

## 8.6 | Session C6: Evaluating the SDGs

### Moderator

- ◆ Dirk Hoffmann, Evaluator, Deval

### Panellists

- ◆ Bala Yusuf-Yunusa, Senior Technical Advisor, OSSAP-SDGs, Nigeria
- ◆ Carolina Zúñiga Zamora, Evaluation Unit, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy, Costa Rica
- ◆ Ana Rosa Soares, Chief Corporate Evaluations, IEO, UNDP
- ◆ Ada Ocampo, President, IDEAS
- ◆ Eriko Pérez, Technical Secretary of Cabinet, Government of Mexico



Have we failed to evaluate the SDGs and inform change? With seven years until 2030, the SDGs are far behind achievement - has evaluation done enough to draw lessons and inform policy? This session examined approaches and common challenges to evaluating the SDGs and emerging best practices, and how country-led SDG evaluations are informing VNRs.

- ◆ Assessing SDG achievement is dominated by monitoring and progress reporting, as illustrated by VNRs. However, governments can apply the capacity gained in undertaking VNRs to move forward with thematic SDG evaluations. This will require political commitment with matched financial resources, as illustrated by examples from Costa Rica and Nigeria:
  - ◆ In Costa Rica, the national plan is linked to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, a basic condition to move forward with an SDG evaluation. The evaluation on climate change and biodiversity in the context of the 2030 Agenda was innovative for Costa Rica, since it was a complex thematic evaluation. It was the first time that this type of evaluation was led by the country and not by international cooperation.

- ♦ In Nigeria, the SDGs have been embedded into national development plans and sector development plans. In addition to reporting on SDG progress through VNRs, the Government evaluated progress towards two priority SDGs (Health and Education) using the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and adding the 2030 Agenda principles of leave no one behind, human rights and equity. This supported VNRs, learning and accountability of the Government and their commitment to the SDGs.
- ♦ Evaluations are often technically focused and do not address policy issues, and need greater alignment with national plans at a political level.
- ♦ The 2030 Agenda is not only about achieving the SDGs but incorporating its principles within national agendas. Evaluations should also cover that aspect and not only focus on progress towards the goals.
- ♦ Multi-stakeholder engagement in the evaluation of the SDGs is not only necessary, but politically and ethically required. Furthermore, engagement of the non-state stakeholders is key to reflect their perspective, setting a baseline, and building on the collective experience.
- ♦ Discourse on evaluating the SDGs is also important at the local level, linking national and global discourse on achievement of the SDGs with local realities. Despite the challenges, a lack of clear narratives for local decision-making and limited local capacity, engagement on the subnational level can transform SDGs into a multidimensional, multifactorial and multiscale evaluation.
- ♦ Considering the different levels of capacity, subnational level requires further capacity-strengthening. Multilateral organizations and developed countries should provide financial support to developing countries to build capacity.
- ♦ The syntheses of evaluative evidence of SDG achievements across the five pillars (5P syntheses) evaluation will capture the depth of learning and outline possible post 2030 Agenda development pathways after 2030. The synthesis will be built on existing data, identifying what worked and what did not, and providing insights and analysis. The first synthesis will be on partnerships, currently resources are being mobilized and partnerships broadened to conduct the synthesis.
- ♦ Developed countries should report on the achievement of SDGs along with developing countries

## Conclusion

The achievement of SDGs since their inception has been dominated by monitoring and reporting on movement. This is yet to translate to evaluation and the capturing of lessons or ensuring accountability of achievement of the SDGs. As we hopefully transition to more evaluations of the SDGs, this needs to take a multi-stakeholder approach, to ensure that all perspectives are included. Evaluation of the SDGs requires political commitment with matched financial support both in the North and the South, and filling the capacity gap at subnational and national levels.

## Quotes



*"For evaluating the SDGs, the need for a robust monitoring, evaluation and reporting system cannot be overemphasized."*

— **Bala Yusuf-Yunusa**, Senior Technical Advisor, OSSAP SDGs, Nigeria

*"We come to the realization that we have a strategic moment ahead of us in terms of learning and thinking what comes after 2030 Agenda."*

— **Ana Rosa Soares**, Chief of Section for Syntheses and Lessons, IEO, UNDP



## Watch the session



**Video recording of the Session C6:**  
[NEC 2022 | Stream C6 - Evaluating the SDGs - YouTube](#)

