

SDG Partnership Symposium

Unleashing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships

A celebration and a call to action

17 September 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, APCO Worldwide, 31st Floor, Nomad Tower, 1250 Broadway, New York

Introduction

We are halfway through their implementation period and, sadly, the SDGs are still far off track. Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) are a key delivery mechanism helping to underpin all of the goals. When done well, partnerships can leverage resources of all kinds from across societal sectors to create innovative solutions, unlock finance, operate at scale, deliver system transformation, create new standards in sustainability and transfer knowledge and technologies. Despite their immense potential, MSPs are not being harnessed systematically or in numbers anywhere near sufficient to meet the magnitude of the challenges at hand. Further, many partnerships are simply not delivering as effectively as they need to.

At the start of 2023, the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator (an initiative by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and The Partnering Initiative), Partnerships2030 (GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) and the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies embarked on a research and awareness-raising campaign, focussing on the essential questions: ‘what’s holding back more and more effective collaboration’ and ‘what do we need to do to deliver a wholesale shift in global partnering practice and impact’?

A glimpse at what we found

The results from a global survey, countless interviews and multiple events in person and online are fascinating and comprehensive, providing a sobering snapshot of the current environment for partnering as well as a clear steer for what we collectively need to do to support partnerships to fully deliver on the SDGs and climate goals. Findings include:

- **91% of survey respondents** believe that professionalising partnering skills and competencies would improve MSP impact, but **only 13%** said that training was accessible in their countries. Further, **93%** believe they would deliver better and faster partnerships if their organization was better set up and institutionally optimised for collaboration.
- **Only 24%** felt that current funding models are strongly or fully effective in maximising innovation, quality and impact, with **96%** agreeing that funders need to adjust their approaches if they want MSPs to deliver greater impact. **And they’ve told us exactly what they want funders to do.**

- **93%** believe partnerships platforms are essential or important catalysts of partnerships for the SDGs and climate, and yet there are surprisingly few such platforms around the world. The majority of respondents (**52%**) thought they should be multi-stakeholder, rather than being run solely by the government (**3%**) or even the UN (**11%**).
- And for the first time we have new evidence on how certain key 'building blocks' lead directly to greater MSP impact.

SDG Partnership Symposium

The SDG Partnership Symposium will be held on the eve of the 2023 SDG Summit, 6pm-8pm on Sunday 17 September in New York. At the Symposium, the report will be launched, and a Call to Action issued towards investing in a supportive eco-system to drive MSPs for the SDGs and climate.

Join leaders from government, foundations, business, the UN, and civil society to:

- Be the first to hear and discuss the results of this groundbreaking study on the current state of partnership enabling factors and what can be done to accelerate the take-up of MSPs;
- Share your experiences and gain fresh insights on your own organizational approach and what you can do to increase the impact from your partnerships or the partnerships you support;
- Network over a glass of wine while watching the sun set over the Manhattan skyline.

Organizers

The event is organized by the campaign partners above and kindly hosted by APCO Worldwide.

Participation

The Symposium will be held as an in-person event with no virtual participation. Due to limited space, interested parties must apply at: <https://forms.gle/VbnT2nAh3aqeSWNx6> (deadline **11 September 2023**). The organizing partners will notify selected participants by 13 September 2023. Please note that there are no associated costs to attend, and there is no funding support available.

Programme

Time	Agenda item
6:00 - 6:30 PM	Opening drinks & networking
6:30 - 6:40 PM	Welcoming remarks
6:40 - 7:00 PM	Presentation of key findings and launch of new study - “Unlocking the Power of Partnerships – Essential enabling factors for collaboration towards 2030” .

7:00 - 7:45 PM	High-level panel debate on the state of partnerships for the SDGs- Unleashing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships
7:45 - 8:00 PM	Discussion in groups Optional to participate.
	Continued networking - drinks & hors d'oeuvres