



**Communication and Awareness
Raising in the Implementation of
the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs:
Activities and Challenges**

Eric Mulholland, Alessia Bernardo & Gerald Berger

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AUTHORS: **ERIC MULHOLLAND, ALESSIA BERNARDO, AND GERALD BERGER, ESDN OFFICE**

CONTACT: **ESDN OFFICE**

Institute for Managing Sustainability
Vienna University of Economics and Business
Welthandelsplatz 1, A-1020 Vienna, Austria
esdn-office@sd-network.eu
+43-1-31336-4807

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Introduction

This Quarterly Report will focus on communication and awareness raising activities that are being employed regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the challenges that are being faced in its effective communication at the UN, national, sub-national, and stakeholder level. This report will be looking specifically at communication and awareness raising activities that go beyond consultation mechanisms, which many countries employ when dealing with and implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS). For the purposes of this Report, communication and awareness raising will not only focus on what types of communication and awareness raising tools the UN, national, sub-national, and stakeholder levels are using regarding the SDGs, but also how they are using them to spread awareness. Some examples of the tools and activities that will be discussed in this Report include, media campaigns, websites, videos, SDG guides, conferences on sustainable development, workshops, newsletters, educational programs, etc.

This Report will, after providing a basic definition of communication and awareness raising activities and tools, focus, firstly, on communication and awareness raising in the 2030 Agenda document itself, in order to determine which stakeholders the 2030 Agenda is addressing and how the UN is trying to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs among different stakeholder groups. In order for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to have the highest possible chance of success, there needs to be in place communication and awareness raising activities that seek to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

From there, this Report will shift its focus to look at the national level within Europe, in order to take stock of what countries are doing in terms of communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs. The Report will give an overview of the tools and initiatives that countries are using, in order to illuminate good practices regarding communication and uncover tools that are effective in being able to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs. From the group of European countries that have something in the way of communication and awareness raising activities and tools, a few countries will be selected for closer inspection on why they employ certain awareness raising activities and how these tools function in enhancing communication and awareness raising. Through analysing different country cases within Europe, it is hoped to be able to showcase interesting strategies that are effective in communicating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at all levels of government, which includes all stakeholders and civil society, and potentially lead to an enhanced success rate in not only the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, but also its uptake by stakeholders and civil society.

In addition to taking stock of the current communication and awareness raising atmosphere in Europe, it is an added goal of this Report, in being able to identify communication and awareness raising initiatives and tools, that countries can learn from one another, communicate further with one another in terms of ideas about different communication and awareness raising tools, in order to facilitate more exchange and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Apart from the UN and national levels, this Report will also inspect what different stakeholder groups are currently doing to raise awareness for the SDGs, whom they are targeting, and how they are targeting them. Stakeholder communication and awareness raising is interesting, as stakeholders and stakeholder groups tend to be very familiar with how best to reach members of their communities and interest groups than larger bodies, such as sub-national, national, regional, and international bodies, could be. Communication and awareness

raising tools can, therefore, have a more targeted focus upon selected groups of stakeholders, which can elicit a more pronounced response from the target audience. When engaging with the SDGs, it is important to be able to present them to stakeholders in a way that is not only understandable to them, but also applicable. It is, therefore, important for stakeholders to be actively engaged with the SDGs, whether that is business, NGOs, CSO's, research and academia, and civil society, as they sometimes know how best to make the SDGs approachable and appealing to their audiences.

Instead of dedicating a special chapter on the European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW), this Report will briefly mention it here, as it is a communication and awareness raising tool that all levels are welcome to use in promoting the SDGs, meaning all European countries, regions and municipalities are involved in the ESDW, as well as stakeholders in encouraging people to register events to the ESDW website that have to do with the SDGs. The ESDW is a European-wide initiative to stimulate and make visible activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It takes place every year from 30 May until 05 June 2017. The European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) is an initiative to facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform. The ESDW contributes to this ambitious, universal and transformative agenda by promoting the organization of bottom-up activities that have a thematic link to and support the SDGs. As such, the ESDW aims to raise awareness for the 2030 Agenda in Europe and calls upon local stakeholders to actively engage with sustainable development, in general, and the SDGs, in particular.²

At the end of this Report, we provide some conclusions about communication and awareness raising tools for achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDGs that are applied at the national and stakeholder level.

¹ <http://www.esdw.eu/>

² <http://www.esdw.eu/about-us/>

Chapter 1: Communication and Awareness Raising Activities in the 2030 Agenda for SD at the UN Level

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities in the 2030 Agenda

In order to be able to understand the important role communication has in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda for SD needs to be more closely examined. While the overall 2030 Agenda does not make an explicit reference to communication, or how communicating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs should be undertaken by the UN or its UN Member States, messages of communication can still be inferred. Since the 2030 Agenda aims to not be overly prescriptive, and because the contexts in each country can be vastly different, such a clearly outlined communication strategy would have probably been inappropriate. UN Member States are in the best position when it comes to understanding their needs and what works best for them regarding communication strategies and challenges.

However, despite the lack of a blueprint on how to effectively communicate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to all stakeholders, the 2030 Agenda does stress the importance of incorporating every facet of society, capturing everyone, and leaving no one behind. Paragraph 5 of the 2030 Agenda outlines the magnitude and reach that the Agenda has, and thereby sends a powerful message of togetherness, despite the clear difference and preferences between countries:

§5 This is an Agenda of unprecedented scope and significance. It is accepted by all countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. These are universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development.

With this paragraph, the 2030 Agenda is being communicated in such a way as to alert and reinforce the sovereignty of the nation-state, stating that **countries are not alone in trying to achieve the lofty targets** set out in the 17 SDGs, **but are, at the same time, responsible for integrating it into their own national contexts**. In this instance, the 2030 Agenda is clearly communicating to the UN Member States that they themselves are the responsible entities in being able to realize the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, which **necessitates them being able to develop strategies that will facilitate the effective communication to their national and sub-national governments, policymakers, stakeholders and civil society**.

The UN and the 2030 Agenda make it clear that the role of the state and national governments will be paramount to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. **Communication and awareness raising for the SDGs is embedded in effective implementation**. As paragraph 45 of the 2030 Agenda alludes to, it is the main role of national governments to be able to communicate the 2030 Agenda to their policymakers, in order to create policies that take the SDGs into account. However, this line of communication must be taken further, so that those levels closest to civil society, the local and municipal levels, as well as other stakeholder groups are also informed on priorities, as they will be the agents of 'on the ground change' regarding meeting the targets of the SDGs.

§45 We acknowledge also the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments. **Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organizations, volunteer groups and others.**

Apart from these two paragraphs, the official 2030 Agenda does not delve into specifics regarding communication and awareness raising, as it is seen, as outlined above, as mainly a country specific challenge. As such, countries and national governments are the more appropriate choices when it comes to knowing how to communicate and with whom to communicate. Since no two countries have the same set of circumstances, it is hard to prescribe a 'one-size-fits-all' approach when it comes to communication and awareness raising strategies. Much like the implementation of the 2030 Agenda into national legislation depends on the contexts of each country, so too do the communication and awareness raising activities and strategies.

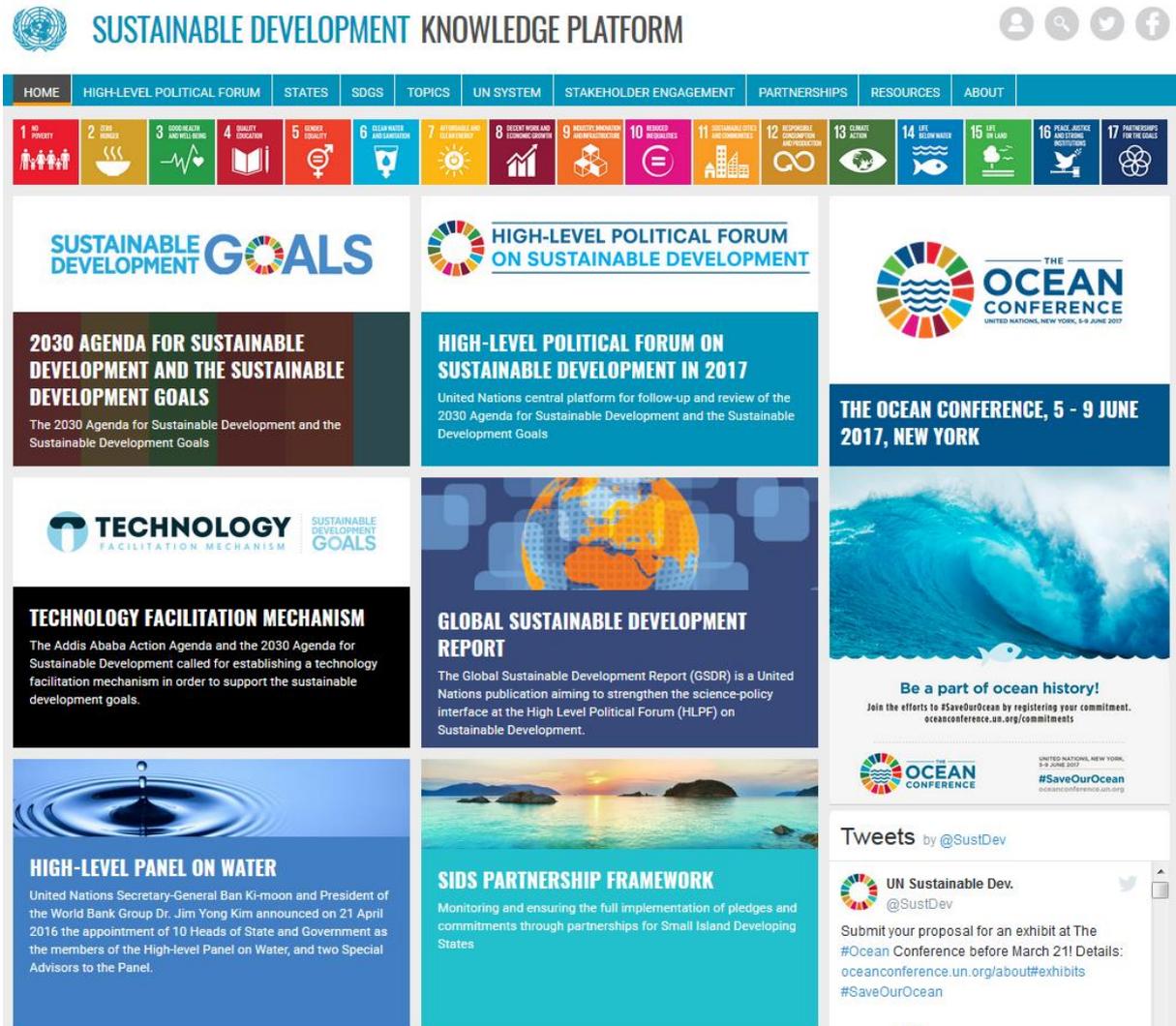
Communication and Awareness Raising Activities by the UN and UN Partnerships

General UN Communication and Awareness Raising Tools

While the official 2030 Agenda may not explicitly mention communication and awareness raising strategies regarding the SDGs in the actual text, that does not mean the UN itself is not undertaking communication and awareness raising activities. The UN has a [website dedicated to sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs](#). The website gives readers an overview of the 2030 Agenda and how it is a more ambitious than the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The SDGs themselves have their own page, where visitors can click on each goal to learn more about it and its indicators: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>. The UN website even goes as far as having a page dedicated towards actions and steps that people can take to make a difference, including a **guide entitled *The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World***, which lays out the small things people can do in their lives that can have far ranging impacts, including on reaching the targets set out in the SDGs.

The UN also has a website called the [Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#) (see Figure 1 below), which has links to different activities that the UN organizes, such as the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), as well as links to official upcoming events, such as [The Ocean Conference](#), which will be taking place from 5-9 May, 2017 in New York. The Platform also has a "[Resources](#)" sub-site, which seeks to briefly inform visitors about the history of Sustainable Development, starting from 1972 through to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Under this sub-site, the UN archives its [newsletters](#), and asks visitors to subscribe. The newsletters function along two lines: The first line is to announce upcoming events to subscribers and website visitors. The second function is to provide a documentation of the events for those who may be interested in finding out more about what happened during them and which topics and themes were addressed. The UN is able to, by using these different websites, offer stakeholders and people a wide range of information that varies in complexity from the 2030 Agenda document itself, to the brief history of sustainable development. As one can see from the screen shot in Figure 1 of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, the homepage manifests many different communication techniques and tools, ranging from a news feed about upcoming events, to using logos, such as the SDGs, and provides links and other sub-menus for the website's visitors.

Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform



Source: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

Based on the language found on the UN website and the way in which they present the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, shows that they are trying to make both highly relevant and accessible to ordinary people, which reinforces the core of the 2030 Agenda being that it is an agenda for everyone, and that everyone needs to do their part, no matter how small. In communicating the Agenda and the SDGs in this way, the UN is communicating that responsibility for reaching the SDGs does not only rely on national governments, but also that individual citizens also have a responsibility to do whatever it is they can in their daily lives to affect change.

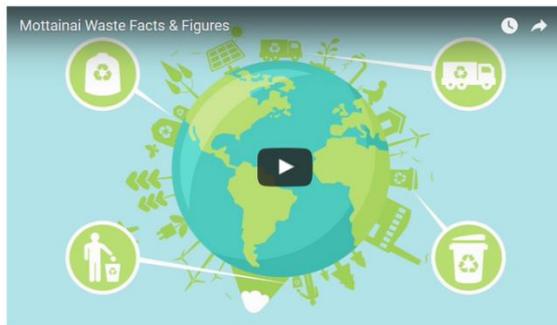
In addressing all of society with the SDGs, the **UN has recently cooperated with UNICEF** and launched a **video, *Small Smurfs Big Goals***, which uses the Smurfs as SDG ambassadors, in order to educate and involve children, young adults, and adults in the SDGs. The short one minute video reinforces the idea that no one is incapable of making a change, and that small changes, if done on a large scale, can have a huge impact.

In addition to the video with the Smurfs, the UN also has **videos dedicated to a myriad of other topics** related to the SDGs (see Figure 2 on the next page), such as [climate change](#), [energy](#), [inequality](#), etc., which seek to provide the most current information available on their respective topics, which is important in communications with people, as they are more easily able to receive up-to-date information, as well as see how topics are being dealt with.

Figure 2: Videos on Climate Change, Energy and Inequality

WATCH: How we treat our waste affects our health, environment and even our economies

February 6th, 2017 | News, VIDEO: Cities, VIDEO: Climate change, VIDEO: Economic growth, VIDEO: Energy, VIDEO: Health, VIDEO: Infrastructure, Industrialization, VIDEO: Sustainable consumption and production, VIDEO: Water and sanitation



India: The Power of Pine Needles

March 9th, 2015 | VIDEO: Energy



How can the SDGs best help Indigenous Peoples?

