4 Country Performance

4.1 Country distribution

The scatter diagram in Figure 15 provides a different perspective on the countries' green growth performance by region. While the distribution of scores across regions tends to be similar in range, their positions on the Y-plane reveals that many countries in Europe have high scores for the Green Growth Index, with values between 60 and 80. In contrast, countries in Africa, the Americas, and Asia gather around scores between 20 and 60, which correspond to low and moderate green growth performance. Oceania has only two countries with Green Growth Index, New Zealand, and Australia, that tend to follow the same distribution as the other three regions. Figure 16 presents the distribution of countries for the four green growth dimensions and reveals more information on the green growth performance for other countries in Oceania. The lack of data for green economic opportunities in Oceania prevented the computation of the Green Growth Index for many countries in this region. While country performance in Oceania in social inclusion approaches those in other regions, it tends to follow the distribution of countries in Europe as far as efficient and sustainable resource use is concerned. It is noteworthy that while many countries in Europe have better scores on green economic opportunities, many European countries have also low and very low scores, similar to most countries in other regions. The countries in Europe excel in social inclusion where scores are all high and very high. This region is approaching the sustainability goal of leaving no one behind. On the other hand, this remains a big challenge in many countries in Africa where half of the countries remain to have low performance in social inclusion. The distribution of scores is promising for natural capital protection where countries across regions tend to gather at the upper end of the scatter diagram, which implies that they are all racing to reach targets for this dimension.

Figure 15 Distribution pattern of country scores for the Green Growth Index by region, 2019

