
Digital Skills	Workforce readiness and digital literacy
Technology Governance	Cybersecurity, data protection, digital regulation

Key assessment question

Can the development system adapt, innovate, and remain competitive as technologies and markets change?

Pillar 7: Leadership Sustainability

Measures whether development leadership is institutionalized rather than dependent on individuals.

Dimension	Suggested Indicators
Strategic Vision	Clarity and continuity of long-term national direction
Leadership Succession	Formal succession planning and leadership pipelines
Institutional Memory	Knowledge-management systems and documentation
Leadership Capability	Skills and competence of senior public and institutional leaders
Cross-Sector Collaboration	Cooperation between government, private sector, academia, and civil society
Decision-Making Quality	Evidence-based, transparent, and timely decisions
Reform Ownership	Commitment to implementation across institutions
Knowledge Transfer	Mentoring, training, and transfer of institutional experience

Key assessment question

Can leadership, knowledge, and strategic direction continue beyond the individuals currently in office?

3. Four Assessment Dimensions

Each indicator should be evaluated through four common dimensions.

Dimension	What It Measures
Capacity	Whether the necessary institutions, people, systems, and resources exist
Performance	Whether those systems are producing measurable results
Resilience	Whether the system can withstand disruptions and shocks
Future Readiness	Whether it can adapt to emerging risks, technologies, and opportunities

This structure prevents the DSI from relying only on current outputs.

A country may perform well today but still be vulnerable if its institutions, financing, or leadership systems are weak.

4. Indicator Scoring Scale

Each indicator can be scored from 0 to 100.

Score	Interpretation
0–19	Critical weakness
20–39	Foundational capacity
40–59	Emerging performance
60–74	Established performance
75–89	Advanced and resilient
90–100	Transformational and future-ready

5. Qualitative Indicator Rubric

Indicators that cannot be measured purely through statistics can use a five-level evidence-based rubric.

Level	Score Range	Description
Level 1: Foundational	0–19	Systems are absent, fragmented, or highly vulnerable
Level 2: Emerging	20–39	Basic policies or institutions exist but implementation is weak
Level 3: Developing	40–59	Systems operate but remain inconsistent or uneven
Level 4: Advanced	60–79	Systems are effective, coordinated, and broadly resilient
Level 5: Transformational	80–100	Systems are integrated, adaptive, innovative, and future-ready

6. Weighting Method

A transparent initial weighting model could assign equal importance to all seven pillars.

Pillar	Proposed Weight
Institutional Sustainability	15%
Financial Sustainability	15%
Economic Sustainability	15%
Social Sustainability	15%
Environmental Sustainability	15%
Innovation Sustainability	12.5%
Leadership Sustainability	12.5%
Total	**100%**

This slightly higher weighting for the first five pillars reflects their central role in development performance, while innovation and leadership remain essential enabling pillars.

For sector-specific assessments, the weights can be adjusted, but any adjustment should be explained and documented.

7. Calculation Method

The score for each indicator is standardized to a scale of 0–100.

The dimension score is calculated as:

Dimension Score = Weighted Average of Indicator Scores

The pillar score is calculated as:

Pillar Score = Weighted Average of Dimension Scores

The overall DSI score is calculated as:

DSI = Sum of Each Pillar Score × Pillar Weight

Example

Pillar	Score	Weight	Weighted Result
Institutional	72	15%	10.8
Financial	65	15%	9.75
Economic	68	15%	10.2
Social	74	15%	11.1
Environmental	61	15%	9.15
Innovation	58	12.5%	7.25
Leadership	70	12.5%	8.75
Overall DSI			**67.0**

This country would fall within the **Emerging Sustainability** category.

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8. Overall DSI Classification

DSI Score	Classification	Policy Interpretation
90–100	Transformational Leader	Highly resilient, integrated, and future-ready
80–89	Highly Sustainable	Strong systems with limited structural risks
70–79	Sustainable	Generally strong, with targeted areas for reform

DSI Score	Classification	Policy Interpretation
60–69	Emerging Sustainability	Progress is visible, but structural vulnerabilities remain
50–59	Development at Risk	Weak systems may undermine long-term progress
35–49	High Vulnerability	Major institutional and systemic reforms are needed
0–34	Critical Transformation Required	Development continuity is at serious risk

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9. Minimum Performance Safeguard

The overall DSI score should not hide serious weaknesses in one pillar.

For that reason, the methodology should include a **minimum-pillar safeguard**.

For example:

- A country cannot be classified as **Highly Sustainable** if any pillar scores below 50.
- A country cannot be classified as **Sustainable** if two or more pillars score below 50.
- Any pillar below 35 should trigger a **Critical Reform Alert**.

This avoids a strong economic score compensating for severe institutional, social, or environmental weakness.

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10. Trend and Progress Indicators

The DSI should measure not only current performance but also direction of travel.

Each pillar can receive one of five trend classifications:

Trend	Meaning
Strongly Improving	Significant and sustained progress
Improving	Positive development over time
Stable	Limited meaningful change
Deteriorating	Performance is weakening
Rapidly Deteriorating	Serious or accelerating decline

A country with a moderate score but a strong positive trend may be more promising than a country with a higher score that is deteriorating.

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11. Confidence Rating

Each score should also receive a data-confidence rating.

Confidence Level	Description
High	Reliable, current, independently verifiable data
Medium	Generally reliable data with some gaps
Low	Limited, outdated, inconsistent, or self-reported evidence

This strengthens the credibility of the index and makes data weaknesses visible.

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12. Final DSI Output

A complete DSI assessment should present:

- Overall DSI Score
- Seven Pillar Scores
- Dimension Scores
- Indicator-Level Results
- Maturity Level
- Trend Direction
- Data Confidence Rating
- Critical Reform Alerts
- Structural Risk Map
- Priority Reform Areas
- Investment Readiness Implications
- Three-, five-, and ten-year improvement targets

The most important improvement is to present the DSI not as one single number, but as a **complete development diagnostic**.

The overall score provides the headline, while the pillar, dimension, risk, trend, and confidence results explain what governments should do next.