



**COMMUNICATION OF  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND THE SDGs: STRATEGIES  
AND GOOD PRACTICES**

**16<sup>th</sup> ESDN  
Workshop**

**Discussion Paper**

**November  
2018**

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## Introduction

This discussion paper provides input for the 16<sup>th</sup> **ESDN Workshop 2018**, entitled “Communication of Sustainable Development and the SDGs: Strategies and Good Practices”, which will take place in **Berlin on 19-20 November 2018**. This ESDN event is organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Workshop will be a 2 half-day event that will bring together policymakers and experts from different stakeholder groups from all over Europe to exchange with one another and learn from one another on how to communicate the SDGs.

The role of communication in the implementation of sustainable development, in general, and the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, in particular, is very important. Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda need to not only be embraced by policymakers and experts in the field, but also by all stakeholder groups in order to have their objectives achieved in practice. However, the 17 SDGs and their specific targets are still mostly known by relatively small groups of people. Therefore, the main objective of this Workshop is to look into the needs for successfully communicating SD and the SDGs by highlighting good practice examples in communication and reflect upon the future needs of being able to better and more effectively communicate SD and the SDGs. In addition to hearing and sharing good practice cases regarding communication for sustainable development and the SDGs, there will also be ample time to discuss and reflect upon these experiences in various interactive activities throughout the Workshop. The Workshop will start with a welcome and opening session and be followed by 5 sessions that will take place over the two half-days.

### Day 1 (November 19<sup>th</sup>)

- **Session 1:** Good Practice Examples of Communicating SDGs from the Supra-national and National Levels
- **Session 2:** German Approaches to Communicate SD and the SDGs
- **Session 3:** Interactive Discussion on the Take Home Messages of Day 1

### Day 2 (November 20<sup>th</sup>)

- **Session 4:** Good Practice Examples from Different Stakeholder Groups and Media
- **Session 5:** Interactive Group Work – Linking good practice cases to national SD strategies and future needs of SDG communication

A full documentation of the keynotes, discussions, and group work at the Workshop will be published in a report shortly after the event and can be found on the ESDN website under [Workshops](#).

As the main premise of the 16<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop is on communication, it is important to highlight that the 2030 Agenda calls upon all areas of society and all stakeholder groups to engage and work towards achieving the SDGs.

Chapter 1 focuses on the importance the 2030 Agenda places on stakeholder involvement, which helps in shedding light on how important and necessary it is to effectively communicate this ambitious agenda to a wide degree of different stakeholders, as communication strategies, approaches, and tools will necessarily be different depending on the stakeholder group, such as NGOs/CSOs, businesses, civil society, policymakers, politicians, etc.

Chapter 2 provides some insights on the importance of countries in being able to effectively communicate the SDGs to a wide array of societal actors. While many of the communicative endeavors

of the OECD focus on development communication, there are many insights that can be applied to the overall communication of the SDGs.

Chapter 3 looks more closely at the good practice examples from the supranational and national levels that will be presented during the Workshop. Representatives from the organizations in this chapter were sent a short questionnaire that asked them to provide information about their organization and how their organization was communicating the SDGs, including how they measure the effectiveness of their communication campaigns and strategies.

Chapter 4 looks into how two German governmental organizations communicate with different stakeholders and societal actors regarding the SDGs. The first organization is the Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global, which attempts to communicate the SDGs to German municipalities. The second good practice example regarding the communication of the SDGs is the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), which seeks to communicate the SDGs to a wider array of societal actors.

Chapter 5 continues looking at good practice examples, but from the perspective of different stakeholder groups and the media and how they communicate with their stakeholders regarding sustainable development and the SDGs. The speakers and representatives of these organizations were also given the same questionnaire as the speakers from the previous chapters.

Chapter 6 is dedicated towards one of the questionnaire questions that were given to all speakers when they offered input for this Discussion Paper. The final questionnaire question was regarding what the Speakers, and their organizations, believed to be the future needs for improving the communication of the SDGs. Their answers have been anonymously documented and should seek to ready participants for the last interactive session of the Workshop, which will have participants discussing the very topic on the future needs of communication for the SDGs.