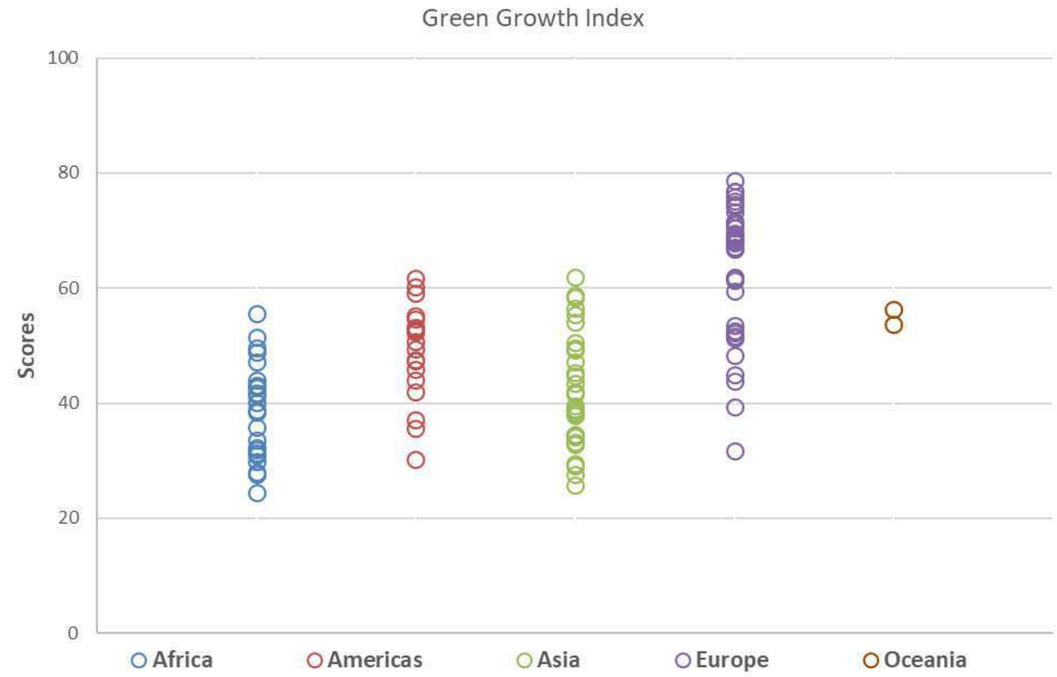
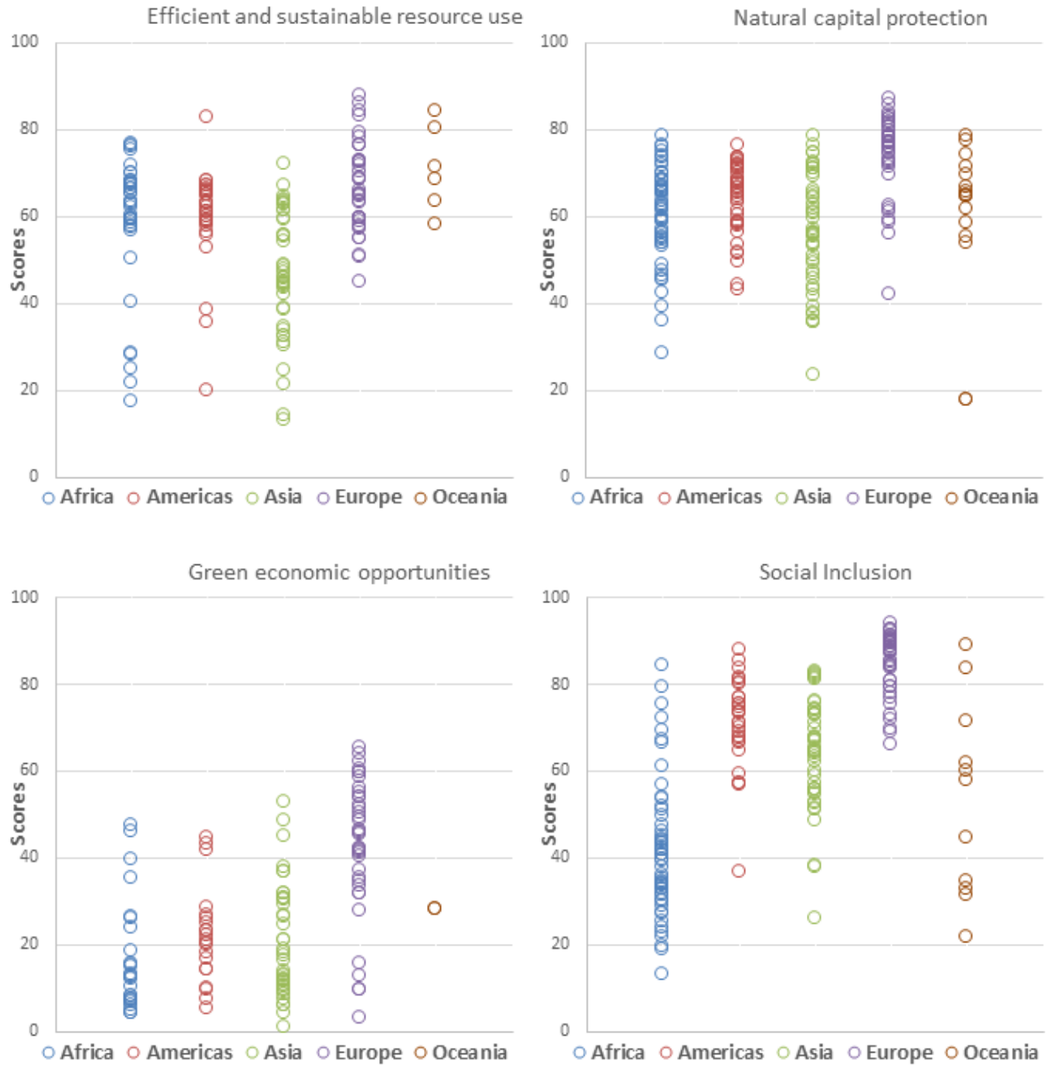


Figure 16 Distribution pattern of country scores for the green growth dimensions by region, 2019



4.2 Best performers by region

The top ranking countries by region are Sweden in Europe with an index score of 78.72, Japan in Asia with an index score of 61.83, Mexico in the Americas with an index score of 61.61, New Zealand in Oceania with an index score of 56.33, and Tanzania in Africa with an index score of 55.56. Figure 17 shows the scores of the indicator categories used to compute the Green Growth Index for these five countries. It further shows the benchmarking method used for measuring the distance of indicators to their sustainability targets. Note that a score of 100 indicates that a target was reached.

