Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Mapper Methodology Paper

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Abstract

The proliferation of more than 50 green taxonomies has shown the increasing interest of policymakers worldwide to foster green capital flows and counteract greenwashing. The Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Mapper (SFTM) aims to foster interoperability across taxonomies worldwide through mapping taxonomy design features as well as technical screening criteria across economic activities substantially contributing to climate or wider environmental objectives. The paper lays out the methodology adopted in the SFTM to map an initial set of 11 taxonomies[1].

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1. Introduction

Sustainable finance taxonomies are a critical tool providing standardised definitions of sustainable economic activities, which in turn enable green capital flows and the detection and counteraction of greenwashing across corporates and investment portfolios. Given the variation in green taxonomies around the world, more work is needed to ensure the interoperability of green taxonomies. The Sustainable Finance Taxonomy Mapper (SFTM) aims to foster harmonisation, transparency, and comparability to align financial flows across global climate and environmental goals. Specifically, the Mapper will enhance interoperability by establishing a shared understanding of taxonomy design across jurisdictions at both overall and economic activity levels. Furthermore, it will provide decision-making support for policymakers, financial institutions, and investors with actionable insights to align taxonomies with global standards while accommodating local contexts. The Mapper has the following features:

- Mapping taxonomies: Enable users to compare taxonomies published globally on climate & environmental objectives.
- Interactive filters: Incorporate advanced filtering options that allow users to narrow taxonomies by governance, objectives, disclosure requirements, sectoral coverage, and technical screening criteria.
- User validation: The mapper will validate and incorporate feedback from financial institutions and investors to ensure its features align with market requirements and user needs.

For policymakers considering revising existing taxonomies or conceptualizing new ones, the Mapper will be a vital tool to align taxonomies with scientific and policy objectives, ensuring alignment with global standards. For financial institutions and corporates, the Mapper will enhance comparability, and reduce the cost of navigating multiple taxonomies across borders.

2. Information sources

As of October 2025, we use the following information sources for the covered taxonomies in the first phase of the project (sorted alphabetically):

ASEAN Taxonomy	Brazilian Sustainable Taxonomy	China Taxonomy	EU Taxonomy	Indonesia Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance	MDB – Common Principles Climate Mitigation Tracking	Mongolian Green Taxonomy	Rwanda Taxonomy	Singapore Taxonomy	South African Green Finance Taxonomy	Thailand Taxonomy
Asean Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance Version 3 (December 2024)	The latest version of the translated Brazilian Sustainable Taxonomy (October 2025)	Green Bond Endorsed Projects Catalogue (2021 Edition)	Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2020 on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment, and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178 of 6 July 2021 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1214 of 9 March 2022 amending Delegated Regulation (EU); 2021/2139 as regards economic activities in certain energy sectors and Delegated Regulation (EU) 4th June 2021; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2485 of 27 June 2023 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 establishing additional technical; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 of 4 June 2021 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852; Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/2486 of 27 June 2023 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2020/852	The Indonesia Sustainable Finance Taxonomy (Feb 2025)	Common Principles for Climate Mitigation Finance Tracking Document CPI's General Guidance for Tracking Green Finance	Mongolian Green Taxonomy National Sustainable Finance Roadmap Mongolian Sustainable Finance Principles & Sector Guidelines	The Rwanda Sustainable Finance Roadmap Rwanda Green Taxonomy Introduction and User Guide Rwanda Green Taxonomy Executive Summary Rwanda Green Taxonomy: Annex 1: Climate Change Mitigation Rwanda Green Taxonomy: Annex 2: Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Rwanda Green Taxonomy: Annex 3: Various Taxonomy Objectives	Singapore-Asia Taxonomy – Final version of the first report (Dec 2023) Application of the Singapore-Asia Taxonomy in the Financial and Corporate Sectors (Mar 2025)	The South Africa Green Finance Taxonomy (April 2022). The Draft Governance Mechanism for the RSA Green Taxonomy The SA Green Finance Taxonomy Methodology document The Development Process of the SA GFT A position paper on the vision for SA's GFT "Starting with Green and Ending with Sustainable" The Technical Paper "Financing a Sustainable Economy" A compendium of case studies on The SA GFT trial by SA financial market participants	Thailand Taxonomy Phase 1 document (June 2023) Excel Tool: Activities thresholds and criteria update: July 2025 Thailand Taxonomy Phase 2 (May 2025) update: July 2025

3. Methodology

The mapping of taxonomies enables users to visualise side by side taxonomies published around the world on climate and environmental objectives. In addition, the mapper is built with advanced filtering options that allow users to narrow taxonomies by governance, objectives, disclosure requirements, sectoral coverage, and activity-level technical screening criteria. We work with 9 research assistants to collect and verify data. The overall data protocol aims to provide an overview of each taxonomy, from its governance and objectives to disclosure requirements and sectoral coverage.

