



PEOPLE'S SCORECARD

Summary report 2021



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

People's Scorecard

Summary Report 2021

Introduction

The People's Scorecard approach has been developed collaboratively in order to provide a framework for comparative analysis of the engagement mechanisms and progress of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national level based on civil society organisation's (CSOs) own shared assessment. The Scorecard provides a common template to allow comparison and identification of patterns and trends within and between countries from a civil society point of view.

It draws from a steady process of mutual learning since 2016 and is rooted in wide experience of national CSO coalitions, including particular expertise from those in Brazil, Colombia, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, South Africa and many others.

In 2021, for the second year, Action for Sustainable Development worked with a wide range of national partners to set out a comparative report, based on the same process of scoring in each country. This report provides an accessible approach to understanding progress of SDG implementation with a focus on many of the countries delivering a Voluntary National Review (VNR) this year.

In each case, the national coalitions themselves organised extensive dialogues across a wide range of different civil society organisations, community groups and local networks, to gather a broad range of views from those who are active on key thematic areas within the SDGs. In a number of cases, they also produced their own parallel or Spotlight Reports alongside the official Voluntary National Reviews.

1. Summary and methodology

- In 2021, A4SD provided support for national CSO coalitions to conduct independent scorecard-based assessments of progress + spotlight reports in 31 countries (primarily in Africa, Asia, LAC and MENA regions) - and we are also including contributions from 3 European countries.
- The methodology is based on a qualitative assessment of the implementation process for each SDG centred around 10 key areas that together constitute **an inclusive conception of the engagement and implementation process**. The Scorecard thus intends to measure the collective, aggregated perception of the SDG implementation process by national civil society coalitions centred around SDG follow-up, review and advocacy.
- Regarding the process- National civil society coalitions are asked to distribute a Scorecard-based survey widely among their CSO members, grassroot organizations and key constituencies in their country that are known to be involved -to different degrees and in a wide array of areas- on SDG implementation and advocacy.
- The Scorecard survey participants are asked to provide a score from 1 to 5 for each of the Goal's key areas, as well as to answer a series of open questions addressing a broad overview of the SDG implementation process in their respective countries, as well as of the nature and extent of citizen participation within the process.
- The sequence for the scorecard-based assessment thus includes:
 - A. A survey distributed to a wide range of CSOs and community groups based on the Scorecard template;
 - B. Data processing and development of a draft aggregated scorecard;
 - C. A virtual and/or in-person workshop for validation of results.
- The scorecards either provide a structure to; or are complemented by; Spotlight Reports.
- Every coalition acts independently and engages in its own advocacy activities but they agree to adopt a similar methodology based on previous experience and shared learning.

Geographical coverage and Scope of the Report

A4SD partnered in 2021 with national coalitions of CSOs in 31 countries, spanning five regions (Africa, Latin-America and the Caribbean, Middle East and Near Asia, Asia and Europe) and a wide array of national contexts: political regimes, political cultures, civic spaces, socio-economic and environmental challenges, institutional and fiscal capacities - all of which amounts to different baselines and systemic conditions for each country. That said, by promoting a standardized sequence for a collective review to take place in, as well as a shared template for



evaluation, the People's Scorecard contributes to build a common ground for an independent assessment on the quality of the implementation process and hence, provides a platform for comparison.

This report focuses on the 17 countries (highlighted in green) that completed the Scorecard-based assessment for HLPF 2021 and are presenting their VNR in this current forum. It aims to provide an overview assessment of the results, based on the aggregated total scores for each country, the aggregated average scores for each country within each SDG, as well as the aggregated averages by key area.

