

2030 Hive Mind is a real-time policy simulation game that explores how we can collaborate to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, and reveals the tough choices and trade-offs we'll have to make along the way.

How the game works

The game takes place in a fictional country where everyone is working to achieve the SDGs. There are seven Goals at play – the six SDGs that will be reviewed at the 2017 High Level Political Forum and Goal 13 on climate action. By downloading an app (a player's passport to the game), each player will be allocated a Goal to achieve, an initial set of randomly assigned policies, and a budget to spend. The aim of the game for the individual player is to maximise the collective amount of funds dedicated to their Goal. They can advance progress towards their Goal by funding policies they are currently assigned, or by finding and funding certain policies from other players that they think will be most effective. There are dozens of policies to choose from, each with a different impact on a Goal and some with multiple impacts across Goals. But without a critical mass of support, any policy (and any Goal) can fail. Players will need to select policies that not only have an impact on their Goal but are popular enough to succeed. Or alternatively convince enough of their fellow players to back their policies, and therefore build the political will needed to activate and implement them.

Players will make a series of investment decisions mimicking the passage of time from 2017 through 2030; they can follow their investments and their impact on the Goals as they course around the network of policies at interactive game tables and join with other players to decide on their collaboration strategies and maximise the impact of their limited resources. At each table, players will be able to view their own personal policy network and see how it combines with that of others through dynamic data visualisations.

As the policy network begins to affect the Goals, 2030 Hive Mind's dynamically generated National News Channel (NNC) will bring breaking news reports that show players how their collective decisions are affecting people across the country. Unexpected shocks will be introduced throughout the game that impact the policy network, meaning players will have to refine and adjust their strategies as they go. Players can also check how their progress compares to others via the *Impact Index*, which ranks how much of players' resources are positively affecting their Goal and how much are going to waste.

Why it matters

2030 Hive Mind allows key actors to explore the trade-offs, prioritisation and sequencing issues they need to consider when implementing the different elements of the SDGs (social, economic and environmental). The game offers a unique way to look at how policies work and form a network of influence; it gives players a pathway to form effective collaborative coalitions in support of multiple SDGs. It also allows players to track in real time their impact on the network, compare it to other delegates and find new points of collaboration and compromise.

The game employs a bespoke game engine to drive a set of dynamic, interactive graphics that respond in real time to the choices and actions of players. This enables them to track their individual and group influence on the matrix of policies and Goals. The social interactions at the heart of the game allow players to discover new touchpoints at which their different objectives combine and reveal how certain policies have leverage in ways they might not have previously considered.

The game simulates the real trade-offs and collaborations that already happen in the development process, including the existing barriers and pathways to successful policy implementation. But the aim goes beyond that. Real-time simulation and data visualisation show development actors the untapped potential that's already in their knowledge base and networks, while the game play sparks and nurtures collaboration across different groups. The game will be launched in beta-mode at the Global Festival of Ideas for Sustainable Development, to see how game theory might help evolve SDG implementation strategies and provide live lessons on how to respond to shocks and the unexpected consequences of decisions.