May 24th, 2016 | Inequality, Video: Inequality



Source: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/videos/>

The UN sustainable development website also provides UN organizations, as well as non-UN organizations, with **easy to [download logos and icons](#) related to the SDGs**, such as each individual SDG, SDG guidelines, and a poster, featuring all of the SDGs in one banner. These logos are free for anyone to use, which aids in the promotion of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. However simple these logos may seem, they provide everyone with an easy way to recognize and relate to the SDGs more easily than with the 2030 Agenda document. These logos also help to unite everyone and everything around the SDGs, and by providing shortened descriptions without the individual indicators, it allows everyone to receive an overview of the different goals. With this overview, people can choose specific goals that appeal to them and learn more about them.

Sustainable Development Action Campaign

The UN, in general, has a lot of communication initiatives in place. However, individual UN bodies are also doing something to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs. **The [Sustainable Development Action Campaign](#)**, which is a **special initiative of the UN Secretary-General administered by the UN Development Programme (UNDP)** and mandated to support the UN system-wide and the Member States on advocacy and public engagement in the SDG implementation, is one such initiative. The Sustainable Development Action Campaign is committed to: 1) engaging stakeholders and individuals to support member states and UN Country Teams in the implementation of the SDGs through people's direct engagement; 2) encouraging public ownership of the SDGs in every country through creative and innovative communications, campaigning and policy advocacy; and 3) sponsoring people-driven processes to strengthen accountability mechanisms and

monitor SDG progress through the generation and collection of data, evidence, and sentiment about the impact of the SDGs (<https://sdgactioncampaign.org/about-2/>). Some of the initiatives and programs that the Sustainable Development Action Campaign is undertaking are briefly described below.

The Sustainable Development Action Campaign has many different programs and activities that deal with raising awareness for the SDGs. [MY World 2030](#) is one such program, which serves an adaptable platform for citizen-generated data and engagement with the SDGs. MY World 2030 allows people from around the world to tell the UN what they are passionate about in the SDG agenda and offers a gauge of perceived progress until 2030. This initiative is taken even further with [Humans of MY World](#), which uses Facebook to show the human faces and stories behind the MY World data. Youth advocates travelled to over 30 countries around the world to gather photo-testimonies on issues that matter most to anonymous individuals. In addition to the Facebook page and social media campaigns, the testimonies were used in over 11 high-level meetings to bring the voices of the people directly to decision makers.

With these two linked initiatives, the Sustainable Development Action Campaign has allowed citizens to be able to communicate with each other and exchange information and experiences, which they otherwise may not have had access to before. The MY World 2030 program asks participants if they are familiar with the SDGs, which, if they are, they can choose 6 SDGs that are of an immediate concern to them and their families. After that, participants are asked to fill out demographic information. Participants can then see the overall scope of answers that have been given at the global level, as well as filter data, such as by age, gender, Human Development Index (HDI), education level, country, etc.

[#Connect2effect Global Hackathon](#) is another initiative under the Sustainable Development Action Campaign, which seeks to challenge hackers to rapidly generate an unprecedented level of innovation and collaboration around the SDGs. The 3-day #Connect2effect Global Hackathon brings together innovators with different skillsets, which range from marketing to programming to designing. The event will produce a series of basic workable prototypes that can be further expanded after the event. The best ideas will be developed and supported through local incubation programmes, and mentoring on crowdfunding platforms.

There has also been an **application for smart phones** developed called the ***Sustainable Development Goals in Action***, which was created in partnership by GSMA, Project Everyone and DPI. It features:

- All the latest progress news
- Facts and figures about all 17 Goals
- Short, shareable content
- The ability to create your own action for the Goals and share it with friends and colleagues.
- Great stories and case studies to inspire you and your friends.
- The application can be downloaded via Android or Apple app stores via: <https://sdgsinaction.com/>

Communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs through social media and smart phone applications is an effective way in reaching a large amount of people, as the amount of time that is spent on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and on smart phones, is increasing. An important part of being able to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs is by providing people with examples of what is occurring around the world and closer to home, as it becomes easier for people to engage with issues if they can see it for themselves. The features of this application allow news to be viewed and shared about particular SDGs that a person may find

interesting. This application makes it easier for its users to find information on these topics, instead of searching for it themselves, which is highly relevant and important in awareness raising: quick, easy to understand, and interesting at the touch of a screen.

The Sustainable Development Action Campaign also formed a partnership with UNDP, UNF and Project Everyone to develop three short films dedicated to the SDGs. One of the **videos**, [We Have a Plan](#), uses scenes out of familiar and recognizable movies to signal that there is plan in place for dealing with many of the world's challenges, mainly the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The video gives examples of pressing problems that are most familiar to people, such as extreme poverty and climate change. The video ends with a strong message for everyone to do their part in the "plan", which further reinforces the message in the 2030 Agenda of being a global responsibility, where everyone has to contribute.

[Numbers in Action](#), is another animated video that deals with the SDGs by breaking them down into relatable numbers, such as the number of people living in extreme poverty in the year 2000, which was 1,750,000, and decreased to 900,000 in 2012, and will hopefully decrease to no one living in extreme poverty by 2030. Other SDGs are also represented in the video, such as inequality, which also put the SDGs into the wider context of the past, present and future, which shows to everyone that progress has not only been made with respect to many of these challenges, but also that progress is continuing to be made and will continue to be made into the future. This form of communication is poignant as it takes some of the SDGs, which many may see as abstract notions that cannot be easily conceived of or related to, and puts numbers on them, which helps to show people their importance and how many people are affected by the SDGs, or who need to be affected by the SDGs, in order have a better quality of life.

The **video**, [Leave No One Behind](#), is a very powerful video that puts faces and real people to the SDGs, thereby marking how important it will be to reach them by 2030. The video focuses on people who are disadvantaged and most at risk of being left behind as the world continues to develop. The first message, grounded in the 2030 Agenda document, of the video is a stark reminder, that the SDGs are goals that need to help the most disadvantaged people first, in order to be able to help everyone.

Videos, social media, and smart phone applications are very easy and effective tools in being able to reach a large amount of people, and to be able to present the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a way that is more easily understood, as well as easy for people to be able to relate to them, and allow them to see that the SDGs are not necessarily abstract goals that were decided by some far-away organization and negotiated by unknown countries. These forms of communication allow vast amounts of information regarding the SDGs to be available at once click of a computer mouse, or one tap away on a screen. Making the SDGs easy for people to relate to is a very effective way in not only raising awareness for the SDGs, but also raising interest in them, and inspiring people to take actions, no matter how small they may be.

Chapter 2: National Communication and Awareness Raising Activities for the SDGs

This chapter of the Report will focus on the communication and awareness raising activities at the European national level. For the purposes of gathering relevant and more up-to-date information regarding current activities, as well as challenges in addressing communication of the SDGs to stakeholders and civil society, a short, three question questionnaire was administered to National Focal Points (NFPs) of the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN). The three broad questions that were asked were: 1) Are there activities in place to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs and/or the 2030 Agenda within your specific country?; 2) If yes, please explain/describe the most important one(s), as well as which stakeholders they target and how they target them.; and 3) What are, in general, the most important challenges in communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs and/or the 2030 Agenda? Prior to sending out the questionnaire, information was gathered on the communication and awareness raising activities of countries by examining their National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), for those countries that have already integrated the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into their strategies, their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) from the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2016, as well as countries' sustainable development websites.

Based on the results from the prior research and the questionnaire, a juxtaposition of the countries' communication and awareness raising activities will be conducted, in order to detect not only common communication and awareness raising tools, but also tools that are unique and novel. This chapter will also illuminate these more unique tools and communication methods, in order to spread knowledge and experiences regarding their function, which stakeholders they reach, and how they reach their targeted stakeholders.

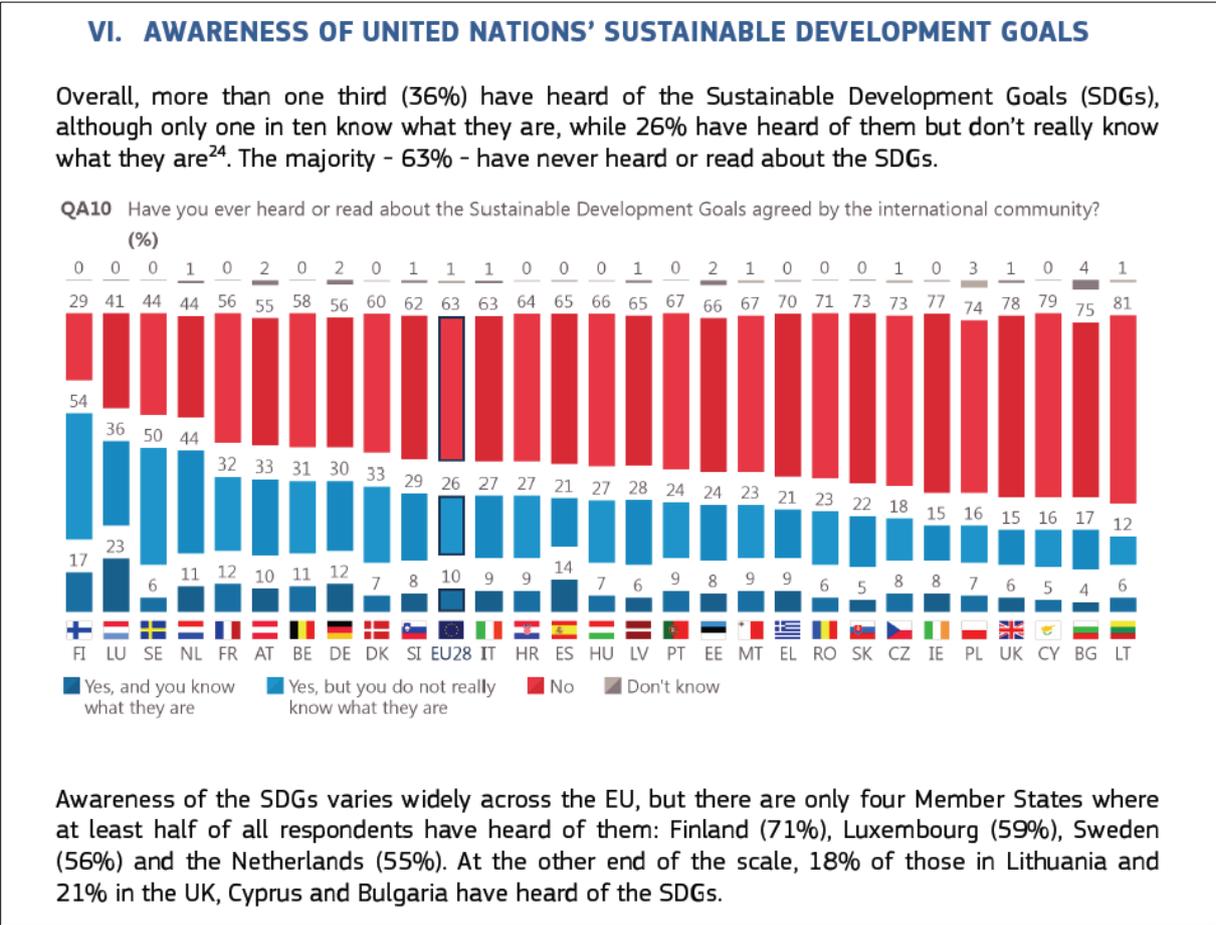
In addition to discussing about communication and awareness raising activities that are set up, or are being set up, regarding the SDGs, it is also important to discuss the challenges that each country is facing in their communication and awareness raising efforts. This chapter, therefore, will serve as a mapping and stocktaking exercise, in order to determine to what extent European countries are facing challenges, and how different the challenges are between countries. By illuminating these challenges, this Report seeks to more closely connect the different European countries, and promote experience exchange and learning, as some countries may have already experienced another country's issue and can help in finding a solution without necessarily duplicating efforts. Also, if countries are encountering the same issues, this Report can help countries identify potential partners for cooperation in solving them.

National Level: Communication and Awareness Raising Activities

Before delving into the selected country case studies, an overview of the awareness of the SDGs in each individual Member State of the EU, as well as the EU average, is interesting to observe. Figure 3, below, depicts the **level of awareness for the SDGs that each EU Member State** has as of December 2015, three months after the 2030 Agenda was agreed upon at the UN. The results are sobering, as the figure states that 63% of EU citizens have never heard or read about the SDGs. However, it has been over a year since these statistics have been published. Eurobarometer has not published more updated results regarding EU-wide awareness for the SDGs. This Report, therefore, will provide concrete examples of how countries are handling the communication and awareness raising for the SDGs. As more initiatives, activities and attention is being given to the SDGs, the more the numbers in the figure below will continue to improve. Discovering, learning, and

sharing between countries on how communication and awareness raising activities function, who they address, and how they are addressing stakeholders will be vital in the overall success of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Figure 3: Awareness within the EU of the SDGs



Source: Special Eurobarometer Report 441, European Commission, February 2016

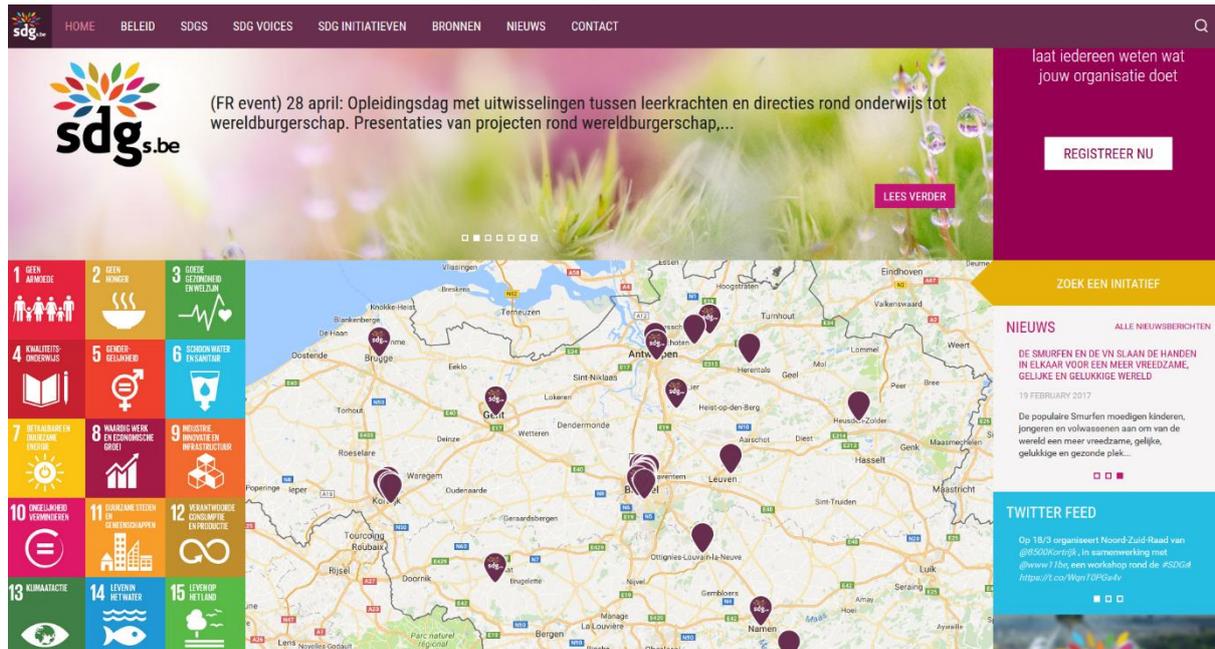
The rest of this chapter will focus on a few European country cases. The **6 countries** that were chosen, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, were chosen because there has been outreach in terms of communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs in each of these countries, and the questionnaire sent out to the NFPs was returned answers to the three questions that were raised. The goal of this chapter is to take in-depth stock of what countries are doing in terms of the tools and activities they are employing in their awareness raising campaigns. In addition to stocktaking, the secondary aim of this chapter is to provide ideas for other countries to potentially adopt and adapt certain tools that other countries are using to their own contexts and foster more communication between countries on which communication and awareness raising campaigns, tools, and activities are successful in reaching stakeholders and civil society.