Countries covered in 2021 (VNR countries in green):

Asia:

Afghanistan: Hagar International

Bhutan: Centre for Research on Bhutanese Society/Tarayana Foundation

Indonesia: International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID)

Lao PDR: Lao CSO Coordination Office (LCCO)

Malaysia: Malaysian CSO SDG Alliance

Thailand: Thailand HLPF Alliance

DPRK: Database Center for North Korean Human Rights (NKDB)

India: Wada Na Todo Abhiyan

Pakistan: Awaz PCDS

Sri Lanka: Center for Environment & Development (CED)

Nepal: NGO Federation of Nepal + SDG National Network

Africa:

Cabo Verde: Plataforma de ONG's (PLATONG)

Chad: House of Africa

Madagascar: Plateforme Nationale des OSC de Madagascar (PFNOSCM)

Sierra Leone: Volunteers Involving Organisations Network (VioNet)

Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe CSO Reference Group on SDGs + National Association of NGOs (NANGO)

Tanzania: Tanzania Sustainable Development Platform

Malawi: Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA)

Kenya: SDG Kenya Forum

Uganda: Uganda NGO Forum

Nigeria: Civil Society Coalition for Sustainable Development

Latin-America and Caribbean:

Bolivia: UNITAS

Colombia: Confederación Colombiana de ONG (CCONG)

Mexico: Espacio de Seguimiento a la Agenda 2030

Paraguay: POJOAJU

Brazil: Agenda 2030 Working Group (GT A2030)

MENA:

Tunisia: Arab NGO Network for Development with local partners

Iraq : Arab NGO Network for Development with local partners
Egypt : Arab NGO Network for Development with local partners

Europe:

Spain: Futuro en Común

Germany: German NGO Forum on Environment And Development

Norway: Norwegian Forum for Development And Environment

2. Key Areas for Evaluation

The Scorecard survey is based on 10 key areas, which together outline the concept of *inclusive implementation* and thus structure the evaluation of the implementation process for each of the 17 SDGs -mainly from a qualitative perspective. These key areas can be organized around three broader areas:

Policy parameters:

These elements seek to gauge the existence and scope of overarching and specific policy tools that provide a normative basis and support to the implementation of each SDG.

- **National Action Plans, Strategies and Budgets** – An analysis of how the SDGs have been integrated into national plans and strategies; as well as how these are linked to the national budgeting process.
- **Legal and Policy framework** – Considers the extent to which the national policy environment (laws and public policies) is conducive to SDG implementation.

Institutional Capacity:

These elements seek to measure the extent of government capacities for SDG implementation, from the perspective of specific institutional arrangements on delivery, support, follow-up and review processes.

- **Institutional Support** – Scope of the institutional arrangements and agencies available for delivery.
- **Implementation at National Level** – Perception of policy implementation efforts at the national level + assessment of progress indicators.
- **Implementation at Local Level** - Perception of policy implementation at the local level + assessment of progress indicators if available.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and reporting** - Availability and openness of institutional frameworks monitoring, evaluation & reporting for SDG implementation.

Inclusive Governance:

Variables related to the concept of inclusive governance, which also act as cross-cutting enabling elements for inclusive implementation in each of the other key areas.

- **Public Awareness and capacity-development** – Considers the existence and opportunity for awareness raising or capacity development among stakeholders
- **Transparency and accountability mechanisms** - Seeks to assess the way in which the principles of transparency and accountability are approached and promoted and within the SDG process.
- **Inclusive Partnerships** – Perceived extent and quality of specific or all-encompassing multi stakeholder partnerships
- **Citizen Participation and Civil Society Engagement** – Extent of formal and informal participation mechanisms across the board

3. Analysis of the Scorecard Results by Goal

Scoring Scale:

