

11. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: How the Dominican Republic Addresses Monitoring and Evaluation Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to great achievements in the fight against poverty and its various manifestations, including lifting over 1 billion people out of extreme poverty,⁴⁷ reaching the global target of halving the proportion of people living in these conditions, facilitating access to improved drinking water sources for 2.6 billion people and improving access to schooling for a greater number of girls. These and other achievements show that the setting of global targets and the mobilization of global leaders can drive major changes towards saving and improving people's lives.

In light of the remaining challenges and based on the will of countries to continue mobilizing efforts drawn from the lessons learned from the MDGs, the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development driven by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to end poverty and guarantee that societies become more egalitarian and resilient to the effects of climate change via systemic, comprehensive solutions to ensure that no one is left behind.

For the Dominican Republic, the 2030 Agenda will facilitate the addressing of deficiencies and inequalities that weigh on its population by means of systemic solutions constructed jointly among all the development agents that cooperate in the country. Monitoring of the SDGs, embraced by the Dominican Republic with the highest commitment from all sectors to ensure the identification of solutions and innovative mechanisms for achieving the formulated targets, presents new opportunities for synergy to maximize effectiveness in the elimination of poverty and the reduction of inequalities.

46 Sócrates Barinas and Cesar Iván González also contributed to this paper.

47 United Nations, 'Millennium Development Goals Global Report', New York, 2015.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF 2030 AGENDA RESULTS

The Dominican Republic has made the 2030 Agenda a national priority, integrating the SDGs as a key element of national planning for achieving the country's vision for the future: the National Development Strategy (Estrategia nacional de desarrollo (END)). To this end, the country has taken the following steps forward:⁴⁸

Creation of the High-Level Inter-institutional Sustainable Development Commission and the SDG Indicator Monitoring Commission

A High-Level Inter-Institutional Sustainable Development Commission was established⁴⁹ with the mandate of marking out the pathway towards effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To this effect, entities that exercise stewardship or carry out public policies coordinate the establishment of implementation paths for the 2030 Agenda in line with the END. Additionally, a systematic monitoring mechanism was created: the SDG Indicator Monitoring Board. This contributed to comprehensiveness across different levels of government and sectors and among the different participating agents, including civil society, organized by the category of SDG targets or spheres on which they have input. This instrument, created during the MDG compliance period and validated by the Decree for the Creation of the High-Level Commission (National Commission for Sustainable Development, or Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo Sostenible (CNDS)), shall serve as a platform for promoting the Commission, including courses of action for increasing the pace of execution by institutions, systematizing monitoring and performing diagnostic evaluation of the country's statistical capacity to provide the data required, among other aspects.

Alignment of the National Planning documents with the SDGs

In order to ensure localization of the 2030 Agenda, the degree of alignment between the SDGs and the Dominican Republic's END planning framework was reviewed at both target and indicator levels. This involved mapping out plans and objectives and incorporating decision-making elements required for their implementation, as well as strategies for closing the gaps identified.

To this end, the Dominican Republic's planning framework—consisting of the END and the 2013-2016 Multi-Year Public Sector Plan—was simultaneously compared with the SDGs, producing a clear picture of medium- and long-term priorities. Additionally, the analysis entailed identifying the gaps presented in different sectors (education, health, the environment, water, agriculture, gender focus) in order for strategic plans to comply with national regulatory frameworks. The alignment analysis identified those targets that were fully aligned, in addition to those that were partially aligned or not aligned. It was thus verified

48 Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA), Dominican Republic. Diagnosis requested from the United Nations Development Programme by the Government, August 2016.

49 Created under Presidential Decree No. 23-16 and its renovation by Decree 26-17, February 22, 2016.

that the END and the Multi-Year Public Sector Plan show suitable alignment in relation to all targets or axes of the SDGs and sufficiently contribute to the four strategic spheres at aggregate level:

SPHERES	SDGs GOAL	2030 END STRATEGIC AXIS
People	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2, 3
Planet	6, 12, 13, 14, 15	2, 4
Prosperity	7, 8, 9, 10, 11	2, 3
Peace	16	1

The country's overall alignment percentage in relation to global targets is 72 percent on average, with 74 of 102 targets aligned in relation to the spheres or areas of intervention proposed in the 2030 Agenda.

Analysis of the first 16 SDGs identified alignment of all the specific targets of the END for the following goals: SDG 1. No poverty; SDG 2. Zero hunger; SDG 4. Quality education; SDG 5. Gender Equality; SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation; SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy; and SDG 13. Climate action.