# Chapter 1: Communicating the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda

## Communication and Awareness Raising 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.

## Chapter 2: Importance of Communicating the SDGs

In a discussion note from the OECD's Development Communication Network's (DevCom)<sup>1</sup> Annual Meeting, which took place on 9-10 November 2016, the **OECD highlights some of the key factors that countries and policymakers should keep in mind when thinking about communicating the SDGs.** While DevCom's annual meeting focused more on development communication and the SDGs, the note still provides insights into general communication with respect to the SDGs, providing hints at what policymakers can do and watch out for when they attempt to communicate the SDGs.

One of the main challenges that communicators of the SDGs are facing is that the **SDGs are a large, holistic and long-term set of goals, difficult to distil into simple and compelling messages. With citizens in many OECD countries expressing fears about globalization, migration, conflict and terrorism, can communicators manage a conversation on longer-term global efforts for sustainable development?**

The commitments to sustainable development that world leaders made when they signed the 2030 Agenda also constituted a direct mandate for SDG communicators. The commitments imply that countries need to recognize the importance of public support and engagement in their SDG strategies, policies and budgets, and, going further, countries need to set goals for public awareness, to incorporate the SDGs into communications strategies and education programs, and to track progress in strengthening public awareness and engagement. **In short, countries and policymakers need to make SDG communications a strategic priority.**

The obligation to engage with citizens can also be seen as part of a broader effort among public institutions to **rebuild trust among citizens.** Recent OECD work recommends that **public institutions need to improve openness across the board and promote more inclusive policy-making and consultations.**

### “Does your neighbour know about the Sustainable Development Goals?”

Felix Zimmermann, Coordinator for the OECD's DevCom, composed a [blog](#) in April 2017 with the above title that deals with the issue of communicating the SDGs. Below are the relevant excerpts that have been taken from the blog that address communication and the SDGs and what SDG communicators need to be aware of in their communication efforts.

“To have any hope of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, we need all citizens to change their behaviours, no matter where in the world they live. SDG priorities may differ from country to country, but we need citizens in all countries to call upon governments, companies – and neighbours – to act.

*“I don't really know my neighbour. What I do know is that she can get pretty grumpy when my kids are too noisy. I also know that she uses the recycle bins. But what does she think about sustainable development? I wouldn't have a clue. That needs to change.”*

The good news is that **the SDGs give us a powerful story to tell** – just check out the inspirational word cloud we created using only language from the SDG web pages of OECD governments.

The even better news is that **people are beginning to engage.** One year into the ‘SDG era’, about 3 in

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<sup>1</sup> OECD DevCom is a platform where communications managers from development institutions explore ways to engage with citizens for sustainable development.

10 citizens say they've heard about the SDGs, according to both Globescan and Eurobarometer. Almost 10 million world citizens have shown they care about sustainable development by participating in the UN MyWorld survey. These numbers will rise further thanks to the work of initiatives like the UN SDG Action Campaign, Project Everyone and the World's Best News."

The experience that an increasing amount of people are engaging with the ESDN and develop activities that contribute to the SDG implementation is shared by the ESDN and European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW).

## European Sustainable Development Week 2018

The ESDW 2018 marked the third year that the ESDW has been aligned with the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ESDW is an initiative to facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform. The recently adopted global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) articulates key issues that call for urgent action at all levels and by all stakeholders. 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.

In terms of measuring the success of the ESDW since it began in 2015, the ESDW measures it by the number of countries actively taking part, the number of registered events, and, more recently, the projected number of participants attending events registered to the ESDW website.

In 2015, the first ESDW was very successful with 4,116 activities in 29 European countries. In its second year running, the ESDW 2016 achieved 4,212 activities in 38 countries. In its third year, the ESDW 2017 reached 4,031 events in 30 countries. In the 4<sup>th</sup> year, the **ESDW 2018 reached 6,035 events in 34 countries**. This marks the highest turnout so far in the ESDW's history in terms of registered events the ESDW has received. **The ESDW 2018 can estimate that there were about 3 million participants who took part in these 6,035 events.**

## Tough Times for SDG Communicators in Public Institutions

Returning to Felix Zimmermann's blog, he writes that, **"these are tough times for SDG communicators in public institutions**. Their audiences include many people who have **lost trust in public institutions** and become **resentful about international co-operation**. In a **changing media landscape**, they have to compete for attention with "fake news" and "clickbait". And, with **social-media** algorithms deciding what people read and dividing readers into different bubbles, communicators may just be preaching to their own audiences.

To overcome these challenges, the first thing **government institutions need to do is improve their listening skills**.