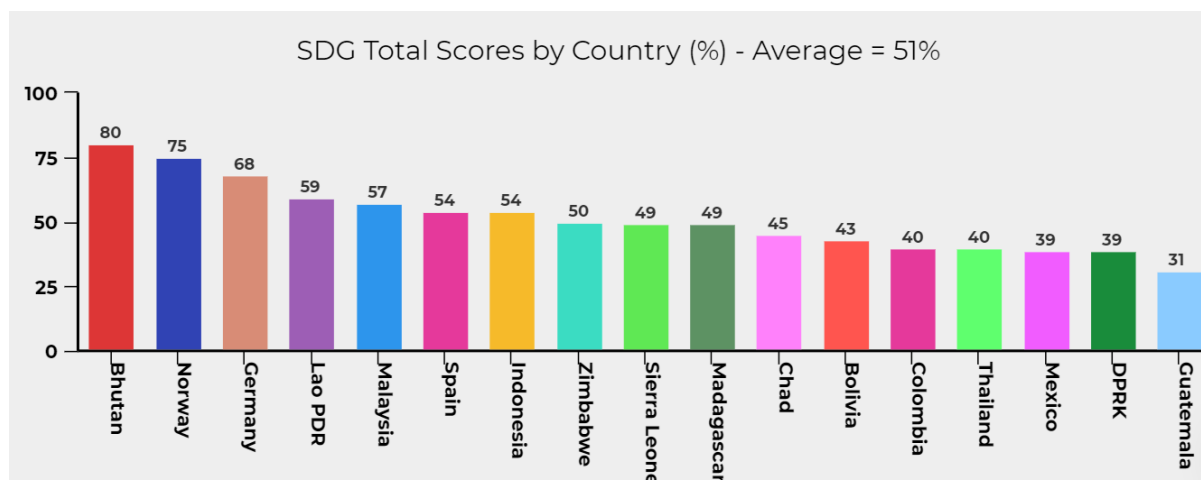
0 to 30% - Very Low (Between 1 and 2 points based in the Scorecard survey's scale)

31% to 50% - Low (Between 2 and 3 points based in the Scorecard survey's scale)

51% to 70% - Medium (Between 3 to 4 points based in the Scorecard survey's scale)

71% to 100% - High (Between 4 to 5 points based in the Scorecard survey's scale)

SDG Totals



Based on the results for the batch of countries presenting their VNRs at this year's HLPF, it is possible to observe that one country rates its national conditions for inclusive implementation of the SDG framework as very low (Guatemala), 9 countries rate it as low (DPRK, Thailand, Chad, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Zimbabwe), 5 countries as medium (Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Spain and Germany), and 2 countries rate their internal conditions for inclusive implementation as high (Bhutan and Norway).

Overall, the key areas most highly rated are Legal Frameworks (63%), Institutional Support (61%) and National Action Plans, Strategies and Budgets (57%), which would point to the fact that a reasonably good number of national plans and policies based on sustainable development principles and aligned with the SDG Goals and Targets are in place -in most countries and to different extents-, and that the general perception is that institutional support is also moderately good. Evidently though, this general perception varies depending on the country and specific SDG - as it will be possible to observe in the disaggregated results per SDG that are detailed below.

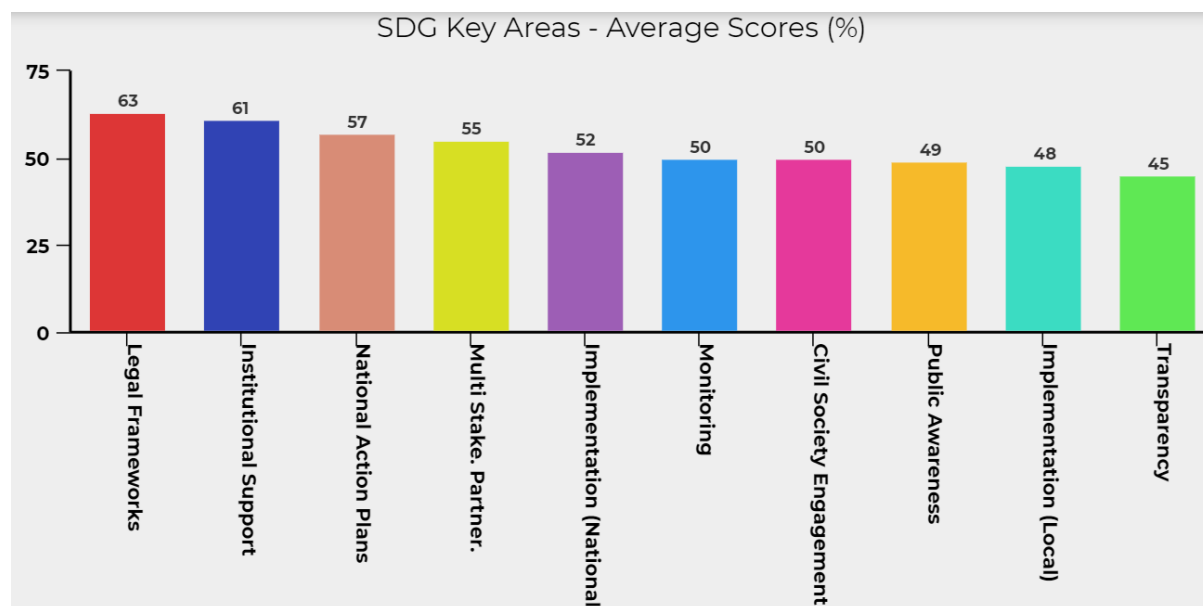
The disaggregated results also show a key global trend, which suggests **a fundamental gap between the existence of frameworks and policies, and their actual implementation** - given that the areas devoted to National-level and Local-level Implementation obtain lower scores, at 52% and 48% respectively. It has to be noted that Local Implementation (48%) is the key area that obtains the second to last position amongst all 10 key areas, which seems to point to a clear lack of development in the realm of SDG localization - a fact that is shared by most countries, although in different degrees.

