July 2021

Pieces of a puzzle: towards national sustainable development advisory bodies

Global Forum for
National SDG
Advisory Bodies

Acknowledgements

Authors
↘ Todd Kirkbride and Danielle Jean-Pierre Figueroa
↘ The Partnering Initiative

Editorial team
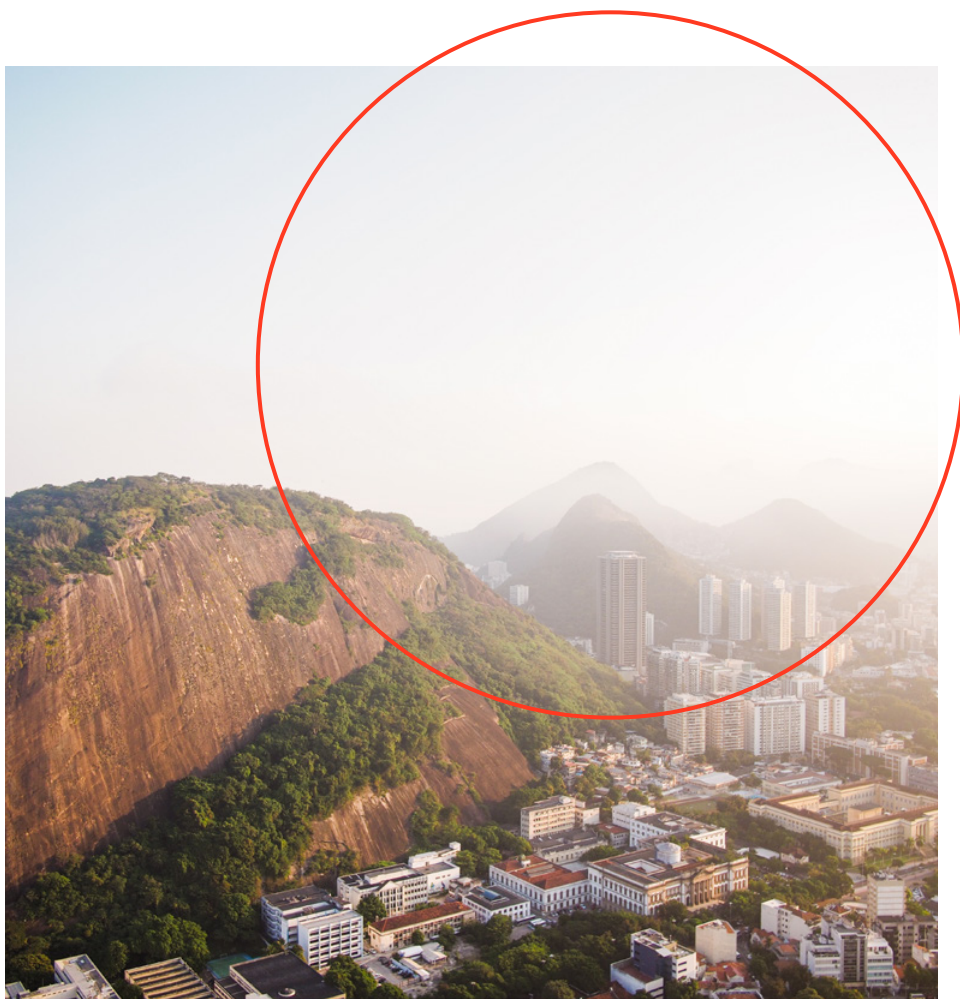Dr. Hannah Janetschek (responsible), Felix Meyerhoff
↘ info@nachhaltigkeitsrat.de

↘ German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE)
c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Potsdamer Platz 10
10785 Berlin, Germany

Design
↘ Studio Hoekstra

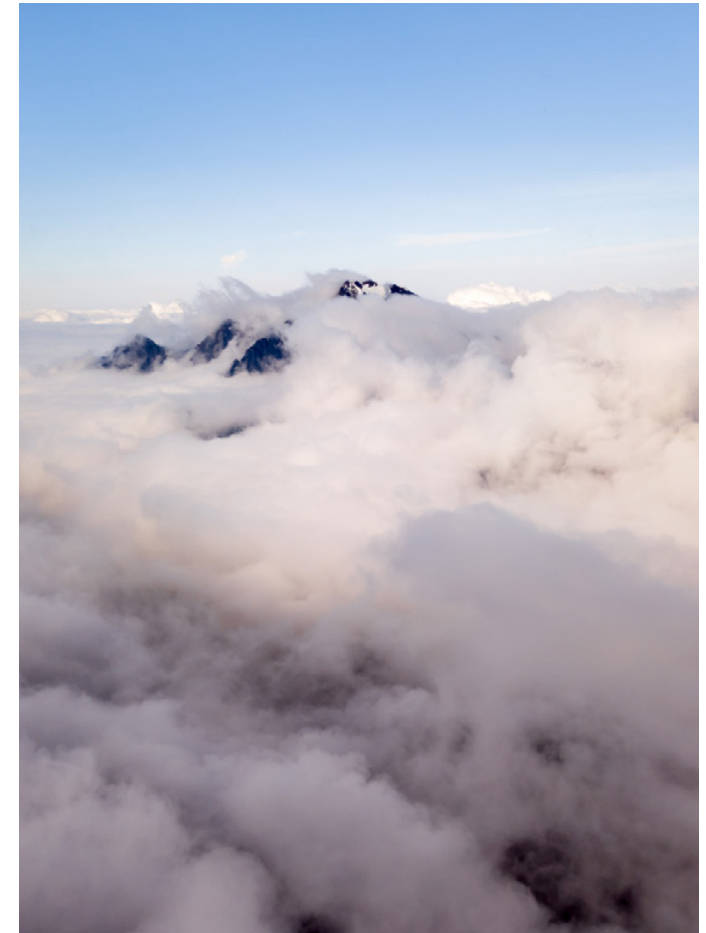# About the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies

The Global Forum is a network that connects the knowledge and experience of multi-stakeholder advisory commissions, councils and similar bodies for sustainable development. These bodies contribute to the national institutional architectures for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By bridging knowledge and interests of various stakeholder groups, multi-stakeholder advisory bodies foster social acceptance and cohesion within society in times of transformation. The demand for their work in facilitating negotiation outcomes cannot be underestimated.

This forum for and by national multi-stakeholder advisory bodies is as heterogeneous as the respective contexts its members are in, which vary accordingly in their institutional development, set-up, mandate and role. Constant exchange in and across working groups creates a rich marketplace of ideas, negotiation mechanisms and effective policy measures that can easily be transferred and tailored to local needs and demands elsewhere. As a demand-driven network, it constantly evolves its focus in collective processes. With its rich pool of collective knowledge, the forum effectively invites stakeholders and governments around the globe to adapt, implement and jointly accelerate the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Table of contents

This is an interactive PDF. Click on the page you'd like to go to.

Please consider the environment & only print pages that you need.

Abbreviations

ADUS	Alliance for Sustainable Urban Development, Ecuador
ANCB	National Association of Local Governments, Benin
ANCM	National Association of Municipalities of Benin
CCIB	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Benin
CEMDES	Corporación Empresarial para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Ecuador
CePED	Center for Partnership and Expertise for Sustainable Development, Benin
CNP-Benin	National Employers Council of Benin
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGCS-ODD	SDG-Unit in Benin
EU	European Union
FFLA	Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
IATWG	The Inter Agency Technical Working Group, or IATW Committee
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Allowance
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MdSC	Maison de la Société Civile, Benin
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Multi-stakeholder platform
NDC	National Determined Contributions
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PASCiB	Plateforme des Acteurs de la Société Civile au Bénin
RNE	German Council for Sustainable Development
SDCM	Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TSDP	Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Preface:
Context of the study
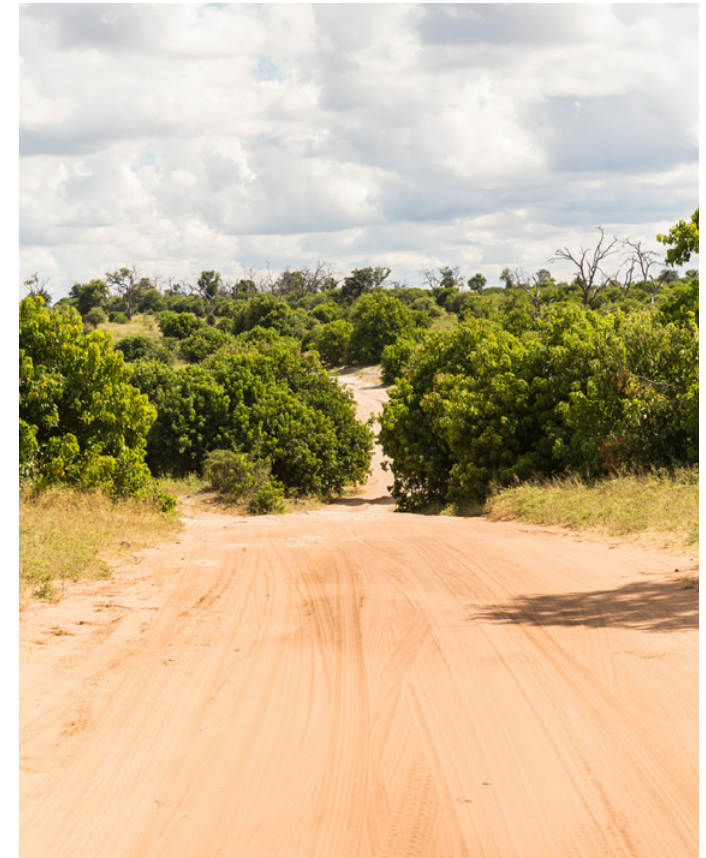
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in September 2015 by all Member States of the United Nations. It provides political orientation for sustainable development in all policy areas and serves as a framework for international cooperation, presenting a plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership. Through gearing up for the "Decade of Action", many efforts at all policy levels have been made. With the growing political support, there is a momentum for launching an ambitious and accelerated response to address the current global

challenges and reach transformation through this common vision.

The pathways towards sustainable development are complex and highly context dependent. Economic, ecologic, political and social contexts determine the way countries are prepared to tackle the immense task of this century. Depending on the individual baseline situation, policymaking requires disruptive changes in thematic areas like food systems, social security, urbanisation, energy transition or mobility systems in order to achieve or fast forward processes for sustainable development.

To achieve the complex transition towards sustainable societies, multi-stakeholder advisory bodies can play a key role as forums for consensus-building. That is why multiple governance mechanisms, such as ad hoc commissions, institutionalised and mandated multi-stakeholder bodies or collective partnership platforms have drastically evolved over the recent years[1]. For the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) they all fulfil various functions and operate in diverse ways. Transformative multi-stakeholder platforms (MSP)[2] focus on supporting the catalysis and implementation of partnerships by building upon in-country support structures. National SDG advisory bodies can be considered examples of institutionalised transformative MSP-advisory bodies that constructively engage with their governments and create space for action and social acceptance of transformation. Their principles embody a "whole-of-society" approach that aims to build consensus or collective action. In doing so, they can rely on a reciprocal relationship with their governments.