Belgium

An NSDS has recently been adopted by the responsible ministers, and is now awaiting approval by the specific governments of Belgium. It is important to note that the NSDS offers a common framework for the federal and regional strategies. A federal strategy has been in place since 1997. At the federal level, the third federal plan (one of the elements of the strategy) that incorporates the 2030 Agenda and SDGs has not been adopted yet. At the Belgian federal level they do, however, have a unique approach to communicating and raising awareness for them. The Federal Institute for Sustainable Development has created a **holistic communication plan** that

groups all of their actions and instruments, as well as actors and the objectives they wish to reach. This Report will focus on two of Belgium’s communication and awareness raising tools, a **website** that is dedicated to the SDGs, [SDGs.be](http://sdgs.be), as well as the use of “**SDG Voices**”, who **function as SDG ambassadors**, a screenshot of which can be seen in Figure 4 below. Belgium is unique in this sense, as they are the only country presented in this Report that employs a website dedicated solely to the SDGs and raising awareness and promoting activities, but also the “SDG Voice” ambassador system. Examining these communication and awareness raising tools, will shed light on how they were designed to function, who the intended audience of these tools are, and how these tools reach their designated audience(s).

Figure 4: Belgian SDG Website



Source: <http://www.sdgs.be/nl>

SDG Website: [SDGs.be](http://sdgs.be)

Focusing firstly on the SDG website, the objective of the website was to **create a point of reference around the SDGs in Belgium, where visitors can be informed and engaged**. The designated actors that the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development wished to **reach the most were civil society and the media**. The website provides copious amounts of **background information about the SDGs**, such as where they come from, what they are, etc. The website also looks at the SDGs from a **multi-level policy point of view**, meaning from the UN, EU, OECD and Belgium. Regarding Belgium itself, the website functions as more than a **relay station for information coming the UN and EU levels**, but also functions as a **hub, where information can be found on ‘registered events’ (almost 50 as of March 2017) occurring throughout Belgium in relation to the SDGs**. The **website provides a platform**, on which projects from organizations, people, stakeholders, etc., happening in Belgium can be registered. With respect to event registration, the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development often reaches out to the event organizers already planning activities related to the SDGs and encourage them to register these events to the SDG website. This is done to help ensure the SDG website reaches a critical mass and can be self-sustaining regarding visitors.

In this respect, the use of the SDG website as a communication tool, attempts to **break down the SDGs into a more easily understood form** by framing it in the context of the UN, EU, and Belgium. By framing the SDGs in the Belgian context, it **brings the Goals closer to civil society and lessens the abstractions** that may be found at higher political levels when they mention the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Higher policy levels can

oftentimes become mired in complex and vague language, making it harder for ordinary citizens to access and relate to. By bringing it to the national level, or the sub-national level, and prioritizing the SDGs in terms of Belgian priorities, it brings it closer to civil society in Belgium. Being able to translate and communicate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs from the UN or EU level, is very important in having them be understood more readily by a country's general population. Moreover, the idea is also to promote engagement from all civil society actors towards the SDGs, not only ministries, but also local communities, NGOs, sectoral business federations etc. Finally, The Federal Institute for Sustainable Development chooses to encourage transversal approaches by granting initiatives that cover multiple dimensions of SD a dedicated logo, which distinguishes them from initiatives that contribute to only one dimension of SD.

Apart from framing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the Belgian context, and in order to raise awareness around the website, the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development distributed a **teaser on social media** and their own website when the launch date approached. When the website first went online, the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development had a **press release** with more information that would help direct people to the newly launched SDG website. Those working in the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development took to **including the URL of the SDG website into their email signatures**, in an effort to raise awareness for the website and the SDGs. The Institute also tries to **be as active as possible on social media**, such as Twitter and Facebook, to lead more people to the website.

Currently, the Institute is working towards a **German and English translation of the SDG website**, which will not only prove useful for the High Level Political Forum, where Belgium will be presenting their Voluntary National Review, but also for the German Speaking Community and for people living in Belgium, who do not speak French or Dutch, and thereby ensuring a higher number of people have the ability to access the SDG website and understand and learn about the SDGs.

In addition to translating the SDG website into German and English, the Institute is considering **advertising** about the website, in order to increase visitors. To this effect, the Institute has planned a meeting with other federal entities in Belgium to gather their information regarding the SDGs and SDG initiatives and programs to also add to the website. Based on Google analytics, most people who visit the website stay for a fairly long time, almost 4 minutes, and a significant amount of people are returning to the website, but also that almost 59% of visitors are new to the website, and 41% are returning visitors.

SDG Voices: Belgium's SDG Ambassadors

The idea for Belgium's **SDG Ambassadors, known as SDG Voices**, came from the spokespersons for the 2030 Agenda that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon had chosen, and consisted of well-known personalities, such as the soccer player Messi, singer Shakira, and Belgium's Queen Mathilde. The Federal Institute for Sustainable Development took this idea and created a partnership with [The Shift](#), which is a Belgian sustainability network that brings together 350 companies, NGOs and other organizations to stimulate partnerships and help co-create sustainable business models, in order to accomplish something similar to what the UN did, in Belgium. They decided to appoint 8 Belgian SDG Voices. These **SDG Voices represent 8 organizations**, which had been selected via a double selection procedure. This procedure entailed the enlistment of a committee consisting of 17 experts from civil society, who were tasked with creating a list of organizations with the biggest potential to carry out the SDGs in Belgium. Once the list of organizations was compiled by the expert committee, the list was put forward to a jury of communication experts, who chose the final 8 organizations with the best resume regarding sustainable development and in reaching the wider public.

The 8 organizations that were chosen received a subsidy from Marie-Christine Marghem, the Minister of Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development, in order to aid them in their communication

efforts regarding sustainable development and the SDGs. There was also a **kick-off event** on September 26, 2017 to announce the SDG Voices. And on February 14, 2017, Queen Mathilde met the 8 SDG Voices for a **roundtable discussion** about their work and the promotion of the SDGs in Belgium.

The 8 organizations consist of NGOs (GoodPlanet, Bond Beter Leefmilieu, DUO for a Job, Mouvement Action Paysanne, 11.11.11, and CNCD), the city of Ghent, and Colruyt Group, which is a business retailer. A sub-site of the Belgian SDG website, available in French and Dutch, has **information** regarding the [SDG Voices](#), as well as a **video, complete with English subtitles**, that introduce the 8 organizations that are SDG Voices. The [Who are the SDG Voices](#) video covers how the SDGs came about, and why these organizations think they are so important and are worth raising awareness for.

The main **aim of these different organizations is to spread the message of the SDGs to their specific stakeholders and members of civil society**, which will create a snowball effect by being able to reach people that are generally not reached with generic media and internet campaigns about sustainable development. In order to support the outreach and awareness raising activities and efforts by these organizations, **the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development also communicates on their website, as well as social media channels, about the activities that these organizations are doing.**

New Communication and Awareness Raising Activities

In a short interview with a representative from the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development regarding new communication and awareness raising activities in Belgium, it was shared that many of the Institute's **initiatives have gathered a lot more steam** at the present time. One of the initiatives is the free dissemination and **distribution of brochures**. The Institute is currently on its third printing, and has already handed out well over 9,000 brochures.

In addition to their past initiatives gaining more steam and an **enhanced brochure campaign**, the Institute has also been **increasingly active on social media**. The Institute is also planning to start a **newsletter** in the near future, which will be coupled with a bottom-up campaign, which could be a **YouTube contest**.

Impacts and Effectiveness of the Employed Tools in Increasing Awareness for the SDGs

In order to retrieve information regarding the **effectiveness and perceived effectiveness of awareness raising and communication tools** that the Belgian Federal Institute for Sustainable Development is employing, a representative of the Institute was asked to provide insights and information in an interview for the following three topics: impacts, challenges, and communication and awareness raising recommendations.

Regarding the Institute's use of social media, there has been a growing presence of the SDGs in Belgium due to the SDG website and the SDG Voices. Citizens and organizations are contacting the Institute via the website more often. The Institute also acknowledges that it can further enhance the impact of UN communication efforts, as they also have a platform to further spread the word.

The SDG Voices goes beyond communication issues, as it serves another function, which is it creates partnerships, where experiences can be shared, knowledge can be exchanged, and cooperation is enhanced.

Communication and Awareness Raising Challenges

For Belgium, the **biggest challenge** that remains to be dealt with is **the 2030 Agenda itself**, because it is such a **large and all-encompassing agenda**. Communicating it in its entirety, therefore, becomes very difficult. When trying to communicate the 2030 Agenda, there is always a risk that the **core message(s) unwittingly become distorted by its simplification** into more easily understood language. During the promotional video of the SDG Voices, for example, there was no time to go into detail about the SDGs themselves; there is a fine line between providing too little information and providing so much information, that it becomes overwhelming and confusing.

Experiences and Recommendations to Other Countries Regarding Raising Awareness for the SDGs

The **SDG website took a lot of resources and time**, so countries wishing to set up or adapt a similar website dedicated solely to the SDGs that serves as a platform for SDG related event registrations should be prepared. However, it should be noted that a **national online knowledge platform is very useful**. The official UN website exists, which informs people about the SDGs. However, on SDGs.be, the Institute is able to highlight Belgian initiatives, their way of work, as well as inform stakeholders and civil society about what is happening in Belgium. It is an **ideal way to communicate directly to citizens**. The website also gives the Institute an idea of non-governmental initiatives in Belgium, serving as a two-way feedback loop. The Institute recommends for other countries to establish a national website, but warn that it is **vitaly important to make it a living thing and not just a static website** that fizzles out. For example, the Institute tries to update it daily with news, and the events, which are occurring across the country, are also always changing. The website takes a lot of effort, especially when one factors in the outreach that the Institute sometimes performs to help initiatives with outreach.

Estonia

Estonia has undertaken many communication and awareness raising activities regarding the SDGs from their inception and ratification by the UN in September 2015. Many different NGOs and CSOs, coupled with the support of the policy world, are active in organizing events that communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs.

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities

Some examples of the myriad activities that Estonia has done, and is doing, regarding awareness raising for the SDGs, can be found in this section. One such activity was a **seminar** that was held in autumn 2015 and was dedicated to the universal Sustainable Development Goals, where, in addition to introducing the SDGs in general, **the seminar focused on SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**, in order to demonstrate what it would mean to implement the 2030 Agenda.

In the following year, autumn 2016, the **Sustainable Development Forum** took place, and **introduced the SDGs and dealt more specifically with issues related to food waste**. The Sustainable Development Forum included a **diverse range of participants**, such as civil servants and representatives from the NGO and business sector. The Forum is supported by the Environmental Investment Centre and the Government Office together with the Estonian Commission for Sustainable Development.³

In November 2016, the **Estonian Sustainable Development Commission** organized a **conference** that **introduced the SDGs**, as well as shared the results of the analysis that focused on the relevance of the

³ <http://www.siani.se/event/sustainable-development-forum-2016-food-and-climate-change/november-2016>

Estonian National Sustainable Development Strategy in light of the 2030 Agenda. The Conference was organized together with the Estonian Parliament.

Also in 2016, the **Estonian National Foundation of Civil Society** dedicated their **annual conference** to the SDGs and to the 2030 Agenda. The conference brought to the stage the **best practices on how NGOs can contribute to SDG implementation**.

The **NGO, Mondo**, which is an organization that focuses on humanitarian aid, development cooperation and global education, **initiated a publication** that was dedicated to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and was published as a **supplement to national newspapers**.

The Environmental Board, which falls within the area of governance of the Ministry of the Environment, has the task to implement the state's policies on the use of the environment and nature conservation and to contribute to the development and improvement of legal acts and other official documents related to the environment.⁴ The Board organized a **7-year educational program**, financed through the EU Structural Funds, on sustainable development that has helped to increase awareness on matters related to sustainable development, including the SDGs, which will be a topic in 2017. During the course of the program, **various seminars were organized for teachers** in academic and vocational schools, university professors, as well as educational specialists in NGOs. The SDG topic for this year will focus on **introducing teachers to the SDGs and help them to integrate the SDGs into school programs**.

In addition to the Environmental Board, there are other initiatives that are promoting the SDGs, such as the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, which worked together with **Mondo** and the **UNESCO National Committee** and organized **UN Day for high school youth** in February 2017, where the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda were one of the main topics.

A new initiative is being introduced this year at the [Tallinn Music Festival](#) (TMW), which has decided to promote the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable development is one of the topics at the TMW Conference, and with the help of Government Office, Ministry of Environment, European Commission and many others, they have **launched a campaign for promoting SDGs**, in which **famous Estonian artists explain the SDGs** and there is also a [short video competition](#) launched, in order to introduce ways for implementing the SDGs.

Finland

Finland's strengths with regard to its national implementation of the 2030 Agenda lie in its **established, but dynamic, institutional structures**: the **National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee**, which are forums for active discussion on sustainable development, placing sustainable development issues in a broader societal context. **Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development** is a tool for creating ownership and enhancing participation in society, which could generate major systemic changes as the number of **operational commitments** increases. Finnish society is showing increasing interest in sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda has been welcomed with enthusiasm and **NGOs have already prepared programs for promoting the 2030 Agenda**. The private sector has also shown interest by engaging, for example, in Society's Commitment with concrete actions. Finland has sought to **foster ownership of sustainable development**, both **through institutional arrangements and by motivating societal actors to act independently to this end**. This has been supported by a **long-term, integrated approach to sustainable development in early education, schools, educational institutions and**

⁴ <http://www.keskkonnaamet.ee/eng/organization/>

universities, as well as by NGOs. Also, this spring, a **comprehensive communication strategy** and plan will be done about the dissemination of information regarding the **2030 Agenda**.

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities in General

In general, Finland has many examples of communication and awareness raising tools and activities. The following examples, therefore, are not an exhaustive list, and have been provided by a representative from the Prime Minister's Office:

The Prime Minister's Office itself has a [website](#), which offers information regarding the 2030 Agenda and makes reports dealing with the 2030 Agenda available, such as the "Government Report on the Implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda: achieving equality and carbon-neutrality in Finland". The website is also offered in English and in Swedish. The Prime Minister's Office also actively uses social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook to inform their followers, which includes informing them about Agenda 2030 and SDG related topics. The Prime Minister's Office also asks their partners to Blog about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Office also regularly disseminates newsletters, which also help in raising awareness for sustainable development issues, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

In Spring of 2017, Finland will launch a **pilot event called "The State and Future of Sustainable Development in Finland."** The event will be organized once a year and is scheduled to coincide with the Parliament's review of the Government's Annual Report. During this event the current status and future of sustainable development will be discussed on the basis of indicator, other assessment data, foresight data, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda goals in Finland. This first event will take place during the European Sustainable Development Week on 31 May, 2017, and all stakeholders are invited to participate in these discussions.

Finland has also published a report to the Government, "[Government Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)", in which it mentions that Finland is also developing a national follow-up and review system for sustainable development, which will include a collection of national indicators facilitating shared learning and understanding and allowing for multi-voiced interpretations. Progress made with the objectives and implementation of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, "Finland We Want by 2050", has been monitored using the national indicators for sustainable development. Finland is also required to monitor its progress with respect to the 17 goals and 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. This will be done using a global indicator framework developed by the UN, the details of which are still being finalized.

The Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development is engaged in broad-based, public discussion regarding sustainable development in Finland and the related actions.⁵ The Commission's key duties include the follow-up and assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Finland. These indicators will be disseminated regularly every month through newsletters, blogs, and social media.

With respect to **young people and children**, Finland is strengthening their cooperation with this demographic by engaging them more actively in national and international discussions about sustainable development, because effective use should be made of the ability of young people to discuss sustainability issues in a way that appeals to them and their peers. A group of Young Agenda2030 representatives was established in February 2017 and they will be participating in communication and awareness raising activities, as they will be

⁵http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/79455/VNK_J1117_Government_Report_2030Agenda_KANSILLA_netii.pdf?sequence=1

taken along to all venues and events, such as the HLPF and the Committee meetings, which take place 2-3 times per year. A representative from the Young Agenda 2030 can have representation and share their thoughts at these Committee meetings. Some representatives have given speeches on what they think about the government's plans for sustainable development. In Finland, they strongly believe that because young people are the future, they deserve to have voices.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development

The **National Commission on Sustainable Development** is a **Prime Minister-led partnership forum** that has operated in Finland for 23 years without interruption, and was reappointed for a four-year term in February 2016, with the aim of **integrating sustainable development into Finnish policies, measures and everyday practices. The membership of the committee includes a broad spectrum of non-governmental stakeholders, private sector actors, interest groups and civil society organizations.** Through their participation in the Commission, all stakeholders are updated on the activities of the Finnish government on a regular basis regarding sustainable development and the SDGs. They are then able to pass information onto their networks. The Commission is based on a unique hybrid model, which combines high-level political leadership with wide-ranging participation by civil society. The Commission is chaired by the Prime Minister, Juha Sipilä, with the Minister of Agriculture and the Environment, Kimmo Tiilikainen, serving as its Vice-Chair. The Secretariat of the National Commission also gives **speeches in events, seminars, venues, fairs on a weekly basis.**

In addition to the Government side of the Commission, the Commission also includes representatives of Parliament, all Ministries, municipalities and regions, the Sámi indigenous people, the autonomous Åland Islands, business life, trade and labour unions, various organizations, including environmental, nature, development, UN, sports and physical exercise, youth and consumer, social welfare and health, training and education, and immigrant organizations, as well as the church and the science and research community. Deputy members included, the National Commission on Sustainable Development covers 84 different bodies, 49 of which represent organizations in various sectors. Although the Commission has a strong focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, there are also clear communication and awareness raising aspects that seek to **increase stakeholders' and civil society's ownership of the SDGs.**

The aim of the Commission is to **embed sustainable development in decision making and policy, involve society as a whole in the implementation of sustainable development, promote encounters, dialogue and networking between various actors, and share and communicate on best practices in sustainable development** at both the national and international level. **A further aim is to raise awareness of the Commission's work in Finland and abroad.**

One key task of the Commission is to **promote, monitor and assess the implementation of "Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development : The Finland we want by 2050", communicate the results, multiply the number of operational commitments,** raise the target level and enhance the effectiveness of the commitment process. A further key task for the Commission involves ensuring that the objectives and **principles of Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development are integrated into societal practices** and that policy coherence is strengthened and the national sustainable development policy mainstreamed within the central Government.

In spring 2016, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee **established a working group to develop governance models promoting sustainable development.** One of the working group's tasks is to consider ways of **promoting ownership of sustainable development.** It has become apparent that a **cultural change** involving the transformation of the roles of Central Government,

stakeholder groups and citizens will be required in order to establish strong ownership of sustainable development.

Awareness Raising Activities at local level

Cities are drivers of sustainable development and it is important that their **best practices in this regard are widely disseminated**. This **dissemination occurs by using newsletters, media, conferences**, etc. At the moment, there are two representatives from each of the regions, cities and municipal administration in the National Commission on Sustainable Development. In 2016 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister's Office arranged two **regional events to disseminate information on Agenda 2030**, while developing cooperation and regional implementation models in the spirit of Agenda 2030. **Regional events**, held in Oulu and Tampere, were **done in cooperation with cities, municipalities, regions, NGOs and signatories of the regional operational commitments to sustainable development**. **Key note speakers**, such as the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development, Kai Mykkänen, and State Secretary, Paula Lehtomäki from the Prime Minister's Office, **attracted a large audience and also caught the attention of the media**.

“Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development”

“Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development” represents a new, active approach to strategic thinking. Although it is a set of **strategic guidelines for sustainable development**, prepared by Finnish society and constituting a policy implementation tool, it does have very prevalent communication and awareness raising aspects to it. **The commitment was drafted in order to make sustainable development tangible, enhance effectiveness in this regard, foster ownership and involve as many new actors as possible in sustainable development activities**. The commitment process combines **bottom-up and top-down measures** into a single push to **promote sustainable development**.

The National Commission on Sustainable Development approved “Society's Commitment” in December 2013. In April 2016, the Commitment was updated to better correspond to the principles, goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The vision, principles and eight strategic objectives of “Society's Commitment” serve as a political framework for sustainable development work among various administrative branches and societal actors.

By March 2017, **over 500 actors, including enterprises, schools, cities, administration, non-governmental and other organizations, communities, political parties and even private individuals from all sectors of society, have signed more than 600 operational commitments**. Sector-specific commitments have been made by the technology industry, finance, forest industry, energy industry and the trade association. These commitments relate to the eight objectives included within “Society's Commitment” and reflect the practical, tangible promotion of their realization. For instance, **schools have committed themselves to obtaining sustainable development certificates**, making their everyday practices more environment friendly and introducing a working atmosphere that **fosters a community spirit and social equality**. **Universities** have introduced **new educational programs in sustainable development**. A large number of enterprises have committed themselves to recycling resources and minimizing their environmental impacts, while employing young persons and people with only partial working capacity. The City of Espoo is committing all of its departments and units to concrete measures, including the promotion of equality and tolerance. The region of North Karelia has decided to terminate the use of fossil-based oil. More than 35 municipalities intend to reduce their carbon emissions by 80% by 2030. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has challenged all diplomatic missions worldwide to participate in activities, such as the implementation of an environmental program. **The Secretariat**

of the National Commission regularly disseminates these commitments through newsletters, blogs, and social media.

European Sustainable Development Week: Communication Efforts in Finland

Finland has participated in the ESDW since its beginning, and will be participating for the third time from 30 May – 05 June 2017. During past two ESDWs, Finland has held around 30 events annually. The main tool that is used to communicate the ESDW is **social media** in the months preceding the Week. During the ESDW, **a conference and commitment summer festival** are also held annually. The purpose of the summer festival is to celebrate the annual commitments that have been entered into by stakeholders regarding “Society’s Commitment”. Since these stakeholders are taking concrete actions, it is believed they should receive recognition for their work. The summer festival also provides a great chance to receive new commitments and give out prizes and awards for the best commitments. Updates on the status of registered commitments are also given, which outline how stakeholders are doing in reaching their commitment goals. This year will mark the first year in which there will be some evaluations on commitments.

However, before the week, [newsletters](#), which are distributed to around 3,000 recipients, several **twitter messages**, with around **1,500** followers, were sent, and **advertisements** were put onto [Facebook](#), which has around 4,100 followers. **Networks, commissions and all stakeholders were all challenged to join the Week** and organize and register events.

During the week, Finland organized [social media campaigns](#), an example (in Finnish) of which can be found using the link, and experienced great results from them. The campaigns were seen and heard, particularly on Twitter. The **social media campaigns reached more than 300,000 contacts during the ESDW 2015 and 2016**. The role of Facebook was less in comparison to Twitter. The campaign's goal was also to receive a permanent digital footprint that would give a complete picture of the success of the social media campaign, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and, thus help to **develop the communication of “Society’s Commitment”**.

Finland also prepared a **social media toolbox** that participants could use that included communication materials, such as a [commitment-video](#), which committers could share on Twitter/Facebook, **ready-made messages and visual materials**, such as Twitter and Facebook **cover photos**, as well as other **ready-made examples to help organizations to communicate regarding the ESDW and their own commitments in “Society’s Commitment to Sustainable Development” and encourage others to take part.**

Communication and Awareness Raising Challenges

Alongside securing the commitment of Parliament and local actors, it has been recognized that **children, young people and immigrants** form challenging but important groups to the implementation process. Possible operating models for interacting with these groups are being considered for inclusion in the national implementation plan.

Throughout the Agenda 2030 negotiation process, Finland advocated an approach founded on broad-based participation and human rights. Sustainable development is for everyone; in its implementation, the key principle is ‘leave no-one behind’. The aim is to apply such principles to the preparation of the national implementation plan. Although, Finland’s long-term sustainable development efforts provide outstanding prerequisites for the involvement of large stakeholder groups and groups of citizens, **challenges are involved in enabling everyone’s participation.**

A large number of representatives of civil society, as well as interest groups, political parties and local and regional actors are represented in the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Development Policy Committee. Children and young people are also represented through various children's and young people's organizations. In addition, active members of the Commission on Sustainable Development include a representative of the Sámi people in Finland and the Finnish Somali League. In 2016, a member of the Finnish Disability Forum will join the Commission. However, on the basis of preliminary discussions, **the involvement of children, young people, immigrant groups, municipalities and regions in particular will require additional effort. Also the commitment of Members of Parliament and political parties is of special focus to Finland.**

Germany

The information on the communication and awareness raising activities in Germany were taken from the German National Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS), which was published in January 2017, as well as the German VNR, which was published in July 2016. As can be seen from the subchapter headings below, Germany is very business and education oriented when it comes to the activities it employs to raise awareness for the SDGs, but also has many activities at the national level that seek to address stakeholders and civil society regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities in General

Since 2014, the communications regarding sustainability, which is handled through the Federal Press Office, has been strengthened. The communication concept deals with the **publication of a short brochure** on strategies, milestones and policies on sustainability, as well as a **newsletter, which appears regularly**.

Preceding the preparation of the new GSDS, the German government held five **Dialogue Conferences** at the national and regional level between October 2015 and February 2016. They sought to gather ideas and impulses for the new GSDS among a diverse range of actors (politicians on federal, regional and local level, NGOs, academia, business, churches etc.) and also made the sustainable development activities of the government more well-known and established to the wider public. The [GSDS](#) has already been **published in German and will also be published in English in its entirety**. Additionally, a **shorter version of the GSDS will be published in all official languages of the UN**.

When it comes to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, **a continuous, open and transparent exchange of information is essential prerequisite for the desired deepening of cooperation between the government and societal actors**, as the 2030 Agenda needs to have the involvement of multiple actors, working together, to be successful. This will only happen if information is communicated between the different stakeholders and between the government and stakeholders, which includes civil society.

The **State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development** steers implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy and oversees the updating of its content. It comprises State Secretaries from all the federal ministries and is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. The committee provides strategic input for the work of the German Government and acts as a forum for the different government departments to share information on their sustainability activities at a high level. The committee invites external experts from the private sector, the scientific and research community, civil society, and from the federal states and local authorities to attend its meetings. It selects a so-called "beacon project" every year in recognition of especially exemplary innovative activities of the various ministries (German VNR, p. 7).

The [German Council for Sustainable Development](#), an independent advisory panel, has been supporting the German Government since 2001. It consists of 15 figures of public life who, by virtue of their professional and personal background, represent the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development in its national and international dimensions. The **Council has two important tasks**: it advises the German Government on all issues related to sustainable development and it **fosters dialogue on sustainability within society** (German VNR, p. 7). The **German Council for Sustainable Development** organizes numerous **campaigns to encourage dialogue within society on the principle of sustainability, and to put the philosophy of sustainability into practice**. The establishment of what are termed **Regionale Netzstellen Nachhaltigkeitsstrategien (RENN) (regional network points for sustainability strategies)** is designed to **strengthen the nationwide networking of sustainability initiatives**. Private, non-public, initiatives are also able to benefit from the RENN. The German Council for Sustainable Development also supports the **international networking of councils for sustainable development and similar stakeholders** (German VNR, p. 17).

The **National German Sustainability Award** is endorsed by the German Federal Government, local and business associations as well as numerous NGOs, among them UNESCO and UNICEF. The awards are **presented to cities, companies and individuals promoting the idea of a sustainable society**. The award was established in 2008 to **encourage the acceptance of social and ecological responsibility and to identify role models in this area**.⁶

For many years, the German Government has also organized a **dialogue forum** held around three or four times a year in order to **facilitate a regular exchange of ideas and information on the international sustainability agenda between the government and representatives of NGOs, churches, local authorities, the scientific and academic community and the private sector** (German VNR, p. 9).

The **Charter for the Future** is a further attempt to **involve civil society actors, especially in the dialogue to promote global sustainable development**. Since 2014, **discussions have been held with the involvement of over 100 organizations and initiatives and members of the public on how to create opportunities for the future for everyone worldwide**, and establish what responsibility we in Germany can assume in this respect. In an **open online dialogue and numerous special events, proposals were advanced which were subsequently compiled in the form of a Charter** along with recommendations. **A nationwide tour brought these issues to a wide audience**. A large number of **sector-specific dialogue forums** are also in place. The German Government uses these regularly and on a case-by-case basis to engage with concerned civil society groups (German VNR, p. 9).

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities for Stakeholders

Business

The GSDS recognizes that businesses are a central actor with a key function in implementing the SDGs. In the area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) there is a **National CSR Forum** from the government, in which stakeholders from business, NGOs, academia and policy take part, in order to work out a consensus on supply chains and trade. Coupled with fora such as this, the national government also offers incentives for businesses in the area of sustainability by offering the **“Governmental CSR Prize”**. This prize has existed since 2013, and is awarded to businesses that show exceptional examples of CSR activities, which include supply chains, resource conservation, climate change mitigation, environmental protection, etc.

⁶ <https://www.nachhaltigkeitspreis.de/sonstige/english-summary/>

There is also an association of companies and organizations that deal with issues in sustainable development and CSR, including the SDGs, and is called **econsense**. Econsense is an association of leading, globally active companies and organisations of German business specializing in the area of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. The association has a **Forum for Sustainable Development of German Business**. The main premise of this forum is the recognition that the engine that will help in being able to arrive at the SDGs is made up of the interactions between the state, civil society, and academia, coupled with business. It is important, therefore, for the business side of the equation to do its part in assuring that innovations, provided services, investments, and new products are aligned to the SDGs. (**econsense, Forum Nachhaltige Entwicklung der Deutschen Wirtschaft, GSDS, p. 49**)

Research and Education

From the academia side of the SDGs and raising awareness there are **initiatives for an academic accompaniment of the implementation of the SDGs, which is called The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)**. The government has made use of these initiatives and offers academia a **platform to allow academia to become more involved in the implementation of the SDGs. The work of the platform will be systematically integrated into further control, dialogue and implementation processes of the 2030 Agenda, in order to show the progress and deficits in the implementation of the SDGs in Germany**. By having this close exchange between science, society and politics, and being able to deal scientifically with the debate on sustainability policy, it will show how serious and important the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are for Germany. **IASS supports the initiative of the government in the establishment of an academic platform** for the consultation and implementation of the SDGs, as the implementation of the NSDS is a mean to be understood as a learning process. This platform must, therefore, be bound in the mandates and implementation structures of departments. As a learning process, it will be necessary to **collect and reflect upon cross-sector knowledge**, which includes state actors and NGOs coming together, in order to have constructive exchange. This type of **platform can serve as an interface between academia and policy, as well as society in the implementation of the SDGs**. (**Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, GSDS, p. 49**)

With respect to education, the **Education for Sustainable Development (BNE)** should be anchored in all educational areas. The German regions have also stressed that this would be important to implement. BNE seeks to help everyone understand their impact on the world, and in so doing help everyone to make responsible decisions. **BNE provides comprehensive action and design competences, which enable people to participate actively in participatory processes and shape their future, both themselves and collectively. BNE promotes inter alia a holistic understanding of global development and a world-wide perspective**. Through a holistic approach, BNE primarily promotes innovativeness, understanding of democracy and the ability to participate and thus makes an important contribution to securing a better and more sustainable future. BNE is the key to strengthening citizens' responsibility and pique their interests for sustainability. The central point for the success of BNE is the **networking of the various actors from administration, civil society, business, culture, as well as school and non-school learning places**.

ESD deals with global interdependencies and challenges and the associated complex ecological, economic and social consequences. **ESD helps to raise awareness of sustainable living in society**. In addition to political agreements, financial incentives or technological solutions, this means that ESD is a key instrument on the path to sustainable development.

Experiences and Recommendations to Other Countries Regarding Raising Awareness for the SDGs

In an interview with a representative from the German Federal Chancellery it was stated that for Germany it was very helpful to have and to be able to fund **the German Sustainable Development Council**, whose mission is **to spread the idea of sustainable development and which supports the German Sustainable Development Action Days**, which is the German national external website for the **European Sustainable Development Week**, as well as the **German Sustainable Development Award**. The ESDW and the Sustainable Development Action Days both raise awareness for sustainable development and the SDGs by calling upon countries, NGOs, businesses, CSOs, and individual members of society to organize events that deal with both of these goals.

Sweden

Sweden has many communication and awareness raising activities regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The information regarding Sweden's communication and awareness raising activities was provided by a representative of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). Sweden recognizes that in order to achieve the commitments made in the Agenda by 2030, everyone everywhere has to be involved. When communicating the Agenda, the MFA considers the audience and reflects upon how they can reach the general public and other key actors, with the aim of raising awareness and strengthen ownership, inclusiveness is an important aspect of their work.

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities in General

Within the Government Offices of Sweden, ministries have gathered in an **Interdepartmental Working Group for Agenda 2030**. The **group consists of focal points for Agenda 2030 from all the Swedish ministries**. The group offers a **forum for government officials to share their ministries work with the Agenda**. Within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs there are additional focal points at each unit that meet a few times a year gather to discuss the work with the Agenda and issues relating to the Agenda.

The **MFA has a communication strategy for the 2030 Agenda** and they are **in the process of developing one specifically for the HLPF 2017**. The **MFA communication strategy for the 2030 Agenda will be elaborated into a joint strategy with the Ministry of Finance, who coordinates the national implementation of the Agenda**. In the daily operations of the MFA, **members of the ministry consider what should be communicated to raise awareness, and how they can best communicate the material that they want to communicate**. Before larger events, the **ministry dedicates time to reflect upon how to best engage and inform all parts of the society**. Regarding the HLPF this type of engagement is an integral part of the ministry's consultations with stakeholders (authorities at national, regional and local levels, the business community, CSOs, trade unions, academia, and society). The involvement of youth is also a cross-cutting theme in this work.

At the **kick-off meeting for HLPF 2017 on January 19, 2017**, the MFA **invited all actors present to send in their contributions to the HLPF report to an e-mail address**. This was also **communicated on the external web page of the Government**. The ministry is currently going through the material, which will be discussed together with the draft report at their next consultation meeting in April/May. On 12 May, the ministry will have another consultation meeting in view of the **Financing for Development Forum**, to which they will report, and on 13 June the **ministry will have a big launch of the HLPF report**. In the autumn the ministry will organize

a follow-up meeting to HLPF also involving the broad society in view of dissemination the results to the public.

The Swedish Delegation for the 2030 Agenda is another example of an activity that Sweden has undertaken to promote the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Delegation is appointed by the Government with the **aim of promoting, facilitating and stimulating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

As an **independent committee**, the Delegation is commissioned to assess the extent to which Sweden fulfils the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda; submit a proposal for an overarching action plan for Sweden's implementation; and **disseminates information on examples of best practice in the area of sustainable development** in its three dimensions.

The assignment also includes **recommending appropriate means of communication to the public in order to create public awareness, and find means to involve the public in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.** The Delegation **delivered a report** this month, where it proposed that Sweden **provide a platform for communication and information on the 2030 Agenda, as well as a national awareness campaign.** The proposals are currently being assessed in the Government Offices.

Another initiative called [#FirstGeneration](#), is used by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs **to spread knowledge about the SDGs and the important role of educators in engaging young people in sustainable development.**

Around 30 Swedish Embassies participate in the initiative by **being active in social media, by organizing events, seminars, and other activities.** Every year the campaign is marked with a big event, the **Global Goals Forum** in October on the International Teachers Day, in Stockholm, Sweden. **Inspiring and engaged individuals**, foremost teachers and educators globally, who **strive to make a change in their communities**, are invited to the event.

#FirstGeneration involves multiple actors in the implementation phase of the initiative, both national and international actors, who, together with the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Swedish embassies, play crucial roles in the initiative's execution. The initiative targets the public with special consideration for educators and youth.

Sweden also heavily **involves their government agencies regarding** the 2030 Agenda. In 2016, 86 government agencies were assigned to report to the government on how their operations relate to the 2030 Agenda. Their analysis of their operations addressed both national and international efforts, some with bearing on external communication.

One of the agencies with a **communication assignment is the Swedish Institute.** The assignment is given by the Government in the annual letter of appropriation. One of the Institute's project is [Sharing Sweden](#). [Sharingsweden.se](#) is a **website that offers a comprehensive collection of material about Sweden**, produced by the Swedish Institute. The **material is intended for an international audience** with an interest in Sweden and Swedes. The **website features**, among other things, **Sweden's work with sustainability and the 2030 Agenda.** Sharing Sweden **offers a toolkit to communicate the 2030 Agenda** that can be used **in Sweden and abroad.**

Additionally, the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)** has received an assignment by the Government up to the year 2022 to **enhance the awareness on the 2030-Agenda and policy coherence for development among the public**, which is performed by Sida itself and by CSOs.

Communication and Awareness Raising Challenges

There are **many different actors** involved not only in the 2030 Agenda process, but also **in communicating the Agenda, and that is a huge challenge**. It is important for the MFA to **acknowledge the differences between their target groups** in their communication strategies, and thereafter adopt strategies that enable a broad outreach. With diverse target groups, **the main challenge is to provide appropriate tools and platforms** that can enable participation from all. It is also important to **enable networking and partnerships between stakeholders**, and **support various means of communication** that could benefit the implementation of the Agenda as a whole.

Switzerland

The information provided in the following subchapters on Switzerland was taken from the [Swiss Sustainable Development Strategy](#) 2016-2019, as well as from inputs provided by representatives from the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE).

Communication and Awareness Raising in General

Switzerland recognizes that a proactive information policy is key to the successful implementation of sustainable development at all levels of government and in society. In the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Federal Council strives to achieve a balanced and cohesive blend of targeted communications activities. The [Swiss website](#) dedicated to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs has been updated. Informal emails are also sent to all stakeholders to inform them about the planned processes at the federal level. A **small stakeholder working group, Begleitgruppe Agenda 2030**, was also set up, in order to **foster more regular exchange**. Two larger stakeholder events are in their planning stages.

The Swiss Federal Council **maintains an information portal** to create transparency about the implementation of the NSDS and its measures. The portal also provides an overview of sustainability-related Confederation sectoral policies, as well as the most important international policy processes for sustainable development. The Confederation releases also **regularly release information** about major issues and activities in the field of sustainable development (Swiss Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019, p. 66)

Communication and Awareness Raising Activities at Differing Policy Levels

In Switzerland, vertical policy integration plays a very important and central role, as the country is highly decentralized. **The Sustainable Development Forum** aids in the vertical integration of policies by **providing a platform for exchange and networking between different levels of government**. The platform itself is a tried-and-tested method, and will therefore be continued as part of a partnership with the Swiss Conference of Directors of Public Works, Planning and Environmental Protection (DPPE), the SSV association of Swiss Cities and the SGV Swiss Association of Local Authorities. Through this **platform**, the Confederation continues to foster regional and local sustainability processes and projects, **offering technical and logistical support**, as well as a **comprehensive range of activities** to connect the actors concerned. The Sustainable Development Forum had an event in January 2017, where a link to the SDGs was established. Furthermore, there is a **regular newsletter**, in which the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are always recurring topics.

In addition to the Sustainable Development Platform, Switzerland also supports specific initiatives that help to strengthen the sustainable development concept through its **Sustainable Development Promotion Program**,

Förderprogramm Nachhaltige Entwicklung. The Sustainable Development Promotion Program supports projects and processes that contribute to sustainable development. These projects should be understood as a way to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the local level. The program focuses on concrete implementation projects and offers starting support of mature proposals that have a direct effect on sustainable development. There are **yearly calls for projects** that are made public at the end of March, with deadlines for submitting projects until mid-September. **The main focus of the 2017 call for projects will be on local 2030 Agendas.**

During the current legislative period, special attention will be given to having more and closer contact with the **canton's Specialist Sustainability Units and Delegates as key partners of the Confederation. These bodies and individuals serve as points of contact for the communes.** In order to achieve this, a joint program of work is to be elaborated and adopted to cement sustainable development at the institutional level as an integral element of decision-making processes and policy priorities. One idea is to **draft guidelines** for the **implementation of the Confederation's Sustainable Development Strategy at the local level.**

Communication and Awareness Raising Challenges

The challenges in communication and awareness raising activities of the SDGs, which are addressed below, were provided during a telephone interview with a representative from the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE).

The main challenges regarding being able to communicate and raise awareness among the general public for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is the **hugeness of the Agenda** itself. Because the Agenda is so large, those at the top can only communicate that there are 17 SDGs in an agenda and that both are very good and promising things. The general public, however, cannot easily connect with that. The problem is compounded further when the SDGs are being rebranded as the UN Goals or the World Goals, as this leads to more confusion with more terms, but also in communication efforts, as stakeholders may not recognize certain terms, especially if they are being used synonymously.

Another challenge regarding awareness raising is the **media**, such as **newspapers, radio stations and T.V.** Generally, these media forms can help with communication, such as by focusing on one SDG at a time, such as health issues, which falls under SDG 3. However, that is not happening in the Swiss media. The difficulties in being able to engage the media with the SDGs is in bringing this complex Agenda and Goals to different agencies, and having them, in their communications with their stakeholders, forge a relationship to respective SDGs that relate to their fields. This would already improve the media presence of the 2030 Agenda. However, having the ability to make such **press communications** regarding certain SDGs, like SDG 3 for health can help a lot in raising awareness, as people care about health. The media would need to be able to make these connections, in order to connect viewers to the SDGs and make them a part of everyday life. The situation in Switzerland is currently a **“chicken-or-egg” scenario**, in which the general public does not know or care enough about the SDGs to warrant the media presenting on them, and because the media does not present on them, the general public is not as informed.

Another communication challenge is that the ARE has no official mandate to realize campaigns with respect to information or raising the awareness of the general public for specific issues, such as the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The ARE has a partner agency, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which, utilizes **social media**, such as Facebook and Twitter. This means that only those **people and stakeholders who are already interested in the SDGs or the 2030 Agenda are the ones following on social media.** Reaching the majority of the population, therefore, becomes extremely difficult. The **majority of the population needs for the SDGs to be made relevant on a daily level** and communicated along those lines.

Communication and Awareness Raising Challenges for Stakeholders

When it comes to being able to address stakeholders, such as NGOs or businesses, and target them with communication and awareness raising activities in connection with the SDGs, it is less difficult than when engaging with civil society. This is mainly due to the fact that Federal Offices, like the ARE, are in touch with them. There are stakeholder groups that are more or less operating in the same areas of interest, and trying to accomplish the same goals. These **stakeholder groups also act as a sounding board, and provide a direct link for further communications with their stakeholders.**

From the business side, being able to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs is complicated based on the size of the business. There are **many businesses that recognize the SDGs** and integrate them into their business strategies, but they **tend to be larger enterprises**. However, **SMEs do not necessarily know about the SDGs**, and those that do, **do not see how the SDGs can benefit them**. In order to combat this disconnect between SMEs and the SDGs the Business School of Lausanne has been working to bridge this divide.

Chapter 3: Stakeholder Communication and Awareness Raising Activities for the SDGs

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, the SDGs have been emphasized as being the “People’s Agenda”. The first step in ensuring that no one is left behind, is to raise awareness for, and understanding of, the SDGs. Stakeholders can play an important role in developing activities that aim to disseminate information regarding the SDGs. In this regard, some actions have already been developed and implemented by different stakeholders.

This chapter provides an overview of how selected stakeholders are contributing to communication and raising awareness for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The amount of stakeholders involved in the realization of the 2030 Agenda is wide and multi-faceted. Therefore, this chapter will not provide a comprehensive overview on stakeholders’ efforts, but rather offers a glimpse of selected stakeholders’ activities concerning their communication and awareness raising activities regarding the SDGs. The sub-sections will take into account actions conducted by CSOs/NGOs, business, research and local authorities.

CSOs/NGOs

Civil society encompasses a wide range of organizations and has many voices. It is, therefore, extremely complex to represent them all. For the purpose of this report, we selected four Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that are active in the implementation of communication and awareness raising activities regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), which represents an umbrella organization of over 140 environmental citizens’ organisations; SDG Watch Europe, a cross-sectoral CSO alliance of NGOs from development, environment, social, human rights and other sectors; The German Council for Sustainable Development, a national umbrella organization fostering 2030 Agenda awareness; and the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), a network of advisory bodies for environmental and sustainable development.

European Environmental Bureau

The [European Environmental Bureau](#) (EEB) is the largest federation of environmental citizens’ organizations in Europe. Its work concerns a multiplicity of environmental issues and aims to develop and protect environmental policies. The EEB, through the Global Policies and Sustainability Unit, and together with CIVICUS, is also one of the Organizing Partners for the Major Group of NGOs in the UN policy process on sustainable development. The Bureau has been actively engaged in negotiating the 2030 Agenda.

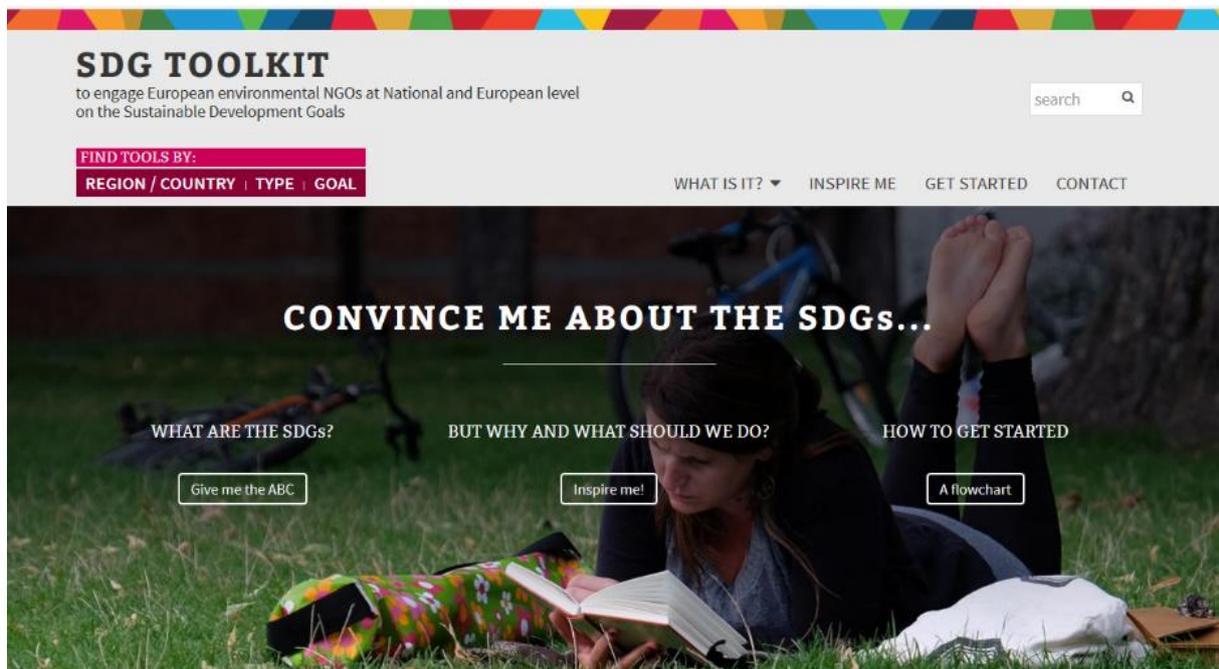


Recently, the EEB launched an online [SDG Toolkit](#), Figure 5, below, addressing environmental NGOs and encouraging them to work on the SDGs. The SDG toolkit provides **articles, presentations, speaker biographies, social media accounts, images, policy papers, monitoring and review documents, SDG coalition websites** and many other resources that aim at supporting NGOs in engaging with the SDGs without

the need to start their work from scratch. Environmental NGOs can use the SDG online toolkit for different purposes concerning their work⁷:

- (1) **Events:** for SDG experts and people who are looking for a good speaker or moderator, or an SDG expert to speak at events.
- (2) **Policy:** for SDG experts and people interested in learning who works on the SDGs in a specific country, which policy proposals exist, or when a policy event will take place.
- (3) **Communications & Press:** for SDG experts and people who write press releases or campaign messages and would like to link it to the relevant SDG, add some graphic content, or find some key social media accounts.

Figure 5: First page of the SDG Toolkit



Source: <http://sdgtoolkit.org/>

The toolkit website, as the screenshots in Figure 6 show, allows users to filter their research by region/country, by tool type, or by SDG.

Figure 6: Filter Options for the SDG Toolkit



⁷ SDG Toolkit introduction <http://sdgtoolkit.org/what-is-it/>



Source: SDG Toolkit website tool)

(Follow hyperlinked tools for the specific

SDG Watch Europe

The SDG Watch Europe is an EU-level, cross-sectoral civil society alliance. Its aim is to require governments to take responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. The work of SDG Watch Europe is organized in **four interlinked Work Strands:**



1. Strand One: Joint high level advocacy and policy coordination for ambitious and integrated EU SDG implementation
2. Strand Two: Monitoring, accountability and review of European SDG implementation across all sectors

3. Strand Three: Engaging CSOs and citizens – at local, national and EU level

4. Strand Four: Innovating, Reflecting, Experimenting and Learning together

Of particular interest for this report is **Work Strand Three**, which explicitly focuses on how to get CSOs and citizens engaged in this global discussion. SDG Watch Europe aims to reach out to CSOs, in order to raise awareness, increase their engagement and help build the capacity of SDGs implementation at different levels and ensure a bottom up approach.

In this regard, the coalition organized a **delegation of 22 representatives** that participated in the events in the run up to the EU Summit on 25 March 2017, which marked the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties. The logic behind this initiative to participate in the EU Summit, is that **civil society mobilization, including events, workshops and marches**, provide an ideal context in which **SDG Watch Europe's members are able to network with other CSOs, strengthen the visibility of the SDGs at the European level, and to convey the message of putting the 2030 Agenda at the core of a new narrative for Europe.**

German Council for Sustainable Development

National Sustainable Development Councils are umbrella organizations that work to turn sustainable development into an important public issue and engage stakeholders in the discussion. An example of how a Council for Sustainable Development works, and aims to increase awareness and involvement around the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, can be seen in the German experience.

The [German Council for Sustainable Development](#) (RNE) consists of 15 public figures and was appointed by the Federal Government in 2001. It develops contribution to carry out the National Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the German Government, by identifying areas for action and proposing implementation projects. The Council also works to **enhance stakeholder engagement and foster social dialogue on sustainability issues.**



Open **SDGclub** Berlin



From 21 to 23 November 2016, the Council organized the first “[Open SDGclub.Berlin](#)” meeting. On this occasion, participants from national sustainable development councils, multi-stakeholder and advisory bodies,

intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, academia and business from over 30 countries met to exchange experiences and ideas, network, and develop new initiatives concerning the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The **meeting** was organized **around 9 ‘Lab’ discussions including case studies, projects, and options for SDG implementation.** ‘Lab’ discussions addressed issues such as: roles of advisory bodies, learning platforms and tools for transformation, cooperative politics, engagement, transnational cooperation, agenda setting, data generation, and Countries’ 2030 Agenda implementation status. Each discussion was followed by a **club learning session**, during which participants reflected on how to turn the results of the debates into concrete actions. **The purpose of the SDGclub.Berlin meeting has been to provide a mutually encouraging learning and exchange platform.**

Following the meeting, the RNE published the **report** “[Non-state actors promoting change towards implementing the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)” summarizing the preparatory process that led to the meeting, as well as Lab reviews, follow-up actions, and lessons learned.

[European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils \(EEAC\)](#)



The [European Environmental and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils](#) (EEAC) is a network of national and regional advisory bodies. The EEAC consists of fourteen advisory bodies from eleven European countries and regions, which provide their respective national or regional governments with independent advice related to sustainable development and the environment.

The EEAC Network and its member councils are involved in several campaigns to **inform private and public actors about the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.** In particular, the [EEAC Sustainable Development Working Group](#), co-chaired by Mr. Arnau Queralt (Catalonia, Spain) and Mr. Gábor Bartus (Hungary), is devoted to the implementation of 2030 Agenda and is **promoting activities and information related to 2030 Agenda.** The EEAC network and its EEAC member councils often use their own media (**websites, newsletters, etc.**) to disseminate information regarding the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. **The increasing use of social media enables EEAC member councils to communicate sustainable development related topics with the broader public.**

The EEAC Network is a partner of, and actively participates in, the [European Sustainable Development Week](#) (ESDW). The European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) is an initiative to facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform. The ESDW promotes the organization of bottom-up activities that have a thematic link to and support the SDGs. The EEAC Network also organizes events during this week around a 2030 Agenda related topic. **These events**

are especially dedicated to empower and to display local, bottom up, initiatives and to create more understanding regarding the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda at the level of the general public.

Furthermore, the **EEAC Sustainable Development Working Group** will participate as a partner at the [International Conference on Sustainable Development Goals: actors and implementation](#). The conference is organized by the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) and supported by UNESCO and the United Nations University (UNU), and it will take place in Barcelona from 18th to 19th September, 2017. It is a **leading international meeting aiming to create a permanent and multidisciplinary knowledge network on implementation of SDGs, where all stakeholders learn from each other: universities, governments, cities and public agencies**. The conference will bring together multidisciplinary experts and high-level practitioners to exchange knowledge, ideas, experiences and expectations around the challenges related to the SDGs. Through a combination of speeches, round tables and workshops, the **conference aims to open a debate among the different stakeholders on solutions for a sustainable development**.

Research

An increasing number of universities, think tanks, and research institutes are taking part in the SDG discourse. The SDGs can be successfully communicated through educational activities, which can help people build a critical understanding of the Goals. Raising awareness, in fact, also means to inform and educate people about an issue, with the aim to influence their attitudes, behaviors and beliefs, in order to achieve a certain purpose⁸. Among the existing academic initiatives using education as a means to communicate the SDGs, the United Nations University, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research were chosen for this Report.

United Nations Development Solutions Network



The [UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network](#) (SDSN) was launched in 2012 by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. The purpose of this Network is to mobilize global scientific and technological expertise that would promote practical problem solving for sustainable development, including the design and implementation of the SDGs. The

SDSN is very active in supporting the SDG outreach at local, national and global scales and works closely with United Nations agencies, multilateral financing institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

Among several initiatives supporting the SDGs, the SDSN provides a virtual platform – [the SDG Academy](#) (formerly known as SDSNedu) – **for high-quality, mass online education for sustainable development**. The SDG Academy involves the world's foremost experts in the field of sustainable development and offers **comprehensive free online courses**. Courses focus on issues ranging from human rights, natural resource governance, global public health, and planetary boundaries, to sustainable cities. Figure 7 below shows the available courses for the upcoming spring semester 2017 and gives an overview of the issues addressed.

⁸ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001476/147637e.pdf>

Figure 7: SDG Academy free online courses (Spring Semester 2017)



Source: <https://courses.sdgacademy.org/>

As an example, the [Natural Resources for Sustainable Development: The Fundamentals of Oil, Gas, and Mining Governance](#) is a joint course by the Natural Resource Governance Institute, the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment, and the World Bank. The course is structured around **pre-recorded lectures, readings, quizzes, and discussion forums** and aims to provide students with understanding about the challenges and opportunities that come with managing extractive industry investments for sustainable development. At the end of this 13-week course, and if completed successfully, students receive a digital certificate of proficiency.

The SDSN also focuses on SDG monitoring framework, and political processes of follow-up and review. The network is also actively supporting the implementation process at many levels. In this regard, the SDSN's **publication and online knowledge platform** "[Getting Started with the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Stakeholders](#)"⁹ was developed as a **preliminary guide for stakeholders** (i.e. SDSN Member Institutions, like universities, businesses trying to get oriented around the SDGs, national and local policymakers responsible for the implementation of the SDG agenda, citizens and civic groups) on how to "get started" with implementing the SDGs. Drawing upon lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals, the guide supports stakeholders to:

- (1) **Understand the SDG Agenda;**
- (2) **Start an inclusive dialogue on SDG implementation;**
- (3) **Prepare SDG-based national development strategies** or align existing plans and strategies with the goals.

With the purpose to assist countries in getting started with SDGs implementation, the SDSN, together with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, launched the [SDG Index and Dashboard](#) in July 2016. The report provides an analysis and **ranking of 149 country performances** (out of the 193 UN member states) **in regards to selected SDG targets**. The Index helps countries to identify priorities for early action and existing gaps, but also helps to

⁹ Full PDF document <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/151211-getting-started-guide-FINAL-PDF-.pdf>

understand key implementation challenges in order to achieve the SDGs. By constructing various measures for each SDG, the index allows countries to compare their performances against the region, other counterparts or the entire world. A country's position is indicated on a 0 (worst) to 100 (best) spectrum. The Index aims to attract political attention and make the communication of the SDGs in each country easier. The second part of the report consists of an **SDG Dashboard** where each goal is coloured in green (goal achieved), yellow (caution lane) or red (far from achievement as of 2015). The resulting dashboards highlight areas where a country needs to make the greatest progress towards achieving the Goals by 2030. The intention of the authors is to publish periodic updates of the SDG Index and Dashboard, incorporating lessons learned and better/additional data. The report is not a monitoring, but rather a starting point tool that aims to **support national discussion on operationalizing the SDGs**.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

The [United Nations Institute for Training and Research](#)

(UNITAR) is an autonomous UN body and functions as the training arm of the UN. One of the purposes of UNITAR is **public awareness raising, education and training of public policy officials concerning the impact of national actions**. In order support its purpose, the Institute provides training and capacity development activities.



Under the [Capacity of the 2030 Agenda Initiative](#), the Institute develops and delivers several **e-learning courses, workshops, webinars and other outreaching activities**, examples of which are shown below. The aim is to help national governments and other stakeholders **build capacity for the mainstreaming, implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda**.



Recently, UNITAR released a new – and ongoing until end of March 2017 – **Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)** to help anyone interested to improve their knowledge about the new Agenda and related SDGs. The course does not address any specific target group, but is **open to everyone interested to learn more about the 2030 Agenda**. Entitled [“Introduction to the 2030 Agenda: A new Agenda for a Sustainable World”](#), it **provides analytical tools to raise awareness about the Agenda 2030 and addresses potential knowledge gaps related to the understanding of changes required from both policymakers and ordinary citizen, to achieve the SDGs**. The self-pace course is structured in five modules followed by an assessment:

- (1) Introduction to the Post-2015 process and the origins of the 2030 agenda;
- (2) From the MDGs to the 2030 Agenda: a call for transformative action;
- (3) The Sustainable Development Goals: policy integration and synergies;
- (4) Leveraging resources, working with partners: The implementation of the 2030 agenda;
- (5) Follow-up, review and data for the 2030 Agenda: The state of the debate

By successfully completing the MOOC, participants will be able to, among other things, explain the difference between the MDGs and the SDGs, understand the importance of the 2030 Agenda, as well as of its review and follow-up, identify the main challenges in each Sustainable Development Goal, and analyze the changing nature of Global Partnership.

More directed to government officials and development practitioners, UNITAR developed the **E-Tutorial “[Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)”**, which **provides an in-depth guide** on how the **2030 Agenda can be mainstreamed into national strategies and policies**. Through case studies, the tutorial can help national policymakers to gain a better understanding and useful skills. In addition, always addressing national governments, UNITAR, together with UNDG, created a **training toolkit, [Preparing for Action” National Briefing Package](#)**¹⁰, which contains a **briefing package** designed for use by national governments to enable national stakeholders to deliver the workshops themselves. The toolkit was designed with two main objectives:

- (1) **to raise awareness among key governments and national stakeholders about the content of the 2030 Agenda and implications for the country-level;**
- (2) **to enable countries to begin preliminary discussions on mainstreaming the agenda into each national context, including the initial mapping of the SDGs in the context of existing national plans and strategies, and to reflect on priority-setting, as well as data, monitoring and review requirements**

To support national governments in realizing the workshop, the package includes:

- (1) Detailed program, organized in six modules with guidance for facilitators;
- (2) Discussion questions prepared with guidance from the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group;
- (3) Kit with presentations, quizzes, videos, participants’ manual and methodologies for discussion groups.

Business

Businesses are increasingly taking on a stronger position in the context of sustainability, and, due to their potential environmental impacts and innovation capacities, they represent an important stakeholder group. Similar to how it is for CSOs, it is difficult to depict a comprehensive picture of the business world. This Report’s selection aims to provide a first overview of how different business networks are acting regarding the communication and awareness raising of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This Report looks at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the United Nations Global Compact, and the Business and Sustainable Development Commission.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

The [World Business Council for Sustainable Development](#) (WBCSD) is a CEO-led organisation of over 200



World Business Council for Sustainable Development

member companies, which represent all business sectors. The **WBCSD provides a forum** for these leading business to **share best practices** on sustainable development issues. The Council also benefits from a network of 70 national and regional business councils and partner organizations, a majority of which are based

in developing countries. Through its advocacy role for business, the WBCSD mission is to stimulate the global business community to create a sustainable future for business, society and the environment.

¹⁰ Training toolkit is free and can be accessed at the following link <https://www.learnatunitar.org/course/index.php?categoryid=91> by logging in as a guest and using the password *unitary*.

The WBCSD is actively engaging with the 2030 Agenda and, especially, with the SDGs. The WBCSD is aware that the SDGs present a historic opportunity for companies to enhance their engagement as a strong and positive influence on society, by better connecting business strategies with global priorities. By embracing the SDGs, the WBCSD sees a growth opportunity that would open new markets, drive innovation, and contribute to the global effort to build resilient, inclusive economies and societies.

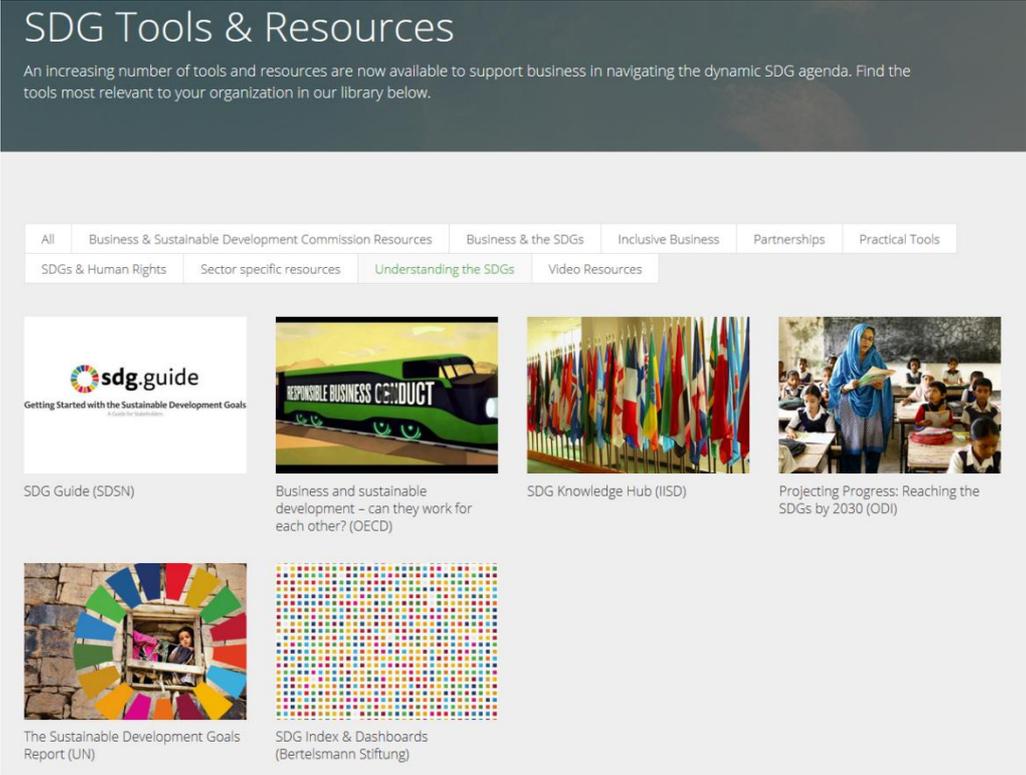
To connect and support companies in engaging with the SDGs, the WBCSD developed the [SDG Business Hub](#). The Business Hub offers a **one-stop-shop** for businesses to **access all relevant information, tools and other resources related to the SDGs**. Through the SDG Business Hub, companies can:



- (1) **Learn** about the programs and tools which are available to assist them in connecting with the SDGs;
- (2) **Keep up-to-date** on the latest developments and what they mean for business;
- (3) **Access case studies from companies** that are establishing themselves as leaders in this field and submit their own activities as examples of best practice;
- (4) Benefit from a **directory of the latest advocacy messages** and leading insight into the opportunities and responsibilities for business in this field.

Figure 8, below, shows various tools and resources the Hub provides for companies aiming to take the first step, and which may need support in 'Understanding the SDGs'. In this context, users are redirected to the **SDG guide** developed by the Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN), to an OECD video, to the SDG knowledge Hub managed by IISD, and other activities and reports concerning the understanding of the Global Goals. The other sections, in the same way, give access to different kinds of materials.

Figure 8: SDG Business Hub, material on understanding the SDGs



Source: <http://sdghub.com/tools-resources/>

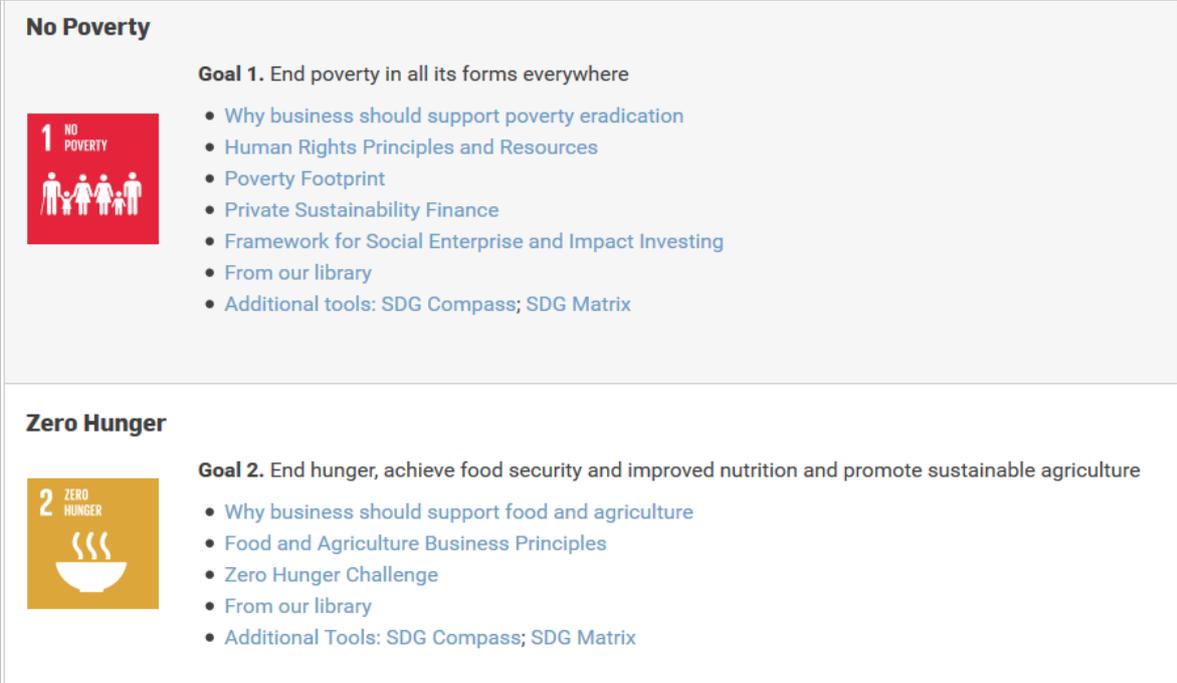
United Nations Global Compact

The [UN Global Compact](#) is an international voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles. Its vision is to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to people, communities and markets.



Making Global Goals Local Business is UN Global Compact’s multi-year strategy to drive business awareness and action towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. As part of the strategy, on its website, the UN Global Compact provides a useful section on [How Your Company Can Advance Each of the SDGs](#). The section offers important **initiatives and resources** of the UN Global Compact **to guide companies and other stakeholders to action-oriented platforms and tools that support SDG implementation**. As an example, Figure 9, below, gives an overview on the available information for business related to SDG 1 and SDG 2, as well as additional tools they can implement for measuring and monitoring their work.

Figure 9: UN Global Compact business tools for SDG achievement



Source: <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/sdgs/17-global-goals#sdg1>

To achieve the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda, the UN Global Compact also offers a portfolio of [Action Platforms](#) to support responsible business activities and filling gaps in meeting the SDGs. The Action Platforms represent systemic solutions to sustainable development challenges. Together with business, leading experts, civil society, Governments and UN partners, the platforms aim to help companies to take a deep dive on complex issues, explore new market opportunities and innovate around the SDGs. Action Platforms are designed for a group of 20 to 40 participants (payment of a fee is required).

Currently, businesses can choose between 5 available action platforms including: The Blueprint for SDG Leadership, Reporting on the SDGs, Breakthrough Innovation, Financial Innovation for the SDGs, and Pathways to Low-Carbon & Resilient Development. Four new platforms will be launched later in 2017. Each Action Platform includes expected outcomes, benefits of engaging, as well as several activities and events that take place within a timeframe of 1 or 2 years.

Global Value Project – Managing Business Impacts on Development

GLOBAL VALUE is one of the largest EU-funded research projects to date with a special focus on the measurement and management of business impacts on global sustainable development. The project created a **toolkit that businesses and stakeholders can use to comprehensively assess and better manage business impacts on the SDGs** including human rights, transparency, and anti-corruption. It takes into account the most relevant pathways of impact (through business operations, community investments, regional, supply chain and product related impacts) and links up with powerful management approaches (such as supply chain management or life cycle assessment).



The **GLOBAL VALUE toolkit** provides knowledge, tools and resources for companies and other societal actors wishing to tackle the SDGs together with business. It is composed of four thematic sections representing the core outcomes of the GLOBAL VALUE project, with each featuring background briefings, tool showcases, thematic working papers, engaging keynotes, and training materials, as well as webinars and podcasts. Figure 10 below provides a more detailed overview.

Figure 10: GLOBAL VALUE toolkit

GLOBAL VALUE TOOL NAVIGATOR	IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT	GOVERNANCE FOR GLOBAL VALUE	BREAKING DOWN THE SDGS
GLOBAL VALUE has collated and categorised more than 200 impact measurement and management tools. The GLOBAL VALUE tool navigator is the largest categorised database of impact measurement & management tools.	Together with footwear manufacturer Bata, paper & packaging producer Mondi, and the agribusiness Olam International GLOBAL VALUE has put 15 widely applied tools to the test. We are currently compiling this data into tool reports and showcases containing key insights on the features, capabilities and usability of each tool.	What is the role of governance for creating global value? We investigated how systems of governance can enhance corporate responsibility and worked with companies and stakeholders to highlight governance challenges in the gold mining, textile and tea sectors in Tanzania and Bangladesh.	What do the SDGs mean for your company? How can you contribute today? We have broken down the SDGs for you and will publish sector profiles for businesses in 10 different sectors in the coming weeks.

Source: <https://www.global-value.eu/toolkit/welcome/>

A central module of the toolkit is the **GLOBAL VALUE tool navigator**. It is a unique service for businesses that want to measure and manage their impact on sustainable development. It helps managers and stakeholders evaluate the capabilities, features and coverage of SDG issues of the plethora of currently existing impact measurement and management tools. It allows systematic filtering of more than 220 tools, methods and frameworks.

Figure 11: GLOBAL VALUE Tool Navigator Output

After three years of target-oriented research GLOBAL VALUE releases its toolkit during the [GLOBAL VALUE virtual launch](#) in June 2017. GLOBAL VALUE offers three full days of learning on how companies can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals - the global sustainable development agenda for 2030 - by enhancing positive impacts and reducing negative ones across bottom lines. From 12th to 14th June 2017, key actors and experts from research, business, policy and civil society will gather online to deliver the knowledge, tools, and resources to corporate decision makers and other societal actors wishing to tackle the most pressing challenges of our times using the power of business.

Local Authorities

Local and regional governments have also been identified as key players for promoting inclusive and sustainable development in their specific context. A series of local government networks and organisations support local actions by providing, among other activities, **case studies**, **training guides**, and **learning platforms**. As an example, this Report chose the leading global network ICLEI and Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, a coordination mechanism of local government association.

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)

The Local Governments for Sustainability network, [ICLEI](#), is a leading global network of 1,500 cities,  town and regions that commit to building a sustainable future. ICLEI provides **training guides**, **case studies**, **regional updates on activities and information services to build capacity, share knowledge**, and support local government in building more sustainable cities.

Particularly relevant for the communication of the SDGs at the local level are the [ICLEI Briefing Sheets](#), which provide background information on current themes and ongoing debates concerning local sustainability. Briefing Sheets have a general length of 4 pages, in exceptional cases (briefing sheet n.4) more in-depth sheets are released and reach about 25 pages in length. At present, to highlight the linkage between the SDGs and cities, ICLEI released a total of 7 Briefing Sheets covering the following topics:

- (1) From MDGs to SDGs: What are the Sustainable Development Goals?
- (2) Cities and the Sustainable Development Goals
- (3) Introducing a new Global Goal for Cities and Human Settlements
- (4) The importance of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for cities and communities
- (5) Implementing the SDGs in cities
- (6) Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluating the SDGs
- (7) Towards the New Urban Agenda: Linking with international processes

To support cities' engagement with the SDGs, ICLEI released several [inspiring examples and case studies](#) about local actions and pioneering work that can help local governments become inspired. For each Goal, ICLEI provides a case from the Global North and one from the Global South. Action examples cover all 17 SDGs, while case studies focus on SDG 11, "Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", and related targets.

Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

The [Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments](#) (GTF) is a coordination mechanism composed of the major local government associations. These work together to build a joint advocacy in relation to international policy processes, including the SDGs. More than 20 global and regional networks are part of the Global Taskforce. The GTF is hosted by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).



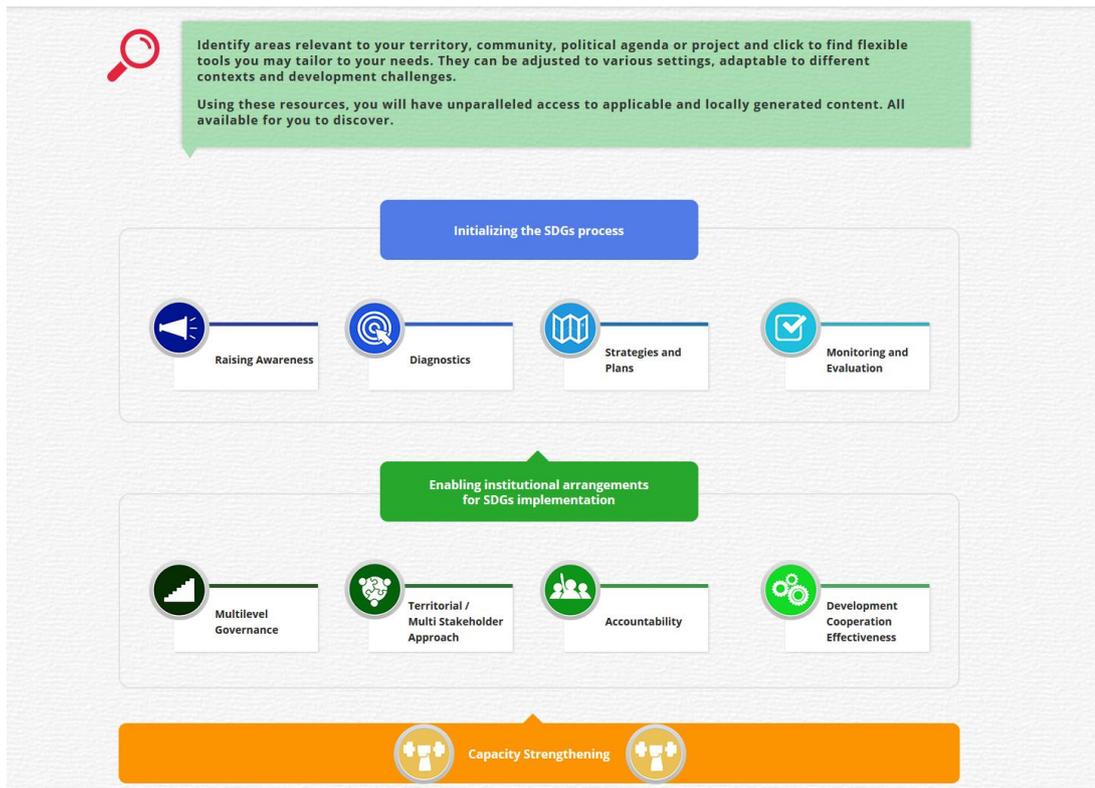
To help in advancing SDGs at the local level, the GTF, together with the UNDP and UN Habitat, developed a [Toolbox](#) for localizing the SDGs (see Figure 12 below). Localizing development means ***taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress***¹¹.

The Toolbox is a knowledge and information-sharing platform that provides easy access to an articulated set of tools to local and regional governments, and stakeholders interested in SDGs implementation at the local level. The Toolbox has been designed to:

- (1) Initializing the process: **raise awareness of the SDGs among local and national actors and improve their knowledge about Agenda 2030 as well as helping them to understand the implications, opportunities and challenges in localizing it;**
- (2) help creating an enabling environment for the localization process, and ensure the SDGs integration in sub-national strategies and plans;
- (3) take stock and review existing tools, systematizes outputs and avails the findings to policy-makers, local officers, experts and actors of local relevance;
- (4) point out best practices that are reliable and replicable in order to efficiently design, implement and monitor policies in line with the SDGs.

Figure 12: Localizing the SDG toolbox actions overview

¹¹ Toolbox definition of localizing development <http://www.localizingthesdgs.org/about-us.php>



Source: <http://localizingthesdgs.org/discover-tools>

As illustrated by Figure 12, above, users can choose to look at material about initiating the SDG process, SDG implementation and/or capacity strengthening strategies. Each section gives access to related available material, including publications, events, mobile apps, e-learning and e-tutorials, guidebooks, assessment tools, projects and more. A discussion platform allows users to exchange ideas and experiences, or start a moderated discussion.

Part of the tool is the GTF, UNDP and UN Habitat [Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs](#), which aims to support local and regional governments in the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs and provide a view to create an enabling environment for action. Within its resource section, the GTF gives access to additional documents and reports concerning the 2030 Agenda and Localizing the SDGs.

Conclusion on Communication and Awareness Raising: Activities and Challenges

Communication and Awareness Raising Tools and Activities Employed by the UN and UN Partnerships

The UN and the organizations it is partnering up with employ a plethora of communication and awareness raising strategies with respect to the SDGs. As can be seen from the examples in the first chapter, the UN and partner organizations heavily favour the use of **short videos** to communicate and raise awareness for the SDGs. This seems to stem from the ease at which seemingly complex information, such as the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, can be synthesized and reinterpreted in unique ways to address particular audiences, such as the Smurf video, which states it is targeted at everyone, but seems to be more geared towards children. It introduces the concept of sustainable development, but does not linger too long on this aspect, as it is an extremely complex concept, and instead launches into the **introduction of certain SDGs**, such as SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 14: Life below Water, and SDG 15: Life on Land. These SDGs are arguably easier to understand than many of the other SDGs, whereby many more people can relate to them. **Short videos are capable of condensing complex material into something that is more easily understood and easier for people to relate to without overwhelming them with everything at once.**

Many of the other short videos also only introduce certain SDGs for much the same reason. The *Numbers in Action* and *Leave no one Behind* videos not only introduce the SDGs, but make them **more applicable and relevant to viewers by contextualizing them**, by either given them fact and figures, as was done in *Numbers in Action*, or **putting a more human face on the SDGs** by showing viewers exactly who the SDGs were designed to help; those furthest behind.

These short videos are also very easy to share on **social media**, such as Twitter and Facebook. Social media, therefore, is also a useful tool that aids in the raising of awareness. “Sharing”, “Liking”, and “Tweeting” on social media has the **ability to exponentially increase the amount of people being exposed to information on the SDGs**, which can help raise awareness in an incredibly short amount of time. Sharing items on social media, apart from being able to reach vast amounts of people, is very easy to accomplish, and people can do it without leaving their house. The ease at which information and awareness can be spread is a very potent tool when it comes to the SDGs and keeping people informed about what is going on in the world in relation to the SDGs.

News articles and depositories of news articles related to the SDGs are also important for not only raising the awareness for the SDGs, but also about what activities are happening around the world. **Smart phone applications** dealing with this type of SDG news collection becomes vitally important, as it reduces the amount of time people need to spend researching about the SDGs. Making the flow of information faster and more efficient is also an important tool being employed, as not only people can keep track of what is happening regarding SDGs they find interesting, but other stakeholders can keep track as well, which may provide benefits for future partnerships, or lead to the adaptation of initiatives that have been set up to deal with a specific issue that has relevance for many regions or countries. These types of information exchanges can enhance cooperation and duplication of efforts.

The UN also uses logos for each **SDG**, and makes these available for download, which is also a way of spreading awareness for the SDGs. More importantly, however, it allows other people and stakeholders to use

these logos for their own efforts in raising awareness, as they ways in which they can make use of them are manifold. It also reinforces and reaffirms that the UN wants people and stakeholders to take responsibility for raising awareness, too.

Another tool that is used are **interactive websites and initiatives** to attract people already interested in the SDGs, as well as those who may not know anything about them, as it allows people to feel as if they are a part of something. This notion and concept of being a part of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, as it is an Agenda for everyone, and that everyone needs to do their part. By allowing people to take quizzes and contribute data, and then store and allow people to process that data can be an eye-opening experience, such as My World 2030. The way in which the collected data can be used to make comparisons and check progress on the SDGs is remarkable, as it shows, along many different lines, how different demographics perceive the SDGs and their importance. These interactive data collection tools can also be used by policymakers and other stakeholder groups to better identify demographics they need to target better, or target differently, in order to not leave them behind. It can also be useful for aligning the priorities of a country to the priorities of their people and what matter most to them.

Many of the communication and awareness raising tools the UN employs makes it easier for people to relate to the SDGs, as they deconstruct the more complex language of the 2030 Agenda. As more time passes, more and more people will become interested in the SDGs, further catalysing the efforts and effects such tools and initiatives have on the exchange of knowledge and the piquing of interests for the SDGs. **By utilizing a wider range of different tools, the UN appeals to a wide audience, spanning many different layers and demographics.** Appealing to wider audiences is a necessary goal, even if it comes at the cost of specialization and targeted campaigns and initiatives.

National Communication and Awareness Raising Activities for the SDGs in Europe

From the 6 country cases presented in this Report there are certain communication and awareness raising activities that are very common across countries: **Fora, workshops, transparency exchanges, dialogues, conferences and platforms, are by far the most common tools and activities that are being used by the national level to communicate and raise awareness for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.** This suggests that countries find these particular activities effective in communicating and raising awareness for the SDGs, as oftentimes **these activities allow stakeholders to exchange information, knowledge and experiences regarding the SDGs.** These types of activities also **allow vast amounts of information regarding the SDGs to be communicated in a more comprehensive way**, unlike other tools and activities, in which a more condensed message needs to be present.

Another common activity that countries employed to raise awareness are **educational activities**, which seek to educate stakeholders about **sustainable development and integrating it into their daily lives and practices.** Setting up **committees and commissions** that deal with sustainability issues and the SDGs is also an activity and tool that was mentioned by multiple countries, and is **effective in bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss and exchange information on the SDGs.** These types of activities are **very active ways to engage stakeholders and civil society when it comes to the SDGs, and offer them more in-depth knowledge in a more personal setting, as information must be exchanged face-to-face**, instead of through newsletters, social media campaigns, and other, more impersonal tools.

However, apart from these more direct and personal tools and activities (events, meetings, fora, conferences, etc.), other, less direct tools, such as **newsletters, advertising, websites, social media and brochures**, have a part to play in the dissemination of information and in raising awareness for the SDGs, as they allow **vast amounts of information, such as the SDGs, to be synthesized and simplified down into terms that are more easily understood and conveyed in very precise manner**. These types of communication activities are important in reaching stakeholders and civil society that are not inherently interested in the SDGs, or cannot participate in conferences, workshops, platforms, etc.

Unlike with the more direct awareness raising activities, the less direct awareness raising activities (social media, newsletters, websites, videos, etc.) were not overwhelmingly in favour of one particular tool, but rather were evenly dispersed between different modes of communication. This may indicate that the **use of these tools may be more context and audience specific**, as **videos** regarding the SDGs, for example, **need to appeal to their audiences**, in order for them to not only be able to relate to it, but also take it further and do something regarding a topic, such as becoming involved with a specific SDG. In some countries, newsletters and press releases work better. **Countries, therefore, should know what their specific context is and use the best tool or activity for information dissemination based on that.**

Some of the more unique communication and awareness raising activities are the SDG website in Belgium, which is solely dedicated to the SDGs and what events are happening in Belgium that relate to them, as it puts the Belgian context squarely in the foreground, in which it is easier for site visitors to contextualize and subsequently connect more to it, whereas an activity at the UN level would seem farther away.

Also a unique tool for Belgium is the use of SDG Voice to act as SDG ambassadors and help to raise awareness for the SDGs, as they feature more prominent people and stakeholders, as well as have a good stakeholder representation among the 8 Voices. **Having prominent and distinctly Belgian representatives helps in the contextualization of the SDGs for other stakeholders and Belgian civil society**. This could also be adopted and adapted by other countries. Estonia would also be an example of a country that is planning to use famous Estonian musicians at an activity to promote and raise awareness for the SDGs.

In Germany and Finland there have been **regional tours** to help in promoting and raising awareness for the SDGs. This is an extremely active way to raise awareness, as those spreading the awareness for the SDGs are bringing the knowledge with them and exposing the people they meet to the SDGs. This type of activity can target those stakeholders who are not intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to understand, or look for information regarding the SDGs. **Having representatives who travel to cities, towns, municipalities, etc., also makes the transfer of knowledge more personal**, whereas flyers, brochures, newsletters, etc., can be ignored or disregarded as unimportant.

It is important, therefore, for countries to have both very active and personal communication that allows for large and comprehensive transfers of knowledge, experiences, good practices and information regarding the SDGs, as well as more impersonal forms of communication and awareness raising activities, in order to appeal to the highest amount of stakeholders. **Helping to contextualize the SDGs to the national or subnational level is a huge boon in being able to effectively reach stakeholders and civil society, as the concept of the SDGs and the UN's 2030 Agenda become less abstract, allowing people to connect to the SDGs more easily.**

Also of import in communication and awareness raising is to have modes of communication that are able to expound and expand the SDGs, such as the conferences, fora, workshops, etc, and provide these important platforms for exchange and discussion, while at the same time pairing these activities with activities that seek to bring the SDGs closer to the people in terms of being able to understand the language and concepts and how they affect them in their daily lives.

There is still much work to be done on the communication and awareness raising front, as **communicating the importance of the SDGs in everyone's daily life still has not happened**. There are still **challenges in making the SDGs easier for people to understand without undermining everything they stand for or oversimplifying it**. The **media** is also another challenging aspect to raising awareness for the SDGs, because without having a sizeable portion of the population understand the SDGs, the media is not going to necessarily mention it, or go out of its way to connect news stories to individual SDGs, such as healthcare related themes being related to SDG 3, etc. **This daily exposure to the SDGs is not happening for most people and for most stakeholders.**

Officials within Europe, and most of the world, should become increasingly aware that communication and information are important to create knowledge and understanding in citizens and stakeholders. In addition, strategies on how to best use particular communication tools and activities to reach desired audiences are necessary. In order to be able to communicate to a large number of stakeholders effectively, easier to understand language needs to be used and more tangible examples need to be provided that help in contextualizing the importance of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in everyday life for everyday stakeholders.

Analysis on Stakeholder Communication and Awareness Raising Activities

In general, what emerged from the stakeholder activity overview is that **different types of outreach tools are applied**. Stakeholders appear inclined to **publish reports, guides and/or case studies**. However, **more interactive tools such as toolboxes, toolkits and hubs, as well as e-learning and e-tutorials are also particularly common**. What can be drawn from the brief analysis of stakeholder activities, is that **events, workshops, or other face to face activities are less likely to happen**. This is probably due to the fact that the SDGs are a global issue and it is difficult to bring people together physically. Communication through social media campaigns, beyond promotional, report publication, notice or information purposes, can be considered one of the less implemented tools, almost absent among the selected stakeholders. **Tools generally address all kinds of target audiences and aim to reach citizens, national policy makers, and businesses alike.**

To sum up, stakeholders are certainly working in order to raise awareness around the 2030 Agenda/SDGs and are developing an **increasing number of strategies to reach more people and support business and local governments in understanding and engaging with SDGs implementation**. However, in order to achieve the Goals, it is necessary that more people and stakeholders get involved and understand its importance. Therefore, **outreach activities are a priority, on which it is essential for stakeholders to continue working towards.**