Sweden has a good green growth performance as it progresses very close to achieving all of its targets in the social inclusion pillar, reflected by a dimension score of 94.06. This makes Sweden the global top performer for this dimension, followed by the Netherlands with 92.51, then Denmark with 92.33 (Table 17). Sweden has also made significant improvements in almost reaching its target in sustainable land use by decreasing trends in its fertilizer application to reduce nutrient surpluses, thus improving soil quality (OECD, 2019c).

Japan has almost reached its targets for social equity and access to basic services with scores of 95.72 and 93.84, respectively (Table

17). The progress in social inclusion indicators has been achieved as the country promotes social welfare, primarily due to its aging population (ADB, 2012). However, in comparison to other top countries, Japan scores the lowest in gender balance, requiring continued work in improving workplace culture and early education to promote equality for women (Estévez-Abe, 2013). Japan is also on track to meet environmental quality and GHG emission reduction targets.

Mexico has nearly reached its target for material use efficiency. Other notable progress is also observed in the social inclusion pillar and natural capital protection, but with slight lags in both access to basic services and biodiversity and ecosystem protection, respectively. Mexico has also scored moderately in terms of green investment, as it is crucial to the economy to develop climate-resilient infrastructure due to the natural vulnerability of the country to climate-related disasters (Holmes, Orozco, & Paniagua Borrego, 2017).

New Zealand continues to have good green growth performance in the region, previously being the top performing country in Oceania in 2019, as its current score increased in score from 52.17 to 56.33 (Acosta et al., 2019a). The social inclusion target is nearly achieved across all indicators, highlighting New Zealand's priority in equal opportunities within social policy. The progress in the natural capital protection shows that the country is on track to meet the targets on cultural and social value and environmental quality, although the scores for biodiversity and ecosystem protection and GHG emissions reductions are moderate. With nearly half of all New Zealand's emissions coming from agriculture, this reflects the low scores observed in sustainable land use as a signal of New Zealand's current agricultural practices (Carroll & Daigneault, 2019).

Tanzania has nearly reached its target for gender balance, as its strongest performing indicator in the social inclusion pillar. Tanzania has also performed well in efficient and sustainable energy and material use efficiency categories and has the second highest score for green investment among these top countries in other regions. As a result of embarking on large-scale, the public-private partnerships are established such as the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania initiative which aims to mobilize 3.5 billion USD in investments by 2030 to help the African country transition to a green economy (Buseth, 2017).

Figure 17 Distance to targets of green growth indicators in top performing countries by region, 2019