1 Stibbe, Darian, Prescott, Dave. "The SDG Partnership Guidebook: a practical guide to building high-impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals". The Partnering Initiative and UNDESA 2020: ↘ PDF

2 This study has been created in the context of the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory bodies and hence MSP-advisory bodies will be used as general term for partnership platforms, councils, commissions or other coordination units for various stakeholder groups. ↘ URL

This study seeks to understand the environment and existing stakeholder processes in order to establish institutionalised stakeholder mechanisms, eg. MSP-advisory bodies.

In this study, the term 'multi-stakeholder body' is used in a way that still reflects a broad range of forms, structures, and mechanisms but shares the commonality of a reciprocal relationship with government partners that are responsible for sustainable development delivery. Meaning, while their composition, characteristics and work modes may vary due to national demands; the different multi-stakeholder bodies all provide a dialogue space for stakeholders to constructively advise governments.

This study provides a light touch assessment of the institutional environment, stakeholder engagement and history, as well as policy processes in four countries that embrace such MSP-advisory body functions. At the time of this study, the countries' multi-stake holder bodies were not institutionalised yet. In order to understand how these bodies can and may evolve for accelerated SDG delivery, their stakeholder overview and engagement in national sustainable development processes is laid out and assessed. The four countries in this study are a first cohort. Comparable assessment in another cohort of eight countries is ongoing and will be published as a second volume to this study.

Collecting the puzzle pieces

National institutional arrangements for SDG delivery come in many forms.

In 2015, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, a solid follow-up and review mechanism was adopted: the Voluntary National Review (VNR). In some countries these VNRs were an additional element to an existing national sustainable development policy cycle and strategy. In others they unleashed and created new national dynamics by initiating policy cycles that align national development plans and indicator reports with the SDGs. Beyond this, the indivisible nature of economic, ecologic and social goals created momentum for concerted and coordinated action and herewith fostered the creation of governance mechanisms, policy cycles of action and reporting for the implementation of the SDGs.

Due to the interconnected nature of the SDGs, they stimulated substantial changes in the national institutional architecture to ensure their delivery. Achieving the SDGs is mandatory for all parts of the executive branch of a government and requires coordination and collaboration across government institutions for integrated policymaking. This integrated policymaking approach that in some cases led to coordination committees across government institutions and initiated enduring coordination processes is the so called "whole-of-government" approach.[3]

Integration of MSP-advisory bodies in national institutional architectures*

WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY

Science Platform

CSO-Forum

Audit Institution

Business Sector

Statistical Office

Government Coordination Mechanism for SDG Implementation (e.g. SDG-Unit)

MSP-ADVISORY BODY

Parla-mentarian Mechanism

Cities & Communities

Head of State

WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT

Subnational Level

Economic / Dev. Ministry

Environment Ministry

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Finance Ministry

Social Ministry

→ informs

↔ mandated two-way relationship or multilevel governance

Various functions of an MSP-advisory body

(see ↘ Global Forum 2021: Pathways for national sustainable development bodies):

— substantial role in national sustainable development policy processes
— advocates for SDG delivery and engages the public
— links together stakeholder and promotes local networks
— builds consensus on transformational topics
— provides constructive advice to the government
— collects data
— reports advancements
— pilots projects

Eminent pol. individuals

Academia

Unions

Social CSOs

Faith-based Organisations

OFFICE MSP-Advisory Body

Environmental CSOs

Youth Repres.

Business Sector

Vulnerable Groups
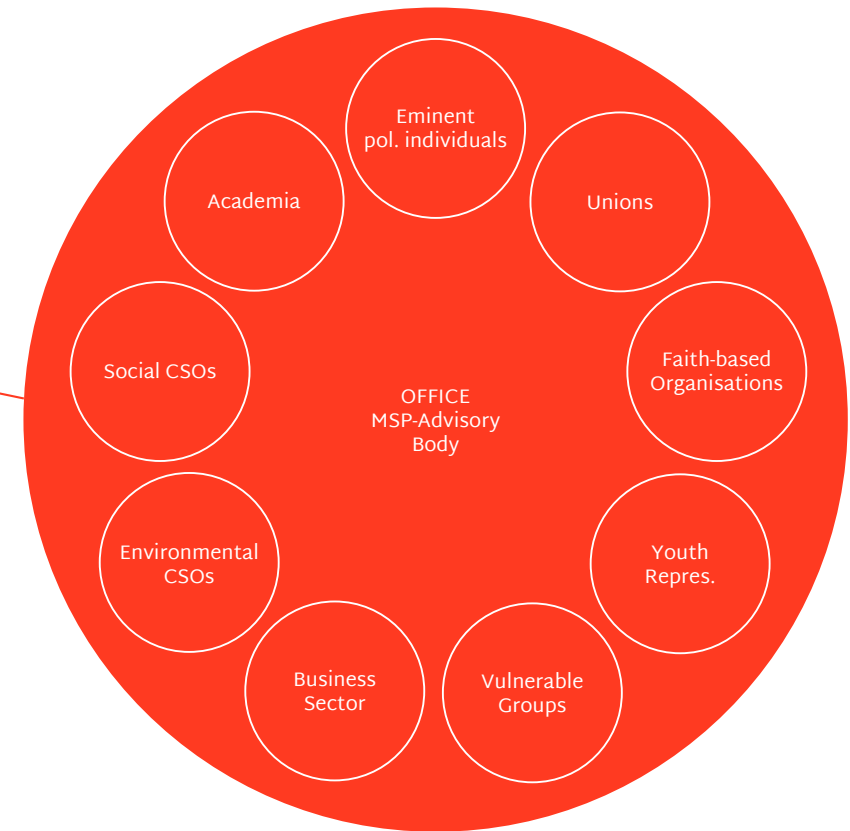
*Exemplary institutional composition. It may vary from context to context.

Collecting the puzzle pieces

To secure a "whole-of-society" approach to constructively engage with governments on development priorities, a large number of multi-stakeholder national SDG committees have emerged to coordinate national responses to the Voluntary National Reviews. The VNR is the main mechanism being used by countries to report progress on the 2030 Agenda and to date, 142 countries have prepared reviews. The establishment of governance and institutional mechanisms (e.g. multi-stakeholder platforms, MSPs) to assist in this process is a basic building block for effective 2030 Agenda implementation and signals to national and international communities the extent to which governments have institutionalised their efforts towards realising progress on sustainable development[4]. These platforms and bodies that are a result of the VNR processes are as heterogeneous as the local context conditions, political systems and traditions of dealing with multiple perspectives and interests. In their heterogeneity, they all share the goal to make a meaningful contribution to national and local SDG implementation. Over time, these structures are sometimes consolidated and sometimes reloaded whenever the process of creating a VNR is aspired.

Accelerating current processes can be done by prioritising synergetic activities and processes across the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The networked system of the SDGs allows for achieving benefits for multiple goals and targets with a focus on synergetic activities. Disruptive change is needed in places and thematic areas where sustainable development trends are negative, pathways are locked-in or path dependencies need to be overcome. Disruptive changes are controversial and thus they require a facilitation

4 Kindornay, Shannon and Gendron, Renée, (2020), 'Progressing National SDGs Implementation: An Independent Assessment of the Voluntary National Review Reports Submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019', Ottawa: Canadian Council for International Cooperation. ↘ PDF

Functions of institutionalised MSP-advisory bodies:
- *advocacy for SDG delivery*
- *consensus-building*
- *collecting data*
- *localization of SDGs*
- *reporting advancements*

of dialogues and negotiations among a broad mix of diverse stakeholders, also in the interest of social acceptance for transformation. Multi-stakeholder advisory bodies, such as sustainable development commissions and councils, that have a history of advising their governments on sustainable development policy, are well equipped to navigate through transformational changes and suggest pathways forward.

Institutionalised multi-stakeholder bodies can provide various functions for their governments from being agile forums for consensus-building on controversial issues to raising awareness, collecting data, monitoring advancements and advocating for sustainable development with a collective approach. With these various functions they fill an important gap in national governance architectures for sustainable development delivery. Their role can vary from navigating complex themes and lending themselves as compass to their government as well as complementary platform for collective engagement, localization of SDGs, monitoring progress and trustworthy partner for joint roadmaps on SDG delivery. The most distinct feature of institutionally established MSP-advisory bodies is their continuity and the long-term processes they can initiate with this continuity as well as institutionalised feedback mechanisms with government institutions.

MSP-advisory bodies are an example of the type of MSPs that have been put in place to add value to the implementation and review of national sustainable policy making. MSP-advisory bodies are understood to build consensus on controversial topics of transformation that incorporate academic, societal and private sector perspectives. They can be a mechanism

for stakeholders to mediate between conflicting interests of stakeholders and collectively provide pathways for sustainable development policymaking. Moreover, they can create a collaborative ecosystem and create space for collaborative action necessary to deliver socially accepted sustainable development objectives.

One example of a national multi-stakeholder structure is the German Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung, RNE), with 15 eminent council members, appointed by the German Government and tasked with generating contributions to the German Sustainable Development Strategy; specifying concrete areas of action and projects; and making sustainability a public issue of vital importance[5]. The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development[6]

5 German Council for Sustainable Development ↘ URL

6 Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development ↘ URL

7 Global Forum 2021: Pathways for national sustainable development bodies ↘ URL

is a similar MSP-advisory body, serving as an influential forum that brings key societal actors together. The Commission promotes cooperation in order to achieve sustainable development and strives to integrate the strategic objectives of sustainable development into national policy, administration and social practices. For more examples of their composition and working modes, please see the Global Forum sister study on pathways for national sustainable development advisory bodies.[7]

Methodological approach

This study analyses the pieces of an institutional puzzle; stakeholder groups and their degree of organisation as well as national sustainable development policy processes. It does so with the goal to derive an understanding of whether existing processes and dialogues hold potential and options for establishing a legitimised and continuous national SDG advisory body with consultative status to national decision-makers for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence the research on potential MSP-advisory bodies was guided by the following two key questions:

Guiding questions

— Is the specific country context conducive to set up (or strengthen) a permanent national MSP-advisory body?
— How can the already existing institutions and dialogue processes become a constructive and permanent partner to national governments?
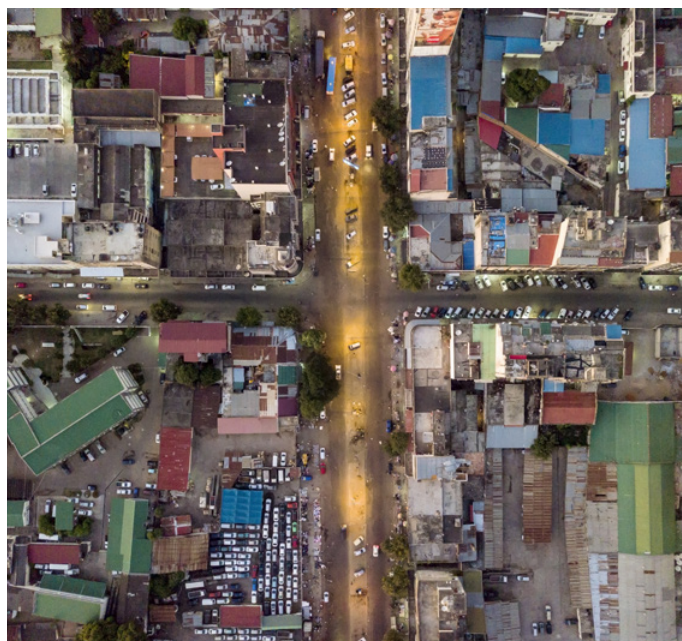
The study has identified four countries, namely Kenya, Tanzania, Benin and Ecuador that have chosen different pathways regarding consensual reporting and decision-making for sustainable development. The following country case studies provide insights from the empirical and the desktop research under-taken in each country. All four profiles are assessed along twelve criteria[8] with a qualitative perception of current trends and action needed, aiming to identify the pieces of the puzzle towards a continuous MSP-advisory body in the respective countries.