Take the opinion polls that some institutions commission on a regular basis. These surveys should tell communicators what citizens really think, particularly when coupled with other kinds of public attitudes research, such as focus groups.

The problem is that polls are designed not only to provide accurate information on public attitudes. They are also designed as advocacy tools, for example to strengthen the case for specific policies. With budgets being squeezed, public institutions have strong incentives to make public support for their work look higher than it really is.

Yet, polls are not the only way to understand public attitudes today. Businesses mine online data to find and target new customers. Political parties have done the same in their quest for votes.

Facebook and Twitter have become daily business for institutions that deliver development assistance, according to a recent survey conducted by DevCom.<sup>2</sup> However, when DevCom members were asked why they use social media, interacting with citizens and seeking feedback on policies ranked amongst their lowest priorities.

**The bottom line is that if policymakers and SDG communicators want to mobilise citizens for the SDGs, then communicators need better listening architectures. They need to invest in opinion polls and public attitudes research that provide reliable information. They need to consider how social media and web analytics can and should inform their public engagement strategies.**

It is only by listening more carefully – setting up stronger listening architectures – that SDG communicators will know **what SDG messages work best for different audiences.**

For example, many people will want to be reassured that their taxes are being spent wisely and achieving SDG results. Some will want to be moved by stories that evoke shared values – they may want practical suggestions on how to become global citizens.<sup>3</sup> Others will want to take pride in their country's performance or global leadership on the SDGs. Others still will need reminding that the SDGs are in everyone's interest, including their own.

**Most audiences today also want to hear from “real” people:** People who share their interests, such as business leaders, fellow hikers or young bloggers; people actually delivering on the SDGs, such as doctors, teachers or engineers; people in their entourages; peers; parents.

Clever and targeted messaging alone won't convince everyone to join the global SDG effort. **To have any chance of reaching the sceptics, government institutions will need a deeper change, linking words to actions.** They will need to become more open, building trust, pursuing an honest dialogue and finding new ways to collaborate with citizens, both offline and online.”

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<sup>2</sup> OECD DevCom is a platform where communications managers from development institutions explore ways to engage with citizens for sustainable development.

<sup>3</sup> A survey of young people by the Varkey Foundation shows that young people want to make a wider contribution to society, but need more knowledge and skills to make a difference.

## Chapter 3: Good Practice Examples of Communicating SDGs from the Supranational and National Levels

The good practice examples below from the supranational and national levels that will be presented during the Workshop were sent to the ESDN Office by the respective speakers, based on a short questionnaire that asked their representatives about their organization and how their organization was communicating the SDGs, including how they measure the effectiveness of their communication campaigns and strategies.

As a final question, Workshop speakers were asked about what they believed to be the future needs for improving the communication of the SDGs. This input should help set the stage in the interactive part, Session 5, of the Workshop for participants, whereby participants can then add to what they see as the future needs of communication for the SDGs.

### UN SDG Action Campaign

The UN SDG Action Campaign is a special inter-agency initiative of the UN Secretary-General mandated to scale up, broaden and sustain the global movement of action for the SDGs. This is done by mobilizing and inspiring individuals and organization to take action on the SDGs

Communicating to the general public, and with a strong focus on youth, about the SDGs is the core of the Campaign's work, in order to raise awareness and engagement of individuals and organisations in the global movement that is taking action for the SDGs.

The Action Campaign does this by mobilizing – Calls to action, coordinating a Global Day of Action, which seeks to inspire, leveraging the power of arts, music, new media and new technologies to increase the visibility of SDG doers and the actions they take, as well as attract new audiences to be part of the movement. Every action, campaign, activation is open and everyone can take part. Actions are turned into toolboxes and guidelines, generating an ever-growing resource hub for everyone to join the Action for the SDGs.

Some of the Action Campaign's key communication tools include:

- **Digital platforms – dedicated website** and **microsites** that provide resources, a space for partners to share their initiatives with the global movement; and **social media**.
- **New technologies – Virtual reality** and **360 media, experimental Augmented Reality**
- **Crowdsourced content – narrative photo and film series** created by individuals and organisations from across the world.

Some specific examples of the communication activities of the Action Campaign include **SDG Storytelling, crowdsourcing and training programs**. One such program is the [MYWorld360](#), which invites youth worldwide to become a 360° SDG media creator. The [Young People Program](#) is another example of a communication activity that seeks to bring renowned photographers and journalists to work with young students on photo and video series on SDGs in their communities.