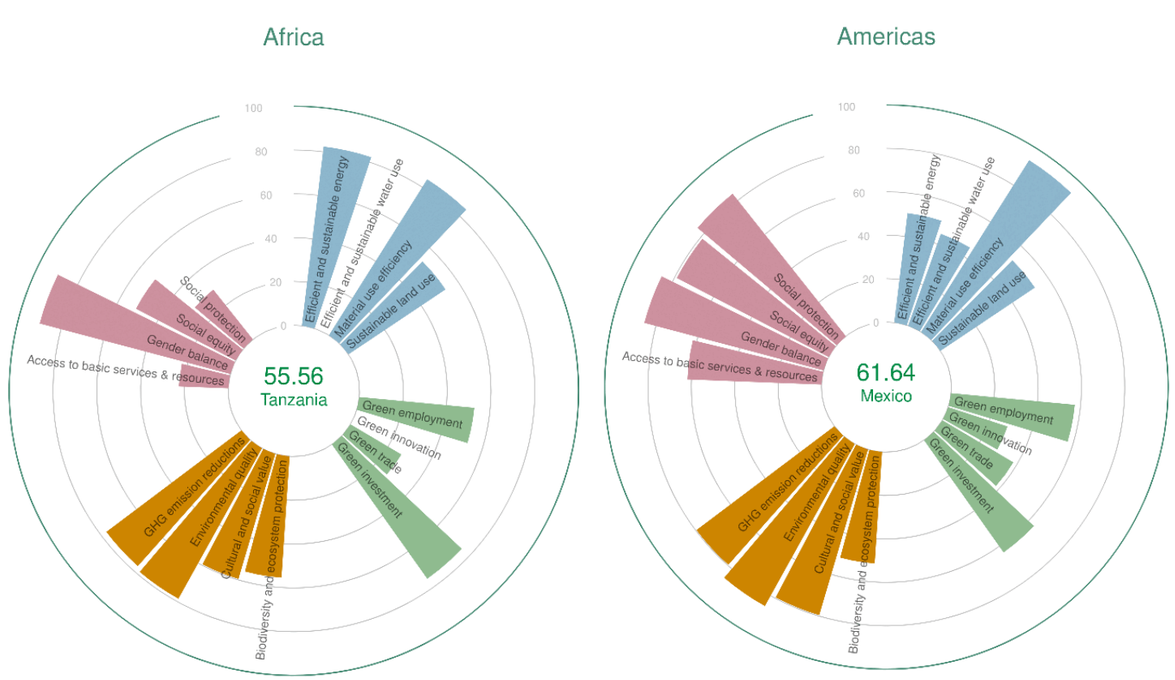


Figure 17 Distance to targets of green growth indicators in top performing countries by region, 2019 (continued)

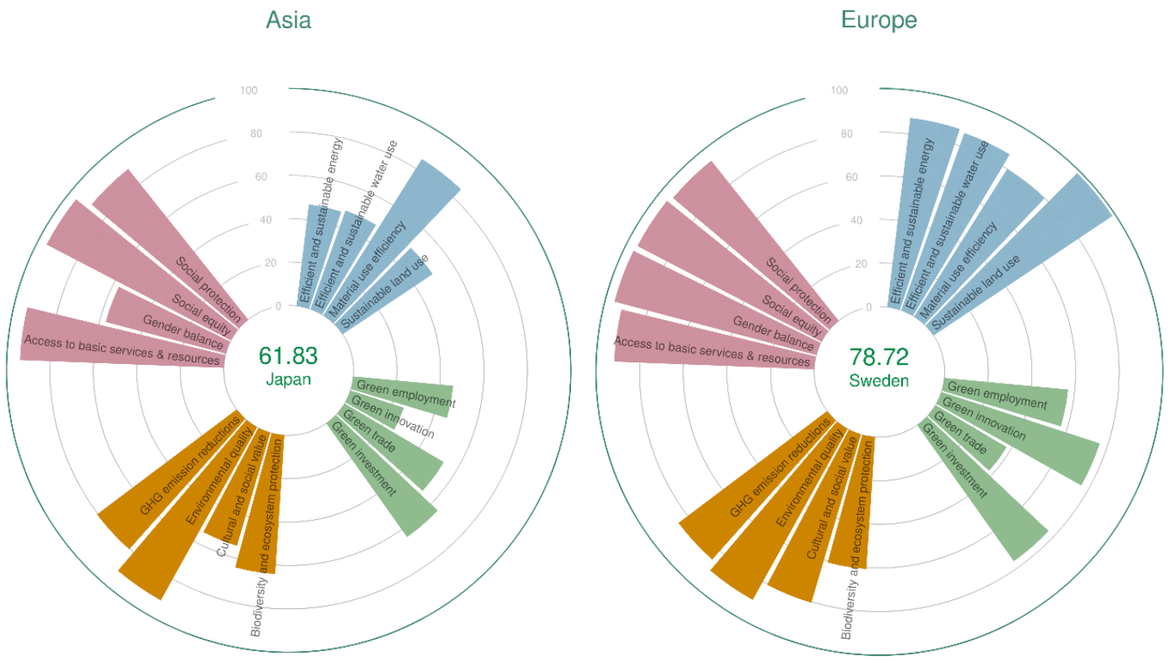


Figure 17 Distance to targets of green growth indicators in top performing countries by region, 2019 (continued)