From a larger group of countries, experts selected these four cases to understand the puzzle pieces required for sound SDG delivery. They were purposely selected based on expert opinion and according to the following criteria and stepwise process: (1) democratic political system as context condition, (2) existence of a national advisory body that has been officially engaged in a national VNR process, aiming at a "whole-of-society" approach.

8 See ↘ Annex for more information

Case studies: four emerging MSP-advisory bodies

KENYA
– The Inter Agency Technical Working Group on SDGs

BENIN
– Cadre institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD

ECUADOR
– The National Platform ODS Territorio Ecuador

TANZANIA
– Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform
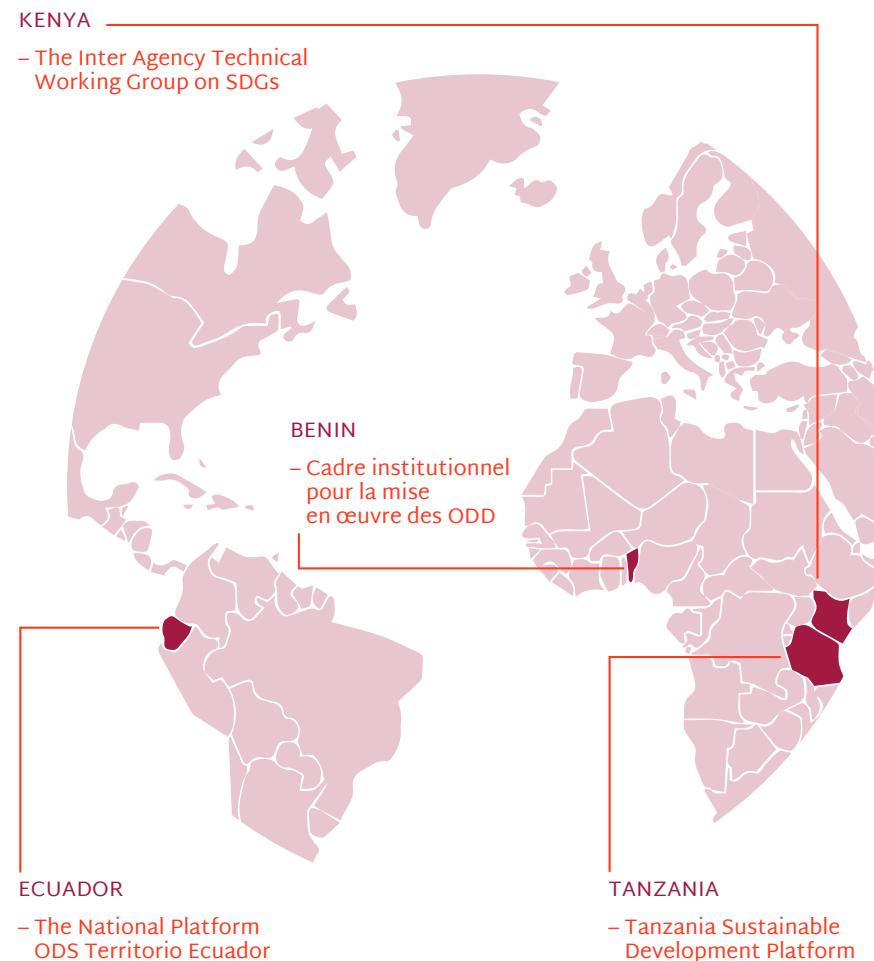
Collecting the puzzle pieces

Showcased in the forthcoming chapters, the four cases all share a national commitment to multi-stakeholder negotiations, inclusion processes and the aspiration to implement the SDGs in a "whole-of-society" approach. However, each context is framed differently with existing policies to align such a platform process within. Furthermore, there are clear differences between the countries when it comes to existing umbrella organisations of the various stakeholder groups. This study aims to identify the various policies, processes and engaged stakeholder groups required in order to most effectively deliver implementation and reporting of the SDGs in the coming years.

The country cases in this study were developed along the research questions and considered the following analytical categories: (1) an institutional environmental assessment (considering political environments; institutional structures; political engagement; and inclusive, progressive, or open society elements) and (2) an assessment of the MSP-advisory platform or body, considering external connections and support as well as internal governance processes and mechanisms.

The research is based on both primary and secondary data that underwent an analytical process of triangulation using various strategies and methods to investigate the same phenomenon. The desk research (files, reports, evaluations, webinars, manuals, VNRs, National Sustainable Development Strategies, existing information on MSP-platforms and bodies) provided background information to anchor the environmental assessment and the mechanisms put in place guiding the multi-stakeholder engagement processes. This was complemented with six to eight

Aim of the study: Understanding the potential for mandated national advisory bodies with consultative status to SDG decision-makers.

expert interviews per country, from all stakeholders (government, civil society, the private sector, academia, and external support agencies)[9]. Experts included in each sector may vary per country depending on the sector level of implication with the MSP and their involvement with the multi-stakeholder process subject to this study. Interviews were conducted around a common semi-structured interview guideline with specific questions to cover each criterion. The template was adjusted as needed, based on any unique characteristics of the country identified during desk research.

The findings of the research are meant to reflect how current governance architecture, national sustainable development policy processes and existing stakeholder groups collaborate. Moreover, it is aimed to carve out the baseline stakeholder landscape of umbrella organisations that may be advanced to carry out the function and role of an MSP-advisory body in the existing puzzle of institutions and policy processes.
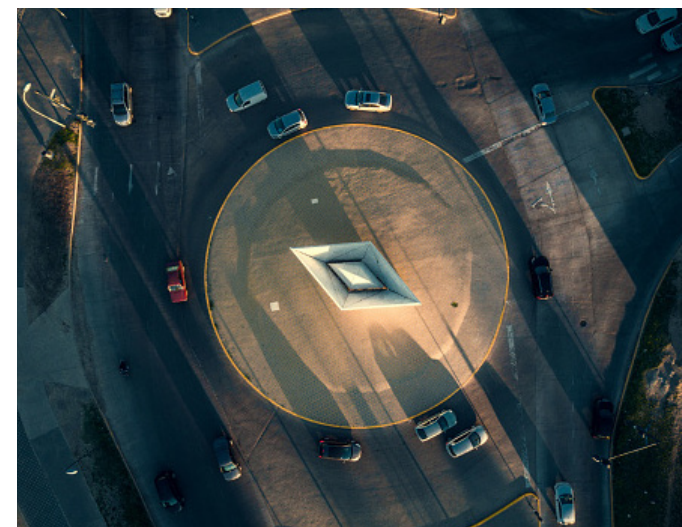
Kenya: Front runner in institutionalising stakeholder engagement

10 Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2017: Implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in Kenya ⬊ PDF

11 Government of Kenya, 2020: Second Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals ⬊ PDF

The government of Kenya is actively engaging stakeholders in delivering the 2030 Agenda. The Government has subscribed to the value added of stakeholder participation as an important element in guiding decision-making and supporting it in achieving its strategic sustainable development objectives. While the responsibility of coordinating the implementation and tracking of the SDGs falls within the mandate of the State Department of Planning, it is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. This awareness has enabled stakeholders to engage and influence government processes and through this collaborative process, the SDGs have been thoroughly integrated within Kenya's National Development Plan, known as Kenya Vision 2030, and the country's main platform for sustainable development stakeholders. The Inter Agency Technical Working Group (IATWG) – hereafter called Committee – comprising of officers from key government Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and other key stakeholders, such as youth representatives and others from across different sectors. The Government hosts SDG consultative meetings with all umbrella organisations in order to share experiences, learn lessons, discuss progress, next steps and to adapt accelerated actions.

The two inclusive processes to draft the 2017[10] and 2020[11] VNR as well as developing an SDG stakeholder engagement framework demonstrate the ambition of the Government and other stakeholders to deliver the SDGs through an effective multi-stakeholder process and platform. Kenya's stakeholder bodies have been instrumental in developing, drafting and delivering the VNR since 2017. This "whole-of-government" and "whole-of-society" approach

has institutionalised stakeholder engagement in the implementation, monitoring and awareness of the SDGs through their umbrella bodies. Each group has been asked by the Government to prepare and submit its own VNR report to assess the performance and lessons learned by its members. These are subsequently included in Kenya's national VNR as Annexes. This entire process is coordinated by the Committee and (once in operation) its thematic working groups. Another example of the government's commitment to an open and inclusive approach to implementing the SDGs is most recently reflected in the release of its SDGs Stakeholder Engagement Framework. This has been developed through a consultative process to strengthen engagement and institutional coordination
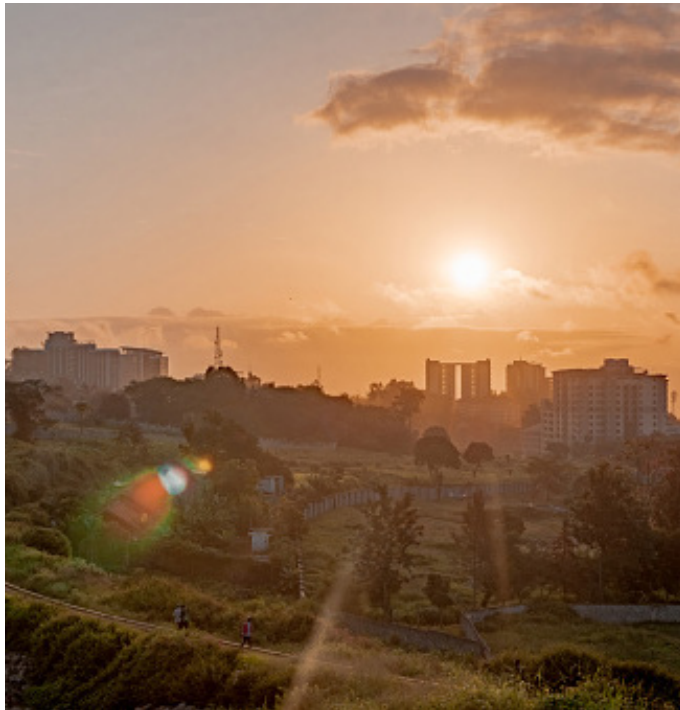
12 SDG Kenya Forum, 2020: Multi-Stakeholder conference ↘ URL

mechanisms, aims at guiding future stakeholder engagements, in an effort to accelerate the momentum on the implementation, monitoring and review of the SDGs in Kenya within the set timeframe. Since 2018, Kenya is hosting on an annual basis a SDGs Multi-stakeholder Conference[12] that brings together all SDGs stakeholders in the country to evaluate progress made, award champions and promote peer to peer learning. This is an important momentum as well as component of the multi-stakeholder dialogue and process in Kenya.