On the other hand, the results indicated that there are gaps in relation to strategic alignment of the national plans with the following SDGs:

SDGs	TOTAL TARGETS CONSIDERED	ALIGNED TARGETS	TARGETS ALIGNED WITH THE INDICATORS	% OF ALIGNMENT
1. No poverty	4	4	3	100%
2. Zero hunger	5	5	2	100%
3. Good health and well-being	9	6	6	67%
4. Quality education	7	7	5	100%
5. Gender equality	5	5	5	100%
6. Clean water and sanitation	6	6	5	100%
7. Affordable and clean energy	3	3	3	100%
8. Decent work and economic growth	9	8	7	89%
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	5	4	3	80%
10. Reduced inequalities	5	4	3	80%
11. Sustainable cities and communities	7	6	4	86%
12. Responsible consumption and production	8	0	0	0%
13. Climate action	3	3	3	100%

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SDGs	TOTAL TARGETS CONSIDERED	ALIGNED TARGETS	TARGETS ALIGNED WITH THE INDICATORS	% OF ALIGNMENT
14. Life below water	7	1	1	14%
15. Life on land	9	4	3	44%
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	9	8	5	89%
Total	30	27	21	72%

These results provide a first overview of compliance with strategic objectives as a way to identify areas of opportunity for reinforcing strategies for implementing new initiatives that will contribute to providing data as well as statistics with the aim of successfully monitoring the evolution of the SDGs, as is the case for SDGs linked to environmental sustainability, where indicators can be only be 40 percent complied with and new statistical operations and increased investment are clearly required for monitoring purposes.

Furthermore, the first revision of the END is due this year. The END will thus be adjusted to the country's new challenges, its presidential targets and, of course, the SDG targets, for the purpose of adapting the 2030 Agenda to the national context.

Inter-institutional coordination

Compliance with the new 2030 Agenda and the need to integrate different sectoral institutions so that no one is left behind represent a challenge for countries. In turn, ensuring the inclusion of specific populations that do not have equal access to rights and opportunities creates challenges for its undertaking, since it involves the coordination of different sectors and strategic agendas and the redistribution of resource priorities. The aim of the CNDS and the Monitoring Commission is to untangle these knots, improving intersectoral coordination, linking actions to avoid duplication of efforts and improve cost efficiency, and facilitating the incorporation of priorities into budgetary frameworks.

Link to statistical capacity

The National Statistics Office can currently measure 30 percent of the 231 SDG indicators. However, 40 percent of indicators will require the creation of new data sources or the complete transformation of existing ones, especially for the area of the environment. For this purpose, the possibility of creating an innovation laboratory for data collection has been proposed, with the aim of seeking out viable solutions, including designing tools conducive to defining methodology and calculating indicators. Likewise, the country is heading towards the compilation of data in a single matrix of national indicators that will be published on an SDG monitoring portal.

CONCLUSIONS

As a starting point, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme the country conducted a rapid integrated assessment that served to develop an initial evaluation

of the country's level of preparedness for monitoring and implementing the SDGs and drawing up a road map, by reviewing national and sectoral development plans in order to determine the degree of alignment of the country's development strategy with the SDG targets and goals.

Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation process for key indicators was launched, so as to gather an overview of the country's contribution to sustainable development, which will be voluntarily presented at the 2018 high-level political forum, as proof of the country's high degree of commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development is the State body which oversees the Sustainable Development and SDG Indicator Monitoring Commissions; its main responsibility lies in establishing a public policy coordination mechanism that promotes links, coherence and consistency with the goals, targets and indicators of the END and the SDGs, together with other ministries and institutions of the Dominican Republic and of the country's civil society.

For the purpose of faithfully complying with the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Commission was created to conduct the target and indicator prioritization exercise, through a mechanism that integrates the existing indicators for monitoring national public policy and conducting an inclusive measurement. To this end, the creation of an innovation laboratory for data collection has been proposed, the purpose of which is to design tools that can define methodologies and calculate indicators.

Likewise, this Commission must seek out awareness-raising mechanisms aimed at local governments and communities, so that civil society organizations, the private sector (small, medium and large enterprises), academia and other community-based organizations that play a significant part in raising awareness among citizens and communities take ownership of the 2030 Agenda and their role in the achievement of SDGs at a local level, so that no one is left behind.