

Technical and Logistical Assistance  
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**Policy  
Forum** on  
**Development**

**PFD Research**

## **National Strategies Supporting the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

**Findings from initial country studies in Ghana,  
Indonesia, the Netherlands and Peru**

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More information about the PFD can be found at <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/policy-forum-development/>

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Global development policy is now focused on the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, via its interlinked and indivisible sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the means to implement them. The members of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD), a space for dialogue amongst stakeholders in EU development policy, are all actors in the implementation of this agenda and well-placed to encourage and evaluate the process. This multi-stakeholder group covers a vast network of players from the grassroots to the global levels. As such, the PFD undertook four country studies to examine national strategies around the 2030 Agenda, looking more closely at: 1) government policies; 2) existing strategies and/or priorities; 3) status and role of civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) in the process; 4) areas where multi-stakeholder partnerships have been helpful and/or could be potentially helpful in SDG implementation; and 5) participation of marginalized or under-represented groups. While this common structure was established for all reports, the country studies have been elaborated by local researchers. This short brief details a set of comparative findings arising from the studies, which have been produced between the end of 2015 to the end of 2016 in the Netherlands, Indonesia, Peru and Ghana.

## Findings:

### **The politics of the governing party, and notably changes in political leadership, affect how a country supports the 2030 Agenda.**

In Ghana, the appointment of President John Dramani Mahama by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, as co-chair to lead 16 eminent persons to advocate for support and momentum for the achievement of SDGs is reflected in the government's initial commitment to the 2030 Agenda. Out of the four countries, Ghana is the one that, politically, has shown stronger initial support for the 2030 Agenda. In Indonesia, the current administration started at an early stage to promote a national debate. So far, it seems less enthusiastic about the 2030 Agenda than the previous administration was about the MDGs. In Peru, the study has largely coincided with the electoral campaign and the elections. During that time, none of the parties in the run up to the elections has made strong claims in support of the 2030 Agenda. Finally, the Netherlands, while supportive of the implementation of the SDGs, has seen changes in its development assistance, affecting both the financial envelope as well as the participation from different actors, including CSOs. Upcoming elections will certainly influence next steps.

## **The indivisibility of the SDGs is at stake, as governments and organisations are selecting where and how to focus.**

Both Ghana (through its Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda) and Indonesia (through “Nawa Cita” or the “Nine Goals”) follow a similar pattern, where either existing or new national development strategies overlap with the SDGs and risk to be the focus, as they are already part of national planning. In fact, the integration of the 2030 Agenda is, so far, slow in terms of highlighting priorities, presenting convincing strategies and establishing coordination mechanisms that support the implementation of the SDGs. In Peru, the debate about how to design a strategy to implement the SDGs has awaited the new executive. Ministries are currently undertaking the revision of means and goals to develop concrete operative plans. CSO and LAs in the Netherlands are also sticking to their core mandates and the government, also a donor, has chosen to continue emphasising its traditional focus areas for external aid, including food security, water, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and peace and security.

## **The agenda feels new and certainly not all actors feel ownership or are aware of the SDGs.**

This is common to all countries examined: both at national and local levels, there is a lack of public awareness. Some local leaders were not aware of the change from MDGs to SDGs, while others wonder how to move along with the new and more all-encompassing global goals. This has different consequences. For example, the country study for Peru reports “a low level of SDG appropriation by multiple actors (public and private)” which hampers the potential to articulate a comprehensive plan of action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In a similar way, respondents to a survey in the Netherlands report mentioned that they felt it was important to inform a wider audience about the SDGs; however, “none of the actors seem to perceive communicating about the agenda as their responsibility.” In general, it is felt that there has been little public information or awareness campaigns about the SDGs, and the level of knowledge shown by most actors, including governmental ones, remains limited. Specific multi-stakeholder initiatives in the last year are working to reverse this trend.

## **Those actors engaged are in the early stages of organising a response.**

There is a learning curve for all organisations involved. In Indonesia, the current leadership is still in an “awareness building” process, and open to inputs from other stakeholders. The same goes for Ghana, which has already set up a CSO platform for the SDGs with the intention of creating opportunities for effective collaboration to ensure active CSO participation in the implementation of the SDGs. In Peru, the lack of governmental leadership is, so far, filled by an unsystematic arrangement of post-MDGs groupings around shared goals, which hope to provide advice to the newly elected government. In the Netherlands, as there is not yet a national SDG strategy, but more of an informal response at this stage, there is some concern that CSOs and LAs “in the know” will engage but not others. A great concern in all countries is the inclusiveness of the process, due to the manifest lack of information and capacity of most organizations.