After several rounds of stakeholders' review and consultation, we have arrived at 6 types of data points and 20 data points in total:

- *General information*:
    - List of information sources used for the mapping
    - Taxonomy public launch date(s)
- *Governance*:
    - Lead Institution(s) and Institution Types in charge of Taxonomy Development
    - Development process
- *Minimum social safeguard*:
    - Description of minimal social safeguards
- *Design principles*:
    - Which industry classification system is used to categorise economic activities?
    - Does the Taxonomy incorporate a lifecycle approach?
    - Does the Taxonomy recognise and align with a certain scientific consensus (e.g. 1.5°C limit) or international norms (e.g. Paris Agreement, Global Biodiversity Framework, SDGs) at the design phase, for instance when they define the environmental objectives?
    - Taxonomy alignment principle: Does the Taxonomy require an economic activity to meet substantial contribution, do no significant harm and minimum social safeguard criteria to be aligned with the objective?
- *Disclosure requirements*:
    - For financial market participants: Is there a disclosure requirement at entity level?

    - For financial market participants: Is there a disclosure requirement for investment products?
    - For financial market participants: Is the disclosure requirement mandatory or voluntary?
    - For financial market participants: If mandatory, is the disclosure requirement specified in another policy instrument? If so, which one?
    - For corporates: Is there a disclosure requirement at entity level?
    - For corporates: Is there a disclosure requirement for financial products issued by the company (e.g. green bond)?
    - For corporates: Is the disclosure requirement mandatory or voluntary?
    - For corporates: If mandatory, is the disclosure requirement specified in another policy instrument? If so, which one?
    - Which financial indicators is the Taxonomy linked to?
- *Indicator/ Economic activity level design*:
    - How many sectors are included in the Taxonomy? Which ones?
    - How many economic activities are included in the Taxonomy? How many for each sector?

For the first phase of the SFTM, the exercise of mapping economic activities focuses on activities contributing to climate change mitigation objective only. The deep mapping of taxonomies by economic activities and technical screening criteria allow side-by-side comparison of sectoral coverage as well as specific substantial contribution (SC) criteria and do no significant harm (DNSH) criteria, if applicable.

The mapping between EU Taxonomy and South African Green Finance Taxonomy is referenced from the report “A Comparison Between the EU Green Taxonomy and South Africa’s Green Taxonomy”[2]. The mapping between EU Taxonomy, China Taxonomy, and Singapore Taxonomy is based on “Common Ground Taxonomy Multi-Jurisdiction Activity Tables”[3].

[2] Cojoianu, T. F., Hoepner, A. G. F., & Vu, A. (2022). *A comparison of the EU Green Taxonomy with South Africa’s Green Taxonomy*. European Union Directorate General for International Partnerships.
[3] International Platform on Sustainable Finance. (2024). *Common Ground Taxonomy Multi-Jurisdiction Activity Tables*. International Platform on Sustainable Finance. https://finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e83394d0-daf1-487e-b1bf-922731767a10_en?filename=241113-common-ground-taxonomy-multi-jurisdiction-activity-tables_en.pdf

For the rest of the taxonomies, first, we match similar sectors across the taxonomies to carry out an in-depth mapping by economic activity. Within each matched sector, we identify similar activities based on their names and descriptions. In some cases, one activity in one taxonomy can be matched with several activities in another taxonomy. This is the case, for instance, for "*Transport via railways*" in Singapore Taxonomy that can be matched with 5 activities in Indonesia Taxonomy (i.e. "*Passenger rail transportation*", "*Urban rail transportation*", "*Rail transportation for tourism*", "*Other rail transportation*", and "*Freight rail transport*"). Next, we map substantial contribution criteria for climate change mitigation and DNSH criteria for the other objectives. Some taxonomies do not have specific SC criteria and DNSH criteria on an economic activity basis; hence, we do not collect criteria for these. For some taxonomies (e.g. ASEAN, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand), SC criteria can be broken down into 2 or 3 categories (green, amber/ amber tier 2, and/ or red/ amber tier 3). In these cases, we include all criteria included in all the categories as SC criteria.

Finally, as these taxonomies adopt different industrial classification systems, we map the activities to Prodcom ("PRODuction COMmunautaire")[4] and EBOPS[5] ("Extended Balance of Payments services classification"). PRODCOM is an annual survey for the collection and dissemination of statistics on the production of industrial (mainly manufactured) goods in the European Union (EU). Each product has an 8-digit code used to record production for that year. The first four digits of a Prodcom code come from the NACE classification (which groups economic activities), the first six digits come from the CPA classification (which groups products by activity), and the last two digits are unique to Prodcom. Most Prodcom codes are fully linked to the Combined Nomenclature (CN)[6]. This means that the data from Prodcom can be directly compared with international trade data that also use the CN classification. For service-based sectors such as construction and transport, we match taxonomies activities with EBOPS. One activity can be mapped with several codes, highlighting the complexities and broad coverage of economic activities across taxonomies.

[4] Procom
[5] EBOPS
[6] Combined Nomenclature

4. Conclusion

While different countries have developed sustainable finance taxonomies on top of various industry classifications, we find that developing taxonomies which are easily mappable to the Combined Nomenclature (for the EU) or the World Customs Organization's Harmonized System (HS) codes for goods which are used in trade worldwide, in addition to the Extended Balance of Payments Services Classification (EBOPS) for services, provides enhanced interoperability opportunities with taxonomies developed under other jurisdictions.

This is due to the granularity of these classification systems, which become a necessity when observing the level of detail required to code the activity descriptions of green taxonomies.