Landscape of SDG umbrella organisations

MSP-advisory bodies core mandate is to unite representatives from different stakeholder groups and negotiate pathways and policy options especially on controversial themes for sustainable development. This is the unique value added for governments in the long run as it links together civil society representatives, the private sector and academia into one institutionalised body. Establishing an MSP-advisory body best harnesses the existing degree of institutionalisation of the various stakeholder groups. In Kenya, the key umbrella stakeholders appear to be fully supported 'by the Government, effectively organised and representative, except for academia. Not only does Kenya have a plethora of small, individual organisations which represent all types of interests, numerous umbrella organisations have been developed to represent these voices.

THE SDG KENYA FORUM[13]

operates as the co-chair of the Committee and is Kenya's main civil society (CSO) umbrella organisation, composed of 350 organisation reaching a network of more than 10,000 members. This is an all-inclusive membership platform on the 2030 Agenda for SDGs, which coordinates CSOs' engagement with the government, citizens, the private sector, the media, academia and development partners. As the longest-standing, widest-reaching independent platform supporting the SDGs, the Forum can also be considered as a possible MSP-advisory body itself to the Government.

KENYA PRIVATE SECTOR ALLIANCE (KEPSA)[14]

serves as the other co-chair and is the umbrella organisation of Kenya's private sector. Its membership comprises more than 400 Business Membership Organisations, which also serve on the 16 Sector Boards that represent the various sectors of Kenya's economy. It raises private sector awareness and ownership of the SDGs through increased capacity building, engages in policy dialogues to help ease private sector involvement in the implementation of SDGs, organises forums and platforms and coordinates private sector tracking and reporting on SDGs.

THE PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS ON SDGS AND BUSINESS[15]

was formed in 2017 to promote sustainable development and social-responsive business through legislation, resource mobilisation, oversight and partnerships. Its 30 parliamentarians represent all regions of the country and have the capacity to train policy makers who will advocate for the SDGs through its eight Parliamentary Committees and parliamentary staff from constituencies on SDGs related topics.

13 SDG Kenya Forum — For Sustainable Development ↘ URL

14 Kenya Private Sector Alliance ↘ URL

15 SDGs Kenya Movement ↘ URL

16 Council of Govenors ↘ URL

17 National Youth Council Kenya ↘ URL

18 Prof. Wainaina Gituro ↘ URL

THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS[16]

was created by law in 2016 to serve as the liaison between national and sub-national governments with 12 sector Committees to mainstream the SDGs throughout the 47 County governments. Its primary purpose is to facilitate capacity building at the local level, lead peer learning, conduct dispute resolution, and coordinate the sub-national governments to track the SDGs and produce their reports.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL[17]

is a youth empowerment platform that facilitates the participation and inclusion of the youth in governance, national affairs and ensures programmes are focused on and driven by youth. Although the body is an active member of the SDG Forum, it specifically enhances youth capacity and active participation

FOR ACADEMIA

Professor Gituro Wainaina[18] participates in the Committee on behalf of the University of Nairobi Business School, but he primarily serves as a trusted advisor to the SDG Directorate because of his leadership role in creating the Vision 2030 rather than as a representative voice of academia. Better representation of an academic organisation is underway.

Kenya: Front runner in institutionalising stakeholder engagement

One of the strongest indicators of the Government of Kenya's commitment to pursue a "whole-of-society" approach to the coordination and implementation of the SDGs, internally and externally, is the formation of the Committee. Having been established through the Presidential directive, the Committee, under the State Department of Planning, is the institutionalised framework for stakeholder coordination in the country. The activities of the Committee are guided by government priorities in the implementation of the SDGs. After about two years of its operation, the Government appointed the representatives' SDGs Kenya Forum, representing the civil society, and KEPSA, representing the private sector, to be co-chairs of the Committee in order to ensure the SDGs discourse is not dominated by the Government of Kenya.

The SDG Kenya Forum has often been perceived as a main MSP for the SDGs in Kenya because of its long-standing relationship with the Government around both the MDGs and SDGs. For example, the SDG Forum was requested by the government to actively participate in National processes such as drafting the Kenya Road Map, SDG Road Map, VNRs and the SDG Stakeholder Engagement Framework. However, the Forum's official mandate is to convene the voice of the CSO through monitoring and implementing the SDGs, which has been an enormous task that they have executed quite effectively. Along with the Government, the Forum has been on point for implementing and tracking the SDGs at the sub-national level, including the County SDG Dialogues.

The puzzle for multi-stakeholder governance

The Committee is developing systems to more effectively engage within the Government and with external stakeholders to measure impact. It does not, however, assess its own effectiveness other than working primarily through the VNR process to collect data on the SDG indicators. For information gathering, the Government has relied heavily on the Forum's coordination with the Department of Statistics to host consultation meetings and provide expertise for methodologies in establishing these processes. Consequently, the Department of Statistics is developing non-state actor guidelines for collaboration so it can be considered official data, and it is planning to launch a Data User and Producer Forum to bring all stakeholders together around this new direction.

— An officially recognised mandate will inherently increase the motivation and capacities of the Committee. A mandate is needed on how to advice the government and how this mandate is linked to policy processes in the country that implement sustainable development. Moreover, a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities among key positions within the steering group could strengthen leadership.

— An institutionalised secretariat and funding for institutionalised coordination and establishment of inclusive processes for SDG delivery is needed.

— Networking with neighbouring countries and international partners in order to gain an understanding of how to best design the mandate and reduce the gap in stakeholder representation.

— Develop strategies that the risk of individuals becoming too powerful is minimized and their nomination allows representation of the respective stakeholder type. Ideally establish a mechanism to hold these individuals accountable to their respective stakeholder type they represent. Potential mitigations may include: 1) limiting the term length of the representative, 2) making it possible for more than one person to be engaged so the relationship is not so much between individuals as between organisations, and 3) building the capacity of the representative to be able to report back to and gain input from members.

— Strengthen the capabilities to liaise with the sub-national level and to set impulses for local delivery of the SDGs. Provision of funding for the platform to launch pilot projects that showcase what SDG implementation might look like.

— When it comes to the private sector engagement for SDG implementation, the research reveals that most of the active players in SDG implementation are multinationals and there is a great need to penetrate deeper into the sub-national level with small and medium-sized enterprises for the implementation and reporting of SDGs.

So far, the Kenyan model has worked but that there is need to reflect on new possible structures and to brainstorm with stakeholders to define what could work better. Thus far, the current funding situation has worked well enough for the Committee to fulfil its coordination and reporting mandate. However, there is the need for an improved model if they were to improve implementation at the sub-national level and lead any type of project activities related to the SDGs.

The government needs to look at resource mobilisation to address the Decade for SDG Acceleration in order to take more to action starting with the sharing of workplans and developing one centralised strategy capable of bridging the individual gaps for SDG implementation.

Tanzania: Puzzle pieces packed with potential

19 Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, 2019: Voluntary National Review ↘ PDF

The 2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR)[19] process has served as a catalyst for the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to realise the importance of establishing a national inclusive multi-stakeholder mechanism to coordinate SDG implementation, follow-up and review. To guarantee a "whole-of-government" approach, the government established a Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism (SDCM) to coordinate government's Ministries, Departments, and Agencies and guarantee inclusion and follow-up with all stakeholders engaged in the process. This new mechanism is an institutionalised arrangement located in the Prime Minister's Office with close coordination with an SDG Secretariat in the Ministry of Finance and Planning. It will also have more of a mandate to coordinate, to ensure budget alignment, to provide the highest level of political leadership for action and to ensure that sustainability of implementation can be achieved through designated personnel with experience on the SDGs.

A "whole-of-society" approach was pursued by establishing the Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform (TSDP) in April 2015. TSDP is the platform for civil society organisations to self-organise and coordinate on the implementation and follow-up and review of SDGs in Tanzania. The platform was consulted on the structure, content, and production process of the VNR as an equal partner. Moreover, they produced an independent, accompanying civil society shadow report, which was a more critical review of Government implementation of SDGs.

The national multi-stakeholder VNR drafting taskforce met regularly and developed the national VNR roadmap and budget; reviewed and developed the 2019 Tanzania VNR template and zero draft of

the Tanzania VNR report. Both the consultation and validation meetings involved the participation of the representatives of the Government, private sector, civil society, media, and the UN system in Tanzania. The civil society consultations were mainly financed by civil society organisations under TSDP and through the support of UN Global Compact and UN DESA. Just recently, the TSDP has been officially tasked to lead civil society consultations in the process of drafting the new five-year development plan for Tanzania to include an all-of-society approach to achieving the SDGs. This seeks to ensure the alignment between policies that SDGs are clearly linked and guarantee that CSOs are part of the development, implementation and evaluation for impact process.

The Ministry of Finance and Planning of Tanzania is responsible for transferring SDG-themes into national plans, and for identifying and mobilising resources for the implementation of the SDGs. It is also responsible for mainstreaming SDG indicators, collecting data for monitoring SDG implementation at the national level and reporting at the HLPF. 2019 was the first time Tanzania was reporting to the HLPF and it was the first time that there has been any coordinated effort to report on the SDGs in the country. The government has committed itself to finalising an engagement framework between Government and CSOs and the private sector on SDG delivery in Tanzania.

Landscape of SDG umbrella organisations

Stakeholder organisations are formalised in Tanzania, but lack inclusive representation, proper capacity building and reliable funding support to implement the SDGs. CSOs appear to be the strongest of the various sectors around the SDGs, which explains their leading role and engagement.