In the case of Guatemala -as the country with the lowest average score-, policy parameters (national plans, policies), institutional capacity parameters (institutional support, level of implementation at national and local levels, monitoring), and particularly, areas linked to inclusive governance (the extent of Civil Society engagement, multi stakeholder partnerships, transparency and public awareness) all rank in the low or very low level of the scoring scale.

In the case of low ranked countries (DPRK, Thailand, Chad, Mexico, Colombia, Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Zimbabwe), these tend to achieve low or medium scores regarding policy parameters, whereas variables related to institutional capacity and inclusive governance tend to have low to very low scores.

For medium countries (Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Spain and Germany), policy-related parameters tend to obtain high or medium scores, while institutional capacity and inclusive governance variables tend to score in the medium or high range.

Regarding the countries achieving the highest average scores (Bhutan, Norway), they both obtain medium or high scores in a consistent manner across key areas - whether it is on policy parameters, institutional capacity or implementation.



Broad assessment of governance arrangements within the SDG implementation process

As mentioned above, the 10 interrelated key areas that provide a base for the assessment of each SDG, represent different dimensions of the concept of inclusive implementation. Hence, based on the aggregated results, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the quality and scope of the implementation process - with a special emphasis on its level of inclusiveness: the multistakeholder nature of the governance mechanisms structured, inclusivity of historically marginalized communities in policy-making and multi stakeholder partnerships for implementation, the level of symmetry between actors within these, concrete links between SDG governance mechanisms and the policy-making cycle, transparency in public debate processes, etc.

On a global average, the areas that achieve the highest scores are related to the conduciveness of the national policy environment regarding sustainable development (Legal Frameworks at 63%; National Action Plans at 57%), as well as the institutional-capacity related area of Institutional Support (61%), whereas the areas that have the

lowest attainment levels are the inclusive governance-related variables Transparency (45%), Public Awareness (49%) and, as already mentioned, the institutional capacity-related area of Local Implementation (48%).

It has to be noted that the areas of Multistakeholder Partnerships and Civil Society Engagement achieve medium scores, with 55% and 50% respectively. These results could point to the fact that, although Multistakeholder Partnerships are seemingly starting to be recognized as an essential venue for a whole-of- society approach to implementation, given the flexibility and network-type approach that they can promote - the extent of civil society participation within these still seems insufficient. Hence, it could be drawn from these preliminary results that the power asymmetries that are usually present within multi stakeholder partnerships haven't really been addressed or solved in the context of SDG implementation. More broadly, the fact that the intensity and scope of civil society engagement is rated at such a mid-range level six years into the SDG implementation process is not particularly encouraging for the enhancement of participation in sustainable development processes -and, by extension, the possibility for comprehensive SDG implementation, one that would be fully aligned with the principles of leaving no one behind and of promoting a human rights-based approach.

The SDGs can -and should- be considered as a non-binding roadmap resulting from a consensus within the global community, intended to foster sustainable development and bring about transformations to current development models by fostering meaningful dialogue between a broad and diverse set of societal actors in the realm of gap analysis, planning, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and progress assessment. If we consider this definition, then the trends shown by the People Scorecard results seem to set a very different stage regarding the depth and scope of the process up to now.