## The capacity of different actors and their ability to build sound partnerships is at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

Progress in the implementation of the SDGs demands multiple actors with coordinated action around the agreed goals. The situation in this respect is challenging. In the Netherlands, CSOs are looking for funding to replace previous funding from government (redesigning both resources and priorities) as well as building new partnerships with private sector. The Global Goals Charter, another multi-stakeholder partnership in the Netherlands, includes many CSOs. In Indonesia, mistrust amongst sectors such as government and civil society sometimes impedes partnerships. Interviews undertaken during the research indicate that a draft of the presidential regulation on the implementation of the SDGs had been delayed in part because of a lack of compromise among major stakeholders with different interests. In Peru, while there is a tradition of participatory history in the country, so far the lack of governmental leadership in regards to the 2030 Agenda weakens the capacity of organizations to structure themselves around clear priorities. In Ghana, two main aspects that remain crucial for the implementation of the SDGs are: the need to strengthen the managerial and organisational capacity of LAs and CSOs; and the creation of credible platforms where they can act together.

## Civil society remains the driving force in supporting the implementation of the SDGs.

In Peru, the tradition of bottom up dialogue between different groups (concertación) in a context of poorly decentralized planning, seems to be a valuable unofficial mechanism in persuading the national government of the importance of the SDGs. In that context, the role of CSOs is essential to encourage the debate. In the Netherlands, CSOs are calling for national leadership and clarity in roles, with the private sector and government as strong driving forces as well. In Indonesia, CSOs drive the demand for a legal framework, the presidential regulation, and lobbying for the establishment of a more multi-stakeholder national secretariat that is equipped with “Joint Working Groups” consisting of representatives of various stakeholders to oversee and coordinate the implementation of each of the SDGs. In Ghana, despite a number of relevant challenges, such as inadequate funding and lack of appropriate human capital, CSOs again play (as they did with the MDGs) a very important role in making sure the government sets the conditions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## Levels of/experiences with decentralisation and size of the country have a clear effect on SDG implementation.

This is particularly weak in Ghana where LAs seem to have different mandates and niches and do not usually work together in a coordinated manner. In Indonesia, decentralisation is in place but LAs throughout the country face very different levels of capacity and financing. Apart from being autonomous regions, provinces are also legally tasked as “representatives” of the national government and therefore carry out many national government programs, having a larger role in development. In Peru, the likelihood of achieving the SDGs is questionable if further efforts to decentralize competences and resources do not take place. In contrast, the Netherlands is the exception. With its small size and participatory culture, decentralisation has been a successful tool in achieving development outcomes, and this is reflected in the approach to promoting the 2030 Agenda, both internally and through development cooperation. Several local authorities are part of the Global Goals Municipality Campaign.

## Examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships do exist and can be helpful in achieving the 2030 Agenda. However, their impact remains unknown.

In the Netherlands, the Global Goals Charter is a multi-stakeholder coalition in which the private sector plays a strong role, specifically set up to inform the national agenda on the SDGs as well as to create an enabling environment to promote the implementation of the SDGs. In Indonesia, *Pencerah Nusantara* was established as an initiative of civil society through collaboration with the private sector and local governments, pushing policies to be formulated based on actual needs of people at grassroots level. In Peru, groups that defend the SDGs are organizing themselves around national established networks with different compositions depending on the theme. Some of those are the National Association of NGOs, the Cities for Life Foro, the Health Foro, etc. In Ghana, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) is currently hosting a *CSO Platform for SDGs*, independent from the one proposed by the government.

These eight points are just some of the findings of the country studies. They are, beyond the informative country analysis, a relevant source of inspiration and debate about the first phase of implementation of the SDGs. In particular, they can further an understanding of the initial obstacles, potential solutions, and role that different stakeholders play, as well as the possibilities that derive from different institutional approaches to set the SDGs in motion.

The four studies have been translated to English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded at: <https://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/policy-forum-development/minisite/pfd-research>

## Here are some questions to ask in-country as implementation progresses:

1. Has political support for the 2030 Agenda remained strong?
2. Has the 2030 Agenda been institutionalized (with a strategy, timeline and body to lead its implementation)?
3. Are national development strategies consistent with the SDGs?
4. Is progress being measured?
5. Are CSOs' advocacy efforts taken into consideration?
6. Are inclusive partnerships installed so no one is left behind?
7. Are LAs adequately resourced and coordinated to implement the SDGs?
8. Are steps being taken to increase the levels of information and capacity to implement the SDGs?
9. Do multi-stakeholder platforms to support the SDGs exist and do they have any impact on policy or implementation?
10. Are marginalized groups participating in or benefiting from the 2030 Agenda?



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