Currently, both the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government serve as co-leads for the SDG implementation in Tanzania. The following different umbrella organisations exist, but still need support and empowerment as well as to find ways to better integrate with each other, in order to deliver a multi-stakeholder advisory body to the government:

was founded in April 2015 as a result of a multi-stakeholder workshop on the transition from MDGs to SDGs held by the UN Association of Tanzania[20] in partnership with Africa Philanthropic Foundation.[21] The platform is a voluntary and open for civil society organisations in Tanzania to come together, self-organise and self-coordinate to ensure a meaningful participation and documentation of contributions towards the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of Sustainable Development in Tanzania. It thereby offers a platform for engagement of civil society with the Government, the UN, and other development partners and stakeholders on sustainable development. The TSDP is not an independently registered entity but has its own voluntary Steering Committee comprised of (the larger) CSOs, which have financial resources to support its operations and which take an influential lead in the 13 thematic working areas (linked to SDGs). The Platform has had an unofficial leadership role to link all the different (non-CSO) sectors and recognised the need for collaborative engagement well before the SDGs. TSDP comprises more than 300 diverse civil society organisations, from grassroots organisations to international non-governmental organisations, with representation from different constituencies.

THE TANZANIA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

20 United Nations Association of Tanzania ↘ URL

21 African Philanthropic Foundation Tanzania ↘ URL

22 Private Sector Foundation Tanzania ↘ URL

THE TANZANIA PRIVATE SECTOR FOUNDATION[22]

is the umbrella apex body of Private Sector in Tanzania. It is the voice of the private sector and the umbrella body for private sector associations and corporate bodies in all sectors of the economy, including trade associations.

THE TANZANIA NATIONAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

was created as an institution providing a forum for public and private sector dialogue for change. With 40 members, its vision is to be a centre of excellence in managing business environments for sustaining economic growth through competitive dialogues, consensus-building and networking between the public and private sectors in Tanzania.

THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

is supported by Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform in training parliamentarians. It is made up of over 30 members who represent different committees in parliament, from different political parties, and is set to be at the forefront of championing sustainable development in parliament. It conducts capacity-building with other MPs, follows and monitors the implementation of the SDGs, and makes sure that national plans are aligned with targets set out in the Goals.

ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH

are represented by the Economic and Social Research Foundation as a policy research think tank and Research on Poverty Alleviation Programme Limited to help with research and policy recommendations for SDG implementation.

Besides engagement in the VNR process, the stakeholders proposed a structure to link to the Government and stakeholders by forming thematic working groups to focus on specific issues. The TSDP is recognised as an official civil society platform on SDGs, but it does not have any official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or mandate to advice. The TSDP has a proven track record of building consensus and

supporting collective action for the SDGs and hence lends itself as MSP-advisory council to the Government.

The interaction between the Government and MSP actors (such as the SDCM) is guided by the agreed principles, as institutionalised in the MoU between the Government and MSP actors, including but not limited to mutual respect, transparency, and accountability. The level of participation and influence depends, among others, on actors' commitment, interest and technical capacity in the respective topic or thematic area, and resources available to participate, especially for CSOs that mostly depend on Development Partner funding. The SDCM can reach consensus when different stakeholders are able to effectively make their case by presenting evidence and overcoming issues of mistrust related to potential financial gain by certain organisations (especially the private sector).

The puzzle for multi-stakeholder governance

The architecture to deliver the SDGs in Tanzania has successfully fostered a "whole-of-government" approach and is harnessed with a high degree of organisation of various stakeholder types in the countries. Moreover, stakeholder engagement and commitment to thematic work and advice is extremely high in Tanzania.

While the TSDP had an official function in the 2019 VNR process and again in developing a stakeholder engagement strategy in 2020, it has yet to receive an official mandate. An official mandate along policy processes such as nationalising and reviewing SDG

indicators, advice on national sustainable development plans and thematic areas where consensus across stakeholders is needed. E.g. agricultural development and food system of Tanzania is a theme that requires joint pathways forward by all stakeholders and where an MSP-advisory body can contribute valuable knowledge and consensus-building processes, bridging perspectives from academia, civil society and private sector.

Regarding its positioning close to the centre of government, TSDP's past processes and interactions have successfully illustrated that the fine balance between closeness to responsible government partners and a trustful and independent relationship exists. Providing constructive advice within this trustful relationship could prove to be the missing piece for accelerated delivery of SDGs by the Tanzanian government. Through its central role in the parliamentary group for sustainable development the TSDP can also build on existing networks and collaboration for sustainable development within Parliament of Tanzania.

Beyond this, through the Africa Philanthropic Foundation the TSDP is engaged in regional and international exchange and can source from a rich network of knowledge partners on what works well for delivering the SDGs. Regional and international networks provide for input on concrete projects and initiatives at subnational and national level elsewhere, such as dialogues of mayors to deliver sustainable development in cities and communities or local SDG-networks to advocate for sustainable development and foster activities of various societal members.

As the SDCM still requires some more clear links between budget and objectives and targets, it proves

to be the central coordination mechanism to mandate TSDP as an MSP-advisory body. Providing a clear-cut mandate and financial support to TSDP could ensure ongoing financial resources, intertwined policy and advisory processes for sustainable development and thereby creating a constant and inclusive governance mechanism to tackle challenging themes of transformation to sustainable development.
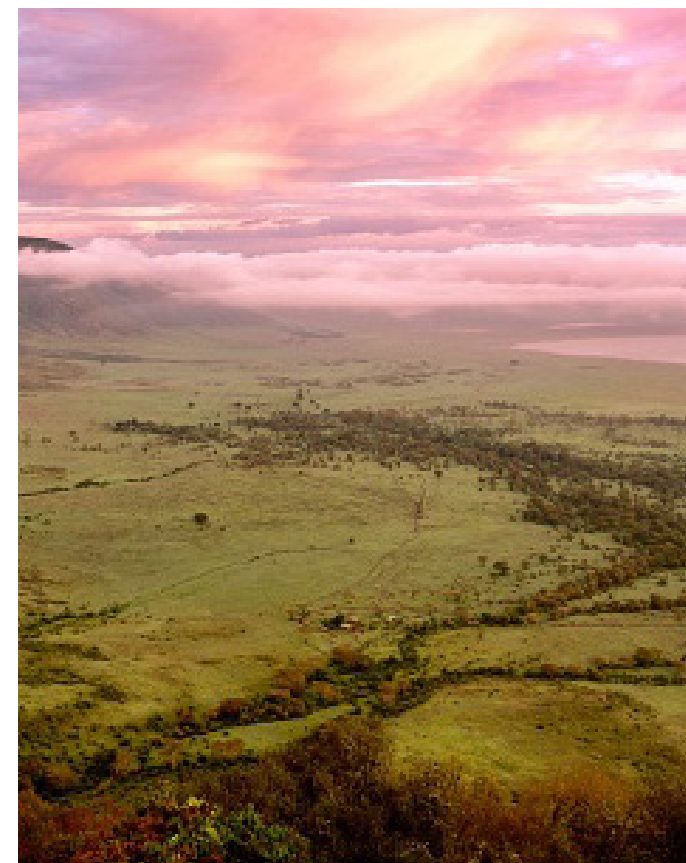
Ecuador:
Strong CSOs looking for more recognition from governmental institutions

23 The decree attributes specific competences to the following public institutions: National Secretariat for Planning and Development, National Sectoral Councils, National Councils of Equality, National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, National Planning Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility. ↘ PDF

24 In Spanish: Secretaría Técnica Planifica Ecuador ↘ PDF

25 Government of Ecuador, Ministry of Planning, 2020: Voluntary National Review ↘ PDF

One of the strongest indicators of the Government of Ecuador to commit to a "whole-of-society" approach to coordinate and implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs is the recognition of the 2030 Agenda as State Policies, i.e. through the issuance of Presidential Decree 371 (2018).[23] As a result, specific competencies and attributions have been defined around the SDGs linked to national planning, monitoring and evaluation, and statistical capacity. The Presidential Decree recognises the importance of implementing an inter-institutional and inter-sectoral logic that establishes the need and importance of integrating the contributions of the private sector, academia, and civil society through different instances of participation. To this end, with the aim of fostering spaces for social dialogue as a mechanism for the generation of national agreements, the Vice Presidency is mandated through Presidential Decree 622 (2018)[24] to lead a National Social Dialogue and, together with the National Planning and Development Secretariat, coordinate the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country.

However, in 2020 the VNR[25] process in Ecuador was perceived by CSO stakeholders and the National Assembly as a procedure that was limited in stakeholder participation processes. While a consultation process was put in place by the Government to integrate a "whole-of-society" approach to the VNR via dialogue tables and the development of an online questionnaire, stakeholders consider the consultation process as deficient to properly engage and incorporate their contribution in the developing, drafting and delivering of the 2020 VNR report. In order to complement the information presented in the VNR report, and to extend their contribution to the

26 Parlamentarian Group of Ecuador, 2020: How is the development in Ecuador? Perspectives from the National Development and the 2030 Agenda ↘ PDF

27 Technical planning secretariat Ecuador: Sustainable Development in Ecuador ↘ URL

evaluation of the 2030 Agenda implementation in the country, the national platform ODS Territorio Ecuador (coordinated by Grupo Faro and Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano), the National Assembly and the academia, with the support of the EU, developed their own analysis and critical reflection of the National Development Plan within the framework of the SDGs[26]. Since then, the Government of Ecuador (Secretaría Técnica de Planificación) has incorporated existing initiatives in the national platform for SDGs[27].

Landscape of SDG umbrella organisations

Key umbrella stakeholders in Ecuador are formalised but only a limited number of platforms exist to ensure an effectively organised, inclusive representation and they lack reliable funding support to implement the SDGs. ODS Territorio Ecuador is a multi-stakeholder initiative established in 2017 that allows the coordination of key stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society, both at national and local levels. Its mission is to contribute to the comprehensive improvement of conditions and livelihoods in Ecuador, through compliance with the SDGs, their incorporation into national and local public policies, and to strengthen civil society and the decentralised autonomous governments in their implementation and monitoring. The initiative is co-led by Grupo Faro and FFLA, with the financial support of the EU. From government side, both the Vice Presidency and the Secretaría Técnica de Planificación are responsible for the SDG delivery. CSOs and the private sector appear to be the stakeholders that are most visibly engaged in the SDGs.

GRUPO FARO[28]

founded in 2004 with the objective of supporting and promoting the participation of the State, civil society and the private sector in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policies. It is regarded as an independent research and action institution that generates evidence to influence public policy and promotes social transformation and innovation. Grupo Faro was recognised by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies programme of the University of Pennsylvania as the 13th think tank in Central and South America. Grupo Faro contributes directly to the implementation of the SDGs, through the development of projects, among which it co-chairs ODS Territorio Ecuador and ADUS initiatives.

FUNDACIÓN FUTURO LATINO-AMERICANO (FFLA)[29]

operates as co-chair of ODS Territorio Ecuador and ADUS initiatives. FFLA is regarded as a strong civil society organisation that was created in 1993 to promote constructive dialogue, strengthen citizen, political and institutional capacities, and articulate processes for sustainable development in Latin America. It operates at the regional level, promoting an articulation towards Sustainable Development. It is coordinator of the global alliance CDKN with implementation of projects in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

FUNDACIÓN ESQUEL[30]

is a social organisation, created 30 years ago and legally recognised by the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion. It promotes, encourages, and creates new forms of participation in favour of good governance, dialogue, and the search for agreements. It operates as co-chair of the ADUS initiative and coordinates Pacto Social por la Vida y por el Ecuador.

28 Grupo Faro ↘ URL

29 Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano ↘ URL

30 Fundación Esquel ↘ URL

31 Ecuador 2030 ↘ URL

ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (ADUS):

is a platform that connects and empowers Ecuadorian organisations and initiatives around Sustainable Urban Development, through the delivery of national and local efforts, the strengthening of capacities, the exchange of experiences and the mobilisation of actors from civil society, academia, the private sector and the public sector. It was established as a collaborative and synergistic workspace to promote the commitment of citizens and candidates for local government offices and their work teams to include Climate Change and Sustainable Urban Development in their government plans.

PACTO SOCIAL POR LA VIDA Y POR EL ECUADOR

is a citizen initiative of the Mesa de Convergencia Nacional, coordinated by Fundación Esquel, which integrates multi-stakeholders into thematic tables to reach agreements and identify possible solutions to address social and economic challenges, with a special focus in fighting against corruption.

ECUADOR 2030[31]

is a private-sector initiative that articulates business, academic, public and civil society actors for the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ecuador 2030 was launched in 2017 by the Ecuadorian Business Committee and the National Federation of Chambers of Industries of Ecuador. Its three main pillars are: Sustainable Development Goals, Fourth Industrial Revolution, and Exponential thinking.

PACTO GLOBAL	this network was created in 2011 to promote the ten Principles of United Nations Global Compact in Ecuador. Currently, the network is made up of more than 200 members from the public and private sectors, civil society organisations, NGOs, unions, and academia committed to the application of the ten Principles and the Respect for Human Rights, Labor Standards, the Environment and the Fight against Corruption.
CORPORACIÓN EMPRESARIAL PARA EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE DEL ECUADOR (CEMDES)[32]	is a private-sector organisation created to promote the concept of Sustainable Development from the business perspective, and to facilitate the implementation of innovative solutions on environmental issues and social responsibility in Ecuador. It also brings together companies that want to work in this area in an active and committed way. Since 2001, CEMDES has been the Ecuadorian partner of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, a leading global organisation in sustainable business development.
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND THE FULFILMENT OF THE SDGS	brings together around 16 assembly members from different political parties to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
ACADEMIA	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE) and Facultad Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) are recognised as the two main stakeholders from academia that have been engaged in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

32 Busienss council for sustainble development in Ecuador, Cemdes ↘ URL

Ecuador does not have an officially recognised MSP supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Grupo Faro is recognised as a strong civil society organisation and most stakeholders did not feel this has impeded its influence and key contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Ecuador. However, the organisation's strength is recognised within the framework of collaboration with other key stakeholders, implementing a collaborative approach with other key actors from academia, private sector, CSOs, development cooperation and the government in most of its initiatives. For years, Grupo Faro has played a key role in generating data and contributing to public policy in different areas, sectors, and territories for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, at the national and sub-national level. In this sense, one of its main strengths is its ability to convene other actors with which it has complementary capacities and experience of co-leading its multi-stakeholder initiatives. Under its institutional line of action on Sustainable Development and Cities, Grupo Faro collaborated in establishing two major multi-stakeholder platforms (ODS Territorio Ecuador and ADUS) that mobilised collective action around the SDGs among a wide range of stakeholders. The organisation in collaboration with FFLA facilitated an open dialogue with all other voices, sharing experiences and making significant contributions to all members within the platform. Grupo Faro has also been invited to participate in other country key platforms that aim to advocate for the 2030 Agenda implementation, such as Pacto Global (private sector) working tables and Acuerdo Nacional Ecuador 2030. Its role is regarded as very significant in strengthening local actors' capacity to advocate for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in their territories.

At the local level, Grupo Faro and FFLA have made significant contributions in strengthening local stakeholders' capacity for implementing the 2030 Agenda and in tracking the SDGs. The interventions at the sub-national level through the ODS Territory Ecuador are observed in three areas: the consolidation of local working groups; the establishment of citizen observatories for monitoring the SDGs in five provinces of the country; and the implementation of capacity building initiatives to strength local actor's SDG advocacy. Grupo Faro has also published other key reports, focusing on the CSO points of view and experiences in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the need for more multi-stakeholder and multi-level articulation.[33]

33 ODS Territorio Ecuador, 2018: Logros y Desafíos en la Implementación de los ODS en Ecuador ↘ PDF (2018) and ODS Territorio Ecuador, 2019: Buenas Prácticas de la Sociedad Civil para el cumplimiento de los ODS ↘ PDF

The puzzle for multi-stakeholder governance

A key aspect of effective multi-stakeholder platform is their contribution to facilitate consensus-building across different interests. Regarding the ODS Territorio Ecuador initiative experience to draft the VNR in 2018, all stakeholders surprisingly noted that this has been a relatively easy and seamless process. To facilitate consensus-building and strengthen the development of collective action, Grupo Faro and FFLA have articulated the efforts of multi-stakeholders by establishing ´citizen spaces for dialogue and participation´. Thus, it is intended to involve these key actors in the process of criteria development, prioritisation, territorialisation and measurement of the implementation of the SDGs, through
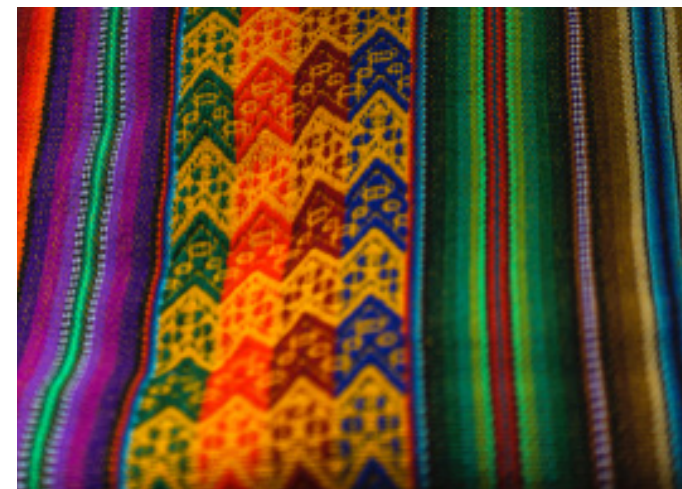
institutionalised spaces for multi-sectoral dialogue. ODS Territorio Ecuador established a national dialogue table in the form of the ´Grupo Nacional de Pensamiento Estratégico sobre ODS´, which seeks to articulate actors from the public sector, private sector, academia and civil society and their ability to influence or make relevant decisions for the implementation of the SDGs in Ecuador. The initiative extends its actions at the local level by forming five local dialogue tables that seek to generate institutionalised spaces for multi-sectoral dialogue, relevant to the implementation of the SDGs in Ecuador.

While the frameworks of cooperation and coordination exist, due to changes in political context, the dialogue is no longer as active as it used to be and/or should be. It is important to note that the need for an MSP that serves as an advisory body towards the 2030 Agenda is fully recognised and embraced by all stakeholders. As noted in the VNR report 2020, the need to improve articulation within sectors and to establish an effective mechanism to continuously

exchange information regarding implementation of the SDGs by different stakeholders, specially at the sub-national level, is required. Stakeholders have also identified the lack of political stability in mandated institutions and weak institutional coordination as key challenges to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

In 2020, the VNR process was perceived a commitment by the Government to live up to the "whole-of-society" approach. Despite the multi-stakeholder involvement in the process, the efforts implemented by the Government are perceived as ad hoc and only temporal engagement processes that do not extend beyond the VNR process and limited participation of key stakeholders (especially at the sub-national level).

Between 2018 and 2019, important efforts were made to analyse the potential for long-term stakeholder engagement for the delivery of the 2030 Agenda in different states. The process concluded with the drafting of a Resolution prepared by the Vice Presidency to establish an Inter-institutional Committee as a mechanism for master coordination to implement the SDGs. However, the Resolution has not been signed yet by the new Government, even though a "whole-of-society" approach would be easy to establish, due to existing umbrella organisations and stakeholder engagement and could benefit the local delivery of the SDGs in the coming decade.

Such a committee facilitates a coordination function by including the diversity of actors and interests that are in conflict in the country; the possibility of ensuring sustained multi-sectoral dialogue processes that are not affected by the constant changes in government authorities, an instance that helps to prioritise and articulate the SDGs, ensuring

consistency in their implementation across sectors; secure access to information; to create awareness and ownership of the SDGs to mobilise citizens to act on sustainable development

Although Grupo Faro is recognised as a key stakeholder in this process, FFLA is the most experienced organisation in charge of facilitating and mediating across different interests, creating consensus and supporting the development of collective action among members of the initiative. In that sense, there are two organisations ready to coordinate a national committee for SDG advice to the government. Grupo Faro qualifies because of its vast experience of coordinating with the public sector on the generation of data and reports and strengthening decision-making at all levels. While FFLA and Fundación Esquel qualify with their experience, territorial scope and decentralised organisations.

With financial support from the government, ODS Territorio Ecuador, under the coordinating leadership of Grupo Faro and FFLA has the potential to establish national thematic working groups and initiate local engagement and activities for the delivery of the SDGs in Ecuador.

Benin: Promising official coordination mechanism in need of strengthening engagement

34 Government of Benin, 2020 : Voluntary National Review ↘ PDF

Benin's stakeholder bodies have been instrumental in developing, drafting, and delivering the VNR since 2017. This "whole of government" and "whole of society" approach has institutionalised stakeholder engagement in the implementation, monitoring and awareness of the SDGs through the organisation of workshops at national and sub-national level.

Within the Ministry of Planning, an SDG unit (DGCS–ODD) was established, dedicated to the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs in the country. To secure the effective implementation of the SDGs, since 2017 the DGCS–ODD leads a national mechanism for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs. It's mission is to ensure that the priority targets of the SDGs are taken into account in Benin's national, sectoral and local planning processes. To assure the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the DGCS–ODD has led a prioritisation process of the SDGs, both at national and communal level. The process allowed each municipality to identify the ten highest priority targets to be taken into account into their Communal Development Plans. The topics inherent in the 2030 Agenda have thus been integrated into planning instruments at all levels, with the intention of eliminating the 'Silo-Approach' in the management of public affairs.

Another key element towards strengthening a "wholeof-society" approach was the process undertaken to deliver previous VNR reports presented by Benin in 2017, 2018 and 2020[34]. There appears to be consensus within the Government that the SDGs can only be implemented through collective action. This awareness has enabled stakeholders to engage and influence government processes and through

Benin: Promising official coordination mechanism in need of strengthening engagement

this collaborative process, the SDGs have been thoroughly integrated within Benin's National Development Plan. Applying a participatory and inclusive approach, mobilising stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, academia and aid agencies (with major support from the UNDP), they implemented a series of technical workshops at national level and the organisation of consultations at national, departmental and local level, which made it possible to collect the aspirations of grassroots development actors.

To ensure greater participation of stakeholders in the Benin planning processes, the Government established the previously mentioned national mechanism for the coordination and evaluation of SDGs, called ´Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD´. It is led by the Minister of State in charge of Planning and Development[35] under the General Direction for the Coordination and Monitoring of SDGs32 (DGCS−ODD) responsible for leading the implementation of the SDGs in the country and coordinating multi−stakeholder engagement. It aims to enable stakeholders to engage and influence national development processes by hosting SDG consultative meetings with all umbrella organisations, with the purpose of enabling stakeholders to engage in the development of the country's VNR.

In this context, the Ministry has initiated consultation forums, including one with civil society. This is the CSO consultation framework for the SDGs, which is a forum for exchange with a view to strengthening dialogue between the State and civil society for efficient and effective implementation of the SDGs. It also aims to be a mechanism for informing, sharing experiences, drawing lessons

35 Ministry of State for Planning and Development

36 United Cities and Local Governments, UCLG, 2020: Rapport de la localization des ODD au Benin ↘ PDF

and discussing progress in the implementation of the SDGs. The CSO Consultation Framework for the SDGs is responsible for developing the CSO Shadow Report. It was established following the recommendation of the 2017 High Level Political Forum.

The Maison de la Société Civile (MdSC) serves as the vice chair of this framework. The MdSC is an umbrella organisation for all Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Benin.

With a view to enriching the government's concept note on the ten−year framework of actions for the acceleration of the SDGs, two workshops were first organised with technical and financial partners. Subsequently, a series of workshops were held with stakeholders to ensure that the process was inclusive and participatory. According to the VNR, a total of 50 working sessions were organised, involving 400 different stakeholders over a four−month period. The VNR was complemented by a parallel report from the National Association of Communes of Benin (ANCB)[36] as well as another from civil society coordinated by the MdSC that strengthen the assessment of the implementation of the SDGs at the sub−national level.

Landscape of SDG umbrella organisations

While different umbrella organisations exist and are able to offer a basic level of service to their members, the need for the government to accompany them is a real problem to be solved in order to strengthen CSOs awareness and involvement around the SDGs. CSOs appear to be key actors of the various sectors around the SDGs, which explains the leading role that the MdSC plays in mobilising the other stakeholders. Additionally, the Ministry of State in charge of Planning and Development through the SDG unit DGCS−ODD as the leading government entity for the implementation of the SDGs and the coordination of the Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD. Other specific stakeholders' bodies are:

37 Directorate General for Coordination and Monitoring of the SDGs, technical and financial partners (GIZ, UNDP, UNICEF), CSOs (consultation framework and thematic pools), external expert facilitator

MAISON DE LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE (MDSC) is a CSO umbrella organisation that incorporates more than 1300 CSO members spread over all 12 departments. Created in 2008, it aims to establish a society through which non-state actors participate in dialogue processes with the Government for the conceptualisation, implementation, and monitoring-evaluation of development programmes and policies in Benin. It is Vice President of the CSO consultation framework. The MdSC is piloting the process of drafting the alternative report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by involving Civil Society Organisations active in 8 thematic pools. The process takes place once a year in Benin and involves several types of actors through their roles and responsibilities.[37] It has coordinated the preparation of alternative reports on the 2030 Agenda every year since 2018. It has strengthened the capacities of CSOs in the framework with the aim of getting them to actively participate in the achievement of the goals.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF BENIN (ANCM) is the umbrella structure of all 77 municipalities of Benin. Since its creation in November 2003, it aims to serve as an interface between municipalities and public authorities on the one hand, and between municipalities and other key stakeholders on the other, in order to represent and defend the interests of its members. The ANCB is positioned as an essential interlocutor in the promotion of local development and grassroots democracy.

PLATEFORME DES ACTEURS DE LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE AU BÉNIN (PASCiB): is a civil society organisation that aims to promote development effectiveness in accordance with the International Framework on CSO Development Effectiveness. PASCiB works for the transparent and effective involvement of Beninese civil society organisations in the process of drawing up, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating development policies and programmes.

NATIONAL EMPLOYERS COUNCIL OF BENIN (CNP-BENIN) is a private sector umbrella organisation. CNP-Benin is a valid and representative interlocutor for the defence of the interests and the promotion of the private sector. The CNP-Benin serves as an interface between the private sector and the Government.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF BENIN (CCIB): is a public establishment with financial autonomy. It is placed under the supervision of the Trade Ministry and its competence covers the entire national territory. The CCIB aims to bring together all economic operators.

PRIVATE INVESTORS COUNCIL OF BENIN (CIPB): is an association composed of fifty companies, which have decided to combine their experiences, skills, and economic weight to have a concerted influence on the environment on which they operate.

38 Ministry of Planning and Development, 2020: Ten-Year Framework of Actions for Accelerating the SDGs ↘ PDF

CENTER FOR PARTNERSHIP AND EXPERTISE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CEPED): is a public institutional instrument under the supervision of the Ministry in charge of Planning and Development in Benin. It responds to the will of the Government to put concerns related to environmental governance at the heart of economic development. With the mission of contributing to the promotion of sustainable development through the strengthening of expertise and the development of partnerships, CePED aims to contribute to the definition of national policies and strategies for sustainable development; improving the monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes; and strengthening national capacities.

GROUP FOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (GRED) was established to put scientific research at the service of Sustainable Development. It is a knowledge and innovation platform that aims to support the implementation of the SDGs by providing political and public stakeholders with relevant, reliable, enforceable, and exportable data and instruments.

Since the inception of the SDGs' implementation process in Benin, a roadmap has been prepared that focuses on critical milestones crucial to the effective transition from MDGs to the SDGs. The Government is committed to making its mandate one of ambitious and accelerated actions through the development of a Ten-Year Framework of Actions for acceleration of the SDGs (CDA-ODD[38]), which is a means of mobilising resources and an instrument for framing public policies for the implementation of the SDGs over the next ten years. One of the strongest indicators of the Governments's commitment to pursue an 'all-of-society' approach to the coordination and implementation of the SDGs, internally and externally,

is the formation of the Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD. Having been established under the Ministry of Planning and Development, it is the institutionalised framework for SDG coordination in the country. The Benin's Government recognises that the main goal in establishing this framework is to ensure a participatory process for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda based on the principles of transparency and accountability. It aims to ensure that civil society plays a leading role in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. It is recognised as a consultative body that promotes multi-stakeholder dialogue and the participation of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

Each thematic group is chaired by a President and the secretariat is assumed by a representative of the DGCS–ODD in order to facilitate access to public information. The Government appointed the representatives' MdSC, representing the CSO, to hold the Vice Presidency of the Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD and the Presidency of the CSOs' consultation framework. It was observed that one of the main challenges of securing a "whole-of-society" approach for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Benin was the need to strengthen stakeholders' capacities to advocate towards the 2030 Agenda within this coordination space. To this end, in 2018, the MoSC proceeded to structure civil society's involvement by setting up eight thematic pools that organise CSOs integrating the Civil Society Organisations consultation framework around thematic working tables. Each thematic pool addresses prioritised public policy sectors and aims to strength CSO advocacy capacities towards the 2030 Agenda.

The puzzle for multi-stakeholder governance

The composition and governance structures of the Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD and the MdSC appear to be inclusive and secure with sound operational structures. MdSC has built a climate of trust and influence among key stakeholders and appears to have built a very strong foundation among CSOs for collective action around the SDGs. Representing more than 1300 CSO members, it is recognised as the only platform that brings together all the components

of the Beninese civil society. The MdSC's reputation is highly recognised and its specific contribution to the coordination with local CSO actors is seen as very positive. The organisation is observed as a legitimate platform to support CSOs and increase their effectiveness so that they can become strong actors of dialogue and social change in Benin. The MdSC has a proven track record of building consensus and supporting collective action for the SDGs. The interaction between the Government and MdSC is recognised as strong at all government levels (national and sub-national). Through its role within the Government's coordination mechanism, MdSC has demonstrated its capacity to mediate among different interests and build consensus among a wide range of stakeholders.

General budget support used to fund the Government's national coordination mechanism is not sufficient to secure stakeholders' participation. According to the VNR, Benin requires the establishment of adequate funding to support the implementation of programmes contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. The VNR recognises the need to create a financial plan that includes the SDGs in the General State Budget. For its part, the MdSC is seen as a strong CSO umbrella organisation and a reliable financial entity. It received technical and financial support from a variety of stakeholders such as EU, GIZ, UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The government needs to look at resource mobilisation better to address the Decade for SDG Acceleration in order to take more to action. Stakeholders participation is limited by lack of financial support to secure their participation in consultation and evaluation activities.

Benin's conducive environment for delivering the 2030 Agenda is in a good position mainly due to the recent establishment of the official coordination mechanism ´Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD´, which aims to integrate multi-stakeholders into decision-making processes. However, limited financial resources and the need to strengthen stakeholders' advocacy capacities represents important limitations on securing a proper functioning of this mechanism. Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD, is on the right path as long as it continues working closely with key stakeholders to implement the required actions identified in this study.

Conclusion

This study reveals that MSP-advisory bodies take manifold shapes, encounter different challenges, be it internally or externally, and are still able to add value to national and local SDG implementation and reporting processes. The pathways they take are heavily based on the policy processes available for sustainable development in the countries, the culture of stakeholder dialogue and the history of existing organisational structures of the various stakeholder groups (i.e. umbrella organisations).

Moreover, the functional gap or niche that is available to deliver the SDGs in a country, needs to be filled with a meaningful institutional set-up that bridges societal debates and aspirations with governmental policymaking for sustainable development. These case studies show that the bodies vary in their function due to the number of engaged stakeholder groups (their role and function varies accordingly), as well as due to their closeness and reciprocal nature of coordination with the SDG-unit, responsible to deliver the SDGs within government.

— The Committee in Kenya is on a path towards a legitimised and mandated multi-stakeholder advisory body, as long as its trending continues upward, and the Government works together with key stakeholders to implement the required actions for transformation. The overall architecture for SDG delivery still requires a stronger engagement of media for public awareness and advocacy. However, the identified challenge of complexity regarding the SDGs is faced by many countries around the world.

Conclusion

— Tanzania's assessment for this study took place during the October 2020 national elections leading to individuals' unavailability due to challenges with the internet. In general, the official Sustainable Development Coordination Mechanism is a relatively new, government-sanctioned multi-stakeholder platform that functions without full approval, structures, or processes yet in place. As it is accompanied by the longer standing and reputable Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform, the potential to consolidate stakeholder engagement into one national platform and to accompany SDG delivery through a continuous national SDG-advisory body is enormous. However, while the pieces of the puzzle are undoubtably in place, putting everything together requires more collective dialogues on themes and processes to be tackled in the near future.