That said, some interesting inroads have been achieved in a limited set of countries - Spain, Norway, and to some extent, Malaysia, Mexico and Zimbabwe- particularly regarding the VNR process.

In the **case of Spain**, developments regarding institutional arrangements and the integration of the SDGs within planning structures have been significant - although they also constitute a clear example of how promising governance mechanisms can be simultaneously created and limited in their scope. Although there has been a somewhat open process for the formulation of a National Sustainable Development Strategy and civil society views the main structural transformations and policy levers outlined in the document as aligned with their policy asks - the main institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring are overseen by an SDG Secretariat that is subsumed within the Ministry of Social Rights, thus benefiting from weak mandates and resources within the wider governance system.

The main multistakeholder space for policy coordination and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Strategy is the Council for Sustainable Development, which is also under the purview of the SDG secretariat. This has actually put the Sustainable Development strategy in a secondary position in relation to other planning documents - which highlights the fact that both the level of institutional leadership and the place attributed to SDG-specific governance mechanisms within the broader governance system are key in order to provide efficacy and policy relevance to the institutional arrangements put in place for SDG implementation.

The Spanish civil society coalition on sustainable development - *Futuro en Común* – calls for a supra-ministerial mechanism overseeing a truly multi-stakeholder governance system in order to raise the status of the Sustainable Development Strategy within the government structures, work on generating broader consensus around the

Strategy and overcome the fragmentation of public debate. This would include strengthened mandate and budgets, sound methodologies for structured dialogue and a monitoring framework with goals and targets fully in sync with the challenges and policy levers identified in the Strategy, a participatory gap analysis, as well as a consideration of interlinkages and measurement standards for policy coherence.

In the case of **Norway**, where the political system generally reflects a culture of dialogue, consensus-building, and inclusivity in public deliberation processes, a National Forum for Agenda 2030 and a National Action Plan are being built - although the scope and policy relevance and content of the Action Plan and the mandate of the Forum could be somewhat weakened by the fact that the country is currently entering a different political cycle. Regarding the VNR process, more concrete inroads have been made, given that the government adopted a VNR similar to Finland - which incorporates mirror-assessments from government and civil society directly in the main report for each SDG. In this context, civil society's assessments were included without any censorship or editing. However, the VNR process had a short timeframe and didn't feature many feed-back loops between stakeholders and the government during the review - which made it difficult to further strengthen cooperation and policy engagement between actors beyond the progress assessment-centred process of the VNR.

This example partially illustrates two key trends (since advocacy processes are currently ongoing). Firstly, gains in terms of institutional architecture and inclusive governance can be susceptible to changes in political cycles even within notoriously open and democratic countries - which should prompt civil society to remain actively engaged in their advocacy efforts in order to prevent any backsliding in ambition by the government. The other is that concrete inroads into the VNR process have to be translated by the government into broader improvements to policy engagement processes - in order to translate specific procedural gains into more substantial gains in the realms of policy formulation and decision-making.

In **Mexico**, institutional arrangements at the federal and subnational level tend to exclude civil society - which can be identified as a defining feature of the broader political system. In terms of governance mechanisms for the SDGs, at the Federal level, the National Commission for SDG Implementation is now embedded within the Ministry of the Economy - which has weakened its mandate. The nature of this mechanism is described as government-centric, although some thematic working groups were created that include civil society and other actors- albeit with unclear methodologies and mandates.

Even within this context though, Mexican civil society's efforts to include their views into the progress assessment efforts - namely the VNR-drafting process- have been fruitful, given that the government agreed for the civil society coalition *Espacio de Seguimiento* to design and organize a broad consultation, handle the data-processing and contribute the analysis of the results in the official VNR, unedited. That said, it's unclear whether these welcomed inroads into the VNR process will allow broader qualitative improvements to policy engagement processes around the SDGs.

On the same topic of making initial inroads into the VNR process, civil society in **Zimbabwe** has also been able to contribute to the official report with its own collective views on the quality of the implementation process and on the progress made - choosing to use the People Scorecard format in order to collect and aggregate perceptions from CSOs and grassroots communities from different regions of the country and structure its assessment on the process and the progress made up to now.