The **Butterfly Effect Campaign**, #SpreadyourGoals is a transmedia campaign combining illustration, geolocalized advertising, AR and cinema spots to invite young people to interact with the Goals and voice their support.

The **Global Day of Action** is another activity that seeks to leverage the anniversary of the SDGs to mobilize and drive attention to action for the Goals locally and globally.

When it comes to establishing whether the SDG Action Campaign has been successful in its communication activities, the Campaign uses two key indicators. They look at two key indicators: 1) The number of people joining an action, a campaign, or being exposed to it; and 2) The capacity of reaching out to new audiences/outside the usual suspects. The tools the Campaign uses to measure these key indicators are Google and open social media analytics, as well as participant surveys.

## France: Energy Observer

Energy Observer is the first self-sufficient energy vessel with zero greenhouse gas or fine particle emissions that is powered by hydrogen and renewable energies, thanks to energy coupling. More than a vessel, Energy Observer is a team and is a media platform providing positive and inspiring content in favor of innovative solutions for the SDGs. Energy Observer has engaged in a world tour in order to endure its technical innovations and to raise awareness everywhere it goes.

Jérôme Delafosse is co-founder of Energy Observer, together with Captain Victorien Erussard, and is Expedition leader of the Odyssey. Energy Observer has been appointed first French SDG ambassadors.



The appointment of Energy Observer as SDGs ambassador is the first step of a broader communication to the general audience. Energy Observer's educational mission is to raise awareness on combating global warming and on the SDGs.

The „itinerant village" that follows the vessel all around the world provides with educational documentaries and virtual reality movies : General public, schools, heads of state and government, representatives of local authorities, media, companies, public figures are brought together into a community committed to the Planet.



Energy Observer is currently working on a "SDGs solutions web platform" with a mini video-series. The purpose is to showcase inspiring solutions that people, whom Energy Observer meets along its Odyssey around the World, has found to tackle the SDGs challenges. Each solution can be sorted according to the SDGs that are tackled by the solution.

In France, in general, the Interministerial Delegate for Sustainable Development, who is under the authority of the Prime Minister and who is also the Commissioner General for Sustainable Development within the Ministry of Ecological, is in charge of the coordination of the SDGs implementation in France in every aspect. The SDGs are a major and structuring axis of the work of the Office of the Commissioner General for Sustainable Development, which is made up of around 450 people. The Office of the Commissioner General for Sustainable Development has worked constantly since the adoption of the SDGs in order to raise awareness among every audiences and stakeholders: members of the Parliament, companies, trade unions, NGOs, academia, etc.

Currently, the elaboration of the French SDGs roadmap is witnessing unprecedented stakeholder mobilization and is a key way that France is planning to communicate the SDGs.

The European Sustainable Development week and the anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs (September 25<sup>th</sup>) are key moments to communicate the SDGs.

A Newsletter (ODDyssée), communication kits and SDG-customized stairs within the Ministry are some of the employed tools to communicate the SDGs.

A SDGs MOOC, gathering 25 partners including ministries, academia, NGOs, companies, etc., was conducted in September and October 2018 and followed by more than 13,200 people in 114 countries (60% in France, 33% in Africa).

Regarding the measurement of communication progress with respect to the SDGs, there has been incontestable progress that has been made over the last three years in the general awareness for the SDGs. Participation in the Ministry SDG events has been constantly increasing, such as the participation of civil society organizations in the HLPF, which jumped from 2 people in 2016 to more than 60 in 2018. Another example of progress being made in SDG communication is the number of readers of the newsletter, which is concretely measured.

## Iceland: Television Campaigns to Raise Awareness for the SDGs

The **SDGs are integrated in all of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' work**, especially when it comes to development cooperation. A new development strategy for 2019-2023 is now being discussed at the parliament and all of the **Ministry's priorities are linked to the SDGs**. Furthermore, Iceland's presidency at the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2019 also focuses on the SDGs. The programme contributes to cooperation on the common challenges facing the Nordic countries in achieving the UN 2030 Agenda and the 17 Global Goals in the Nordic Region.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has done one **promotional campaign on the SDGs** and a second one will be launched in December 2018. The first was launched in March 2018 on **TV, social media and print media**. The target group was the general public in Iceland. The second will be launched in December 2018 on TV and social media. The target group is still the general public in Iceland, with **special emphasis on youth**.

In terms of measuring the success of the first promotional campaign, the Ministry conducted a national survey on awareness for the SDGs before and after the first campaign, and will conduct another after

the second campaign. The results showed that after the first campaign, more people said they had heard of the SDGs and more people also said that they knew the SDGs.

## Finland: The Use of Digital and Social Media in the Communication of the SDGs

The Prime Minister's Office in Finland is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, the Office is also charged with communicating the Agenda and the SDGs.

The Prime Minister's Office communicates the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in a variety of ways. Most importantly is through "[Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development](#)", which serves as Finland's sustainable development strategy. "Society's Commitment" calls upon all societal actors to become involved in sustainable development. All stakeholders can contribute by registering their commitments onto an [online platform](#). For Finland, each commitment that is made is a measurable action towards Finland's achievement of the SDGs, which is important when it comes to measuring the success of communication and is a very powerful tool that seeks to get many involved with sustainable development.

## Chapter 4: German Approaches in Communicating Sustainable Development and the SDGs

This chapter looks into how two German governmental organizations communicate with different stakeholders and societal actors regarding the SDGs. The first organization is the Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global, which attempts to communicate the SDGs to German municipalities. The second good practice example regarding the communication of the SDGs is the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), which seeks to communicate the SDGs to a wider array of societal actors.

### Service Agency Communities in the One World: Communicating the SDGs among Municipalities

The Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) of Engagement Global is the first port of call for all cities, municipalities and districts from all over Germany that want to strengthen their engagement in the field of decentralized development cooperation and sustainable development on-site. SKEW's focus areas are migration, fair trade and fair procurement, municipal partnerships and localization of the SDGs.

While SKEW's focus areas and projects correspond to different SDGs, they also have one area that deals especially with strategy development and long-term integration of the SDGs in local development strategies. By doing this, SKEW supports the role of cities, towns and districts in Germany to take an active part in making the SDGs reality.

**SKEW's main target audiences are municipalities.** Thus, they work foremost with the municipal administration. **Depending on the municipal administration's knowledge of the SDGs, SKEW adapts their communication strategy.** In general, SKEW's strategy focuses on four steps of the localization process, where each step contains a strong communication aspect. The first step of localizing the SDGs is in fact raising awareness and in order to reach these objectives SKEW uses different tools:

- Signing of specimen resolution on the 2030 Agenda;
- Supporting tailored events that starts a localization process including citizens and administration;
- tailored regional workshops;
- creating Fact Sheets for each Goal;
- Online and Social Media, publications; and
- Give-aways.

The other steps are diagnostics, aligning strategies/ plans and monitoring. These steps have a technical focus, in which the communication is already beyond the point of awareness rising. At this point in time, SKEW uses steering committees and SWOT analyses, as well as networking workshops with other pilot municipalities. At this point, communication is at the implementation level (beyond awareness), which is also a crucial subject, as the stakeholders need to make the SDGs even more tangible to decision makers and adaptable for administrative purposes.

There are different signs that SKEW looks for regarding municipalities' progress towards the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs:

- The specimen resolution on the 2030 is signed. This means a starting point for further action on SDG implementation is placed in the political agenda;

- Municipalities produce integrated SDG strategies that pay respect to the global level and their own role in the field of development policies. Therefore, components of sustainable development within Germany or in the realms of decentralized development cooperation are part of strategic goals of the municipality;
- The SDGs are known among the inhabitants of the city, town or district; and
- SDG indicators that measure the overall performance are defined and embedded in the administrative workflow.

## German Council for Sustainable Development: Communicating SDGs to Different Societal Stakeholders

The German Council for Sustainable development (RNE) is an advisory body to the German Government. It develops contributions to ambitiously implementing the German Sustainable Development Strategy (which has integrated the SDGs) and promotes dialogue on the topic within society through its own projects and events, such as networking conferences, workshops, and competitions.

RNE also makes use of the SDG graphic elements for branding, and thereby presenting SDGs at events for various governance levels and contexts. Publications (on line, print) related to RNE projects and sustainability action in Germany are also made available. Additionally, the RNE actively promotes the German Action Days for sustainable development (in the context of the European sustainable development week).

**Through its communication, the RNE targets decision-makers at the political, administration, business, university, NGO and individual level through dialogue projects, competitions, newsletter, website, Facebook, and twitter.** RNE believes that success comes from how many people know about the SDGs and the meaningful actions that are taking place, because meaningful actions tend to follow awareness. Therefore, raising the awareness of stakeholders raises the chances of more meaningful actions regarding the SDGs that could take place.

Some more concrete measurements that the RNE can take regarding success comes from the number of actions from the German Action Days, number of likes of RNE-Facebook posts, number of followers on twitter, number of companies applying the sustainability code, etc., but this is only an intermediate figure compared to the statement before.

## Chapter 5: Good Practice Examples from Different Stakeholder Groups and Media

This chapter looks at some good practice examples from different stakeholder groups and the media and how they communicate with their stakeholders regarding sustainable development and the SDGs. The speakers and representatives of these organizations were also given the same questionnaire as the speakers from the previous chapters.

### Pulse of Europe: HausParlamente Project

Pulse of Europe started as an independent, non-partisan citizens' initiative in 2016 to counter the increased emergence of right-wing populist and nationalist parties with a positive, broad public pro-European movement.

Initially, Pulse of Europe only held demonstrations across Europe that focused on emotional signs and more general political messages. However, **the HausParlamente project now offers interested citizens a new opportunity to participate in policy-making and allows for a deeper understanding of European issues.**

Pulse of Europe tries to raise awareness for the great value of a peaceful, free, and united Europe, thereby addressing the general public. With the HausParlamente project, Pulse of Europe has implemented a simple, but, at the same time, innovative citizens' participation and consultation model.

### Germanwatch: Communicating Sustainable Development and the SDGs

Germanwatch has been engaged since 1991 for global equity and the preservation of livelihoods. The politics and economics of the North, with their global consequences, stand at the centre of Germanwatch's work, which actively promotes North-South equity and the preservation of livelihoods.

Germanwatch focuses on the politics and economics of the North with their worldwide consequences. The situation of marginalised people in the South is the starting point of Germanwatch's work. Together with their members and supporters, as well as with other actors in civil society, Germanwatch intends to represent a strong lobby for sustainable development, where their topics consist of World Trade and Food Security, Climate Protection and Adaptation, Corporate Accountability and Human Rights, the Financial Sector and Sustainability, as well as the Financing of Development Cooperation.

All of these topics are, in one way or the other, targeted by the SDGs. Germanwatch's various projects in different fields aim for, and communicate, a human rights based implementation of the SDGs. Most explicitly, **Germanwatch communicates / aims to raise awareness for the SDGs through Germanwatch's educational projects** – Transformative Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Target groups are mainly, but not only, young people, pupils and students. Germanwatch aims:

- to empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in - Transform unsustainable structures;
- to also address decision-makers - ESD as a tool for lifelong learning for all learners; and
- to encourage action: from knowledge to real life political action.

Some other projects from Germanwatch include:

- Germanwatch Hand Print – increase your hand print, decrease your food print.
- Successful ESD -projects change structures to help other people to behave more sustainably.
- For the broader public: positive response, participation in discussion, follow up -Emails, etc.
- For decision makers: concrete activities that make a difference.

In measuring the success of their communication activities, Germanwatch would ask the question if there were reductions in ecological and social footprints of their target stakeholder group. Even more importantly, Germanwatch would ask stakeholders if they increased their handprint regarding active participation in society and/or in politics.

## Netzwerk Weitblick: Journalism and Sustainable Development

“Netzwerk Weitblick“ is an **offer by journalists for journalists that informs media professionals about the overarching and interdisciplinary aspects of sustainability**. “Netzwerk Weitblick“ aims to support quality, as well as quantity, of reporting on topics relating to sustainability, and the Sustainable Development Goals form the basis of their work.

The target audience is journalists, whereby “Netzwerk Weitblick“ provides trainings on all aspects of the SDGs and teaches how to communicate them in the media, and provide expert knowledge in fields like circular economy, fair trade, energy transition, agriculture, climate change and other topics. These topics are then always connected **with practical knowledge for journalists, such as storytelling, constructive journalism or research**.

“Netzwerk Weitblick“ just completed a pilot project with 12 training units that covered several SDGs. These training units were tested at universities and journalism schools. Through questionnaires, they evaluated if they could raise interests for sustainability related topics, if the journalists received a deeper understanding of the SDGs, and if they would later apply their new knowledge at work, report more about SDGs or share it with colleagues.

## Project17: Communicating the SDGs in the Media

Projekt17 was founded as a **communication unit to contribute to bringing the 17 SDGs into the public sphere**. Both founders have been working in the field of communication for many years, with a focus on organisations and foundations.

Realizing that the media (still) has not discovered the SDGs, Project17 took them and made it the core of their business. By doing so, the project put the engagement and the work of entities and people into a global context.

The magazine “Seventeen Goals” is the first step of a communication platform. With its fresh, positive and motivating stories, it brings the SDGs to the public and targets everyone and every age.

Project17 raises awareness by cooperating with ZEIT Publishing House with its many different media products for readers of all ages.

Projekt17, with “Seventeen Goals” brings messages and stories to the public and makes the SDGs understandable and relevant for the people. Calls to action in the magazine help to understand and see that every individual can do something.

“Seventeen Goals”, as a magazine supplement, is the first step in Project17’s communication strategy. The next steps to be taken are: interaction and dialogue with a digital magazine, social media presence and events, which are all in process of development.

Project17 measures success by the reactions of their audience and the positive feedback from many different stakeholders, such as German Ministries, Ministry of Education (Kulturministerium), schools, universities, WHO, NGOs, TV/radio stations, companies, book publishers, social initiatives, and readers.

Other ways to measure success are through two websites with a digital reading version of the magazine and presentation of the concept, which received 5,085 hits as of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Regarding the future of Project17, with implementing a digital magazine, instruments for measuring the impact need to be installed, such as by creating calls to action that can be tracked.

## Chapter 6: Future Needs for Improving the Communication of the SDGs

All Workshop speakers who provided feedback to the questionnaire for this Discussion Paper were asked a final question regarding what they believed to be **the future needs for improving the communication of the SDGs**. Their answers can be found below and should seek to ready participants for the last interactive session of the Workshop, which will have participants discussing this very topic.

Future Needs for Improving the Communication of the SDGs
Future needs are many and varied. However, two areas can be identified: improving public knowledge and participation, as well as moving from awareness raising to direct calls to action/activation in overall SDG communications. Also relevant for the future of communicating the SDGs is to strengthen the collaboration among different SDG Communicators/actors to align and simplify the messages.
More money, more time, more people.
Deepen the knowledge of the SDGs. It is not enough that people have heard of them, they need to know them, so they can actively change their habits to help in their achievement.
Improvement of education for global issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More training of local government officials (legal training, media training, methodological approaches to localize the SDGs)</li> <li>• Promoting the SDGs among city associations</li> <li>• More exchange between municipalities in the global north and south</li> <li>• Integrating the local level in the national VNR process and strategic processes of the regional (subnational) level</li> <li>• Collect more practical examples that display the already existing engagement of the municipal level</li> </ul>
It is not the SDGs per se that need to be communicated, but their relevance to specific needs and challenges of the various stakeholders need to be addressed. It is also not just about the SDGs, but about the principles underlying the 2030 Agenda, such as a transformative approach, whole of governance, and inclusiveness.
We need better and constructive storytelling, which reaches and convinces people; we need a good narrative.
More media presence through all kinds of media; film as a stronger player; more surprising stories and more iconic content to help raise awareness is needed.
People must understand how much the SDGs are related to their lives. So far, most of them understand the SDGs as a nice UN-thing that is not really relevant for them.
SDGs should be correlated to relevant human rights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countries like China try to replace human rights with SDGs</li> <li>• For people it is more concrete to see that they also have rights and the state has to deliver on those rights. (However, the relevance of human rights also has to be shown)</li> </ul>
The endorsement by major medias or newspapers is still a challenge that needs to be overcome when it comes to the mainstreaming of the SDGs.

As can be seen from the input of the Workshop speakers, the future needs regarding the communication of the SDGs are many and varied. If one common thread can be identified in the feedback points, it is that there is a **very real need to quickly move away from awareness raising to encouraging people, stakeholders, and all societal actors to become actively involved in the achievement of the SDGs**.

Perhaps through finding **better narratives**, or framing the SDG narrative, in a **simpler, more tangible way** that **cater towards the different needs that society, societal actors, and stakeholders have**, will allow these actors to more profoundly connect with the SDGs, so that they feel their actions make a difference.