— In Ecuador the Presidential Decree 371 enshrines commitment to the SDGs, but this needs to be backed up with more ambitious SDG implementation routines. The country's inclusive approach to the process of combating climate change demonstrates that it has the capacity to do so and this is partially mirrored in its collaboration with various stakeholder groups in delivering the 2030 Agenda. Grupo Faro has been observed as one strong CSO capable of convening and facilitating consensus among a variety of stakeholders and capable of delivering sustainable development activities locally. However, to embark upon a path towards a national MSP-advisory body, stakeholder engagement requires more recognition and

engagement from government partners in local and national policy processes.

— Benin's conducive environment for delivering the 2030 Agenda is a good position for change, mainly due to the recent establishment of the official coordination mechanism "Cadre Institutionnel pour la mise en œuvre des ODD", which aims to integrate multi-stakeholder perspectives into decision-making processes. However, limited financial resources and the need to strengthen stakeholders' advocacy capacities represent important limitations for securing a proper functioning of this mechanism. In this sense, the MdSC is recognised as a strong intermediary body, able to catalyse civil society engagement in the country and is currently building up its skill set to facilitate more multi-stakeholder processes for SDG implementation.

A major influence that determines the function of multi-stakeholder bodies is the fact that the decarbonisation of economies requires disruptive and transformational changes. In all four case study countries profound changes are necessary to succeed. Multi-stakeholder bodies in the analysed countries bridge knowledge and foster social acceptance for transformation but also play an important role in awareness raising and anchoring transformational change within society. In doing so they are a crucial and complementary component to national government architectures for SDG delivery. Equipping the bodies with trustful and reciprocal relationships with governmental partners is key for their success.

A trustful and reciprocal relationship with government is Key to success.

Conclusion

Such reciprocal relationships can be tied to assisting the government with all kind of sustainable development processes. That is why their position is often close to national institutions, such as SDG-units responsible for overseeing sustainable development policymaking. Voluntary National Review processes, development of national engagement frameworks and national sustainable development strategies and indicators are policy processes that they contribute to.

What is evident, is that there is no "one size fits all" approach, when it comes to creating a continuous and legitimate multi-stakeholder advisory body. Institutional questions that are shared across all four context settings are about the level of integration versus independence from the government architecture. Moreover, what type of primary function or combination of functions (coordination, bridging controversies, advocacy, local implementation, etc.) are most complementary and meaningful for accelerated delivery and what is the most effective operating structure to support the respective mandate and function? This implies questions on accountability and governance mechanisms, leadership and rotational participation for enlarged inclusion as well as the creation of engagement framework and routines to clarify roles and responsibilities. The findings of the research are meant to shed light on some of these puzzle pieces, in order to understand where and how MSP-advisory bodies can successfully contribute to the national puzzle of institutions and processes to create a meaningful composition for the delivery of the SDGs.

Institutionalised stakeholder engagement has multiple faces.

To learn more about the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies and read the study on different pathways for national sustainable development advisory bodies and their respective success factors (2021) click here.

There you'll also find the soon to be published second volume of this study, adding another cohort of country cases.

Annex

COUNTRY	NO. OF INTERVIEWS
KENYA	7
TANZANIA	3*
BENIN	5
ECUADOR	6

*Due to ongoing national elections in autumn 2020, research was confronted with various difficulties and low response rate for interviews.

INDICATOR	OPERATIONALISATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1 The government is willing and actively seeking to engage stakeholders in delivering the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement	Evidence of engagement by the government of multi-stakeholders in: — VNR — 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement processes — National development plan/strategy — Self-reporting on SDG 16, strong institutions	— What action have you seen the government take to engage stakeholders in sustainable development priorities? — Have these actions (if there are any) been installed for the purpose of a single process (VNR) or have they an ongoing character? — How has the process been planned and implemented (Stakeholders in silos, multiple levels, cascading up, etc.)?
2 Inclusive, progressive, open society	— The government is progressive and open to new ideas and approaches	— Do you believe the overall political will supports a "whole-of-society" approach to implementing the SDGs?

3 Government has put in place flexible institutional structures to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement	— Government pursues a "whole-of-government" approach and has installed coordination units and/or processes across Ministries
	— Government issued mandate for MSP
	— Signatory of Paris Agreement with NDCs
	— Light-touch MSP-advisory body provides ongoing advice and support
		— Does the current political environment support the role of an MSP-advisory body?
		— What is the need and demand for such a body?
		— Have the right stakeholders been engaged to participate with the MSP-advisory body?
		— What has been the key problems and challenges in establishing and maintaining such a body?
		— Which Ministry is in the lead?
		  — Is there effective cross government collaboration?
		— Has the Govt implemented any changes to deliver the SDGs more successfully?
		  — How do you take into account the interlinked nature of SDGs when implementing them?

INDICATOR	OPERATIONALISATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

(4) Political support and interest demonstrated by highest governmental level and/or parliament (caucus)	— Political system (over time)
	— Highest level/presidential support demonstrated (e.g. through proclamations, presidential public/private dialogues etc.) other government communication
	
	and / or
	
	— Supportive role of the parliament (caucus) to establish an MSP-advisory body for constructive advice and mediate positions existing in society.
		— Is there an interagency body established?
		— What is the political context or environment in which the multi-stakeholder body operates?
		  — How has the relationship of the MSP with the government changed over time?
		  — Are there any political or legal factors/processes that have contributed to the legitimacy of the MSP in relation to the government?
		  — How has the relationship of the MSP with the government been impacted by the political context, changes in political leadership or policy changes?
		— How has the MSP managed to maintain its advisory role in relation to the government over time? Is there a supportive role of the parliament (caucus) to establish an MSP for constructive advice and mediate positions existing in society?

(5) Effective organisation / strength of key stakeholders (academia, civil society, and private sector)	— Existence of umbrella organisations business associations; CSO and academia representative bodies etc. — Strength of civil society — Degree of formal v. informal business — Evidence of strong dialogue and trusted relationship across stakeholders, (e.g safe spaces to experiment with new regulation)	— What other platforms, organisations, forums, councils etc. exist to promote a collective voice? — How do you interact/cooperate with them? Compete or collaborate? — Is there a history of stakeholder dialogues or commissions to identify compromises across stakeholders?

INDICATOR	OPERATIONALISATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
6 MSP-advisory body has the mandate and is officially recognised as an advisory/intermediary body	— Government recognises the MSP as an official advisory body — Government regularly engages with the MSP — Participates in VNR process or other national or sub-national processes for sustainable development	— Is the MSP officially recognised and mandated by government? — At what level of government is the MSP positioned and over what sectors does it have influence? — How does the government engage with the MSP? How is a reciprocal relationship established and maintained?
7 Strong, charismatic leadership able to effectively engage and influence all sectors of society	— Previous experience in multi-sectors e.g. government, civil society and business — Individual has good reputation and respected voice with people from multiple sectors. — Platform leader (or coordinator/manager) can think, lead and act across organisational boundaries	— How would you describe the leadership of the organisation? — How does the MSP facilitate lesson-sharing and promote innovation among members? — How do you solve problems collectively and reach agreement on priorities to be addressed and ways of addressing them? — How are conflicts among members resolved? — What have you/your organisation learnt from these interactions and problem-solving exercises? Has it changed the way that you think or act, or has it had any impact on the work of your own organisation?
8 The MSP-advisory body is well-connected and has strong engage-ment, trust, reputation and influence across soci-etal sectors	— Wide range of organisations (including representative bodies) that are officially connected/ members of the MSP — The MSP is trusted and has a strong reputation among its constituents — Vertical links (to international institutions) and horizontal links (to other platforms) — Multiple, diverse, strong relationships at all levels — Platform is built on existing structures, with minimal new infrastructure — Sense of 'ownership' of platform by its stakeholders / members and hosts understanding of when, where, how, why and with whom to connect	— How well connected and influential do you think the organisation is? — Is it effective to communicate both ways (public to government and vice versa) on progress and needs of SDGs?

INDICATOR	OPERATIONALISATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
9 The MSP is representative and inclusive and has sound governance	— MSP has in place policies and processes to help ensure inclusion — Operating structure supports effective management of MSP and inclusion of other stakeholders — Platform is built on existing structures, with minimal new infrastructure	— What does the MSP do to ensure it is representative and inclusive? — Can you please tell me about the membership of this multi-stakeholder body? — What is the relationship between members of the multi-stakeholder body? — Is there multi-sector representation? What kinds of organisations or institutions participate in this body? — How many members does your multi-stakeholder body have and how are they selected? — Do you feel it is equally representative of all key stakeholder groups? Has the MSP been set-up to be an effective inclusive platform?
10 The MSP includes Public engagement at sub-national level (ability to create space for the government to follow up pilot action)	— Multiple, diverse, strong relationships at all levels — Understanding of when, where, how, why and with whom to connect — Establish pilot projects or studies to pave the way for large-scale activities by government agents (create space for action)	— Does it extend beyond the central level to receive input from sub-national level? — Is it effective to communicate both ways (public to government) on progress and needs of SDGs? — Do you establish dialogue projects or create knowledge to be provided as foundation for government agents to follow-up with innovative action?
11 The MSP has the skills and experience to be able to a) facilitate consensus building and develop policy advice, b) mediate across different interests, and c) support the development of collective action.	— MSP has demonstrated its ability to deliver on those three areas — MSP has staff with the right experience and skills	— How would you rate the experience and skills the MSP has in the three areas? — What mechanisms institutionalize or promote the MSP's interaction/engagement with government? — How do government and MSP actors interact in meetings, and how would you describe the MSP's level of participation and influence in these meetings?

INDICATOR	OPERATIONALISATION	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
(12) The MSP has systems and processes to engage effectively and M&E in place to measure its effectiveness	— Documented process for engagement — Strategy and workplans aligned to SDGs — Learning linked to M&E — Logic model/Theory of Change used to maintain strategic focus	— How do you measure the effectiveness (M&E) of your work? — Have you developed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy for the MSP? — What is the expectation of members in relation to M&E for the MSP? For example, are members expected to collect and submit data on progress related to joint activities led by the MSP? — Who takes the lead on reporting for the MSP? Does this require all Members' sign off? — As a collective body, have you engaged in any reflective exercises around how your work can be improved?
(13) The MSP is a „bona fide" organisation able to accept and report on finances	— The MSP is a legally registered organisation (or programme of a registered organisation) — The MSP is in sound financial condition — Has (or is seeking) multiple, diverse funding sources — Platform champions help to secure funding — Funders provide other support as well as money — Reporting requirements are realistic and fit for purpose (e.g. initially more geared towards a small start-up enterprise than a large development project)	— How is your MSP funded? — If you receive any funding from the government, what does this mean for the scope of work, the way that you work or your level of independence? — What are the constraints in terms of funding and resources, and how does this affect the capacity to collaborate?