That said, from a broader perspective, participation in institutional arrangements for SDG implementation is still undermined by information gaps and lack of transparency, lack of accessibility and centralization - which amounts to engagement from civil society being rather informal in nature. This is particularly the case regarding the newly created SDG Secretariat and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework – of which CSOs nevertheless commend the creation.

As in Mexico - and given the broader context for participation, which includes a Constitutional amendment that could further undermine the quality and scope of civic space in the country-, it's unclear whether these inroads into the VNR process will bring about improvements to the quality of engagement within the implementation process.

In the case of **Malaysia**, civil society has also been able to make inroads into the VNR process (having access to the official draft of the VNR and participating in institutional arrangements) and some interesting initiatives for localizing the SDGs in an inclusive manner are reported - but these procedural gains still haven't had concrete outcomes in order to fully broaden inclusivity in monitoring, assessment and policy-making processes - as well as transforming siloed policy-making practices.

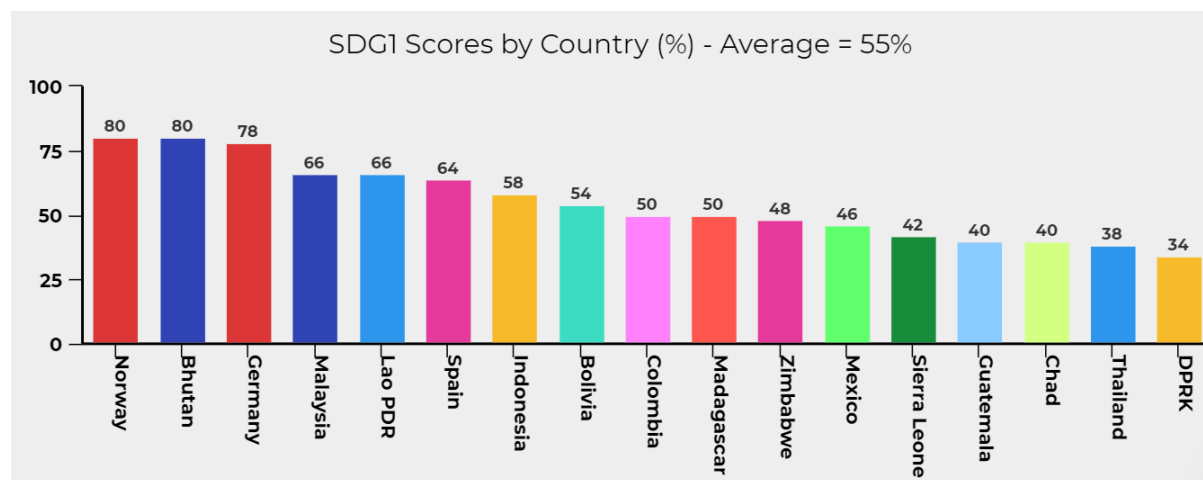
Altogether, the global aggregated perception reflected by the results of the Scorecard process and the insight contained in the spotlight reports is one of piecemeal, fragmented, procedural gains in terms of sectoral policies and partial governance mechanisms – mainly specific to SDG progress-assessment, namely the VNR-, without necessarily implying further gains into broader policy dialogue, nor inroads into policy formulation or decision-making processes. That is why, 6 years in, SDG implementation hasn't really brought about substantial changes in the way governance is organized across countries - and more specifically in democracies in which governance styles are more hierarchical in nature-, in terms of meaningful cross-societal dialogue for policy formulation, inclusion of marginalized communities in policy-making processes, horizontal and inclusive partnerships, policy coherence and integrated policy-making, transparency, etc.

It is therefore safe to say that the SDGs haven't yet started to achieve the core transformations in political cultures - the thinking patterns and practices that have supported entrenched hierarchies and vertical power structures in governance arrangements for hundreds of years. It will take unrelenting commitment and significant doses of political will (at the national, subnational, regional and global levels) in order to put in place the kind of horizontal and inclusive consensus-building spaces needed in order to enable different societal actors to interact in meaningful ways and promote more openness in public deliberation processes when charting sustainable development pathways.



Results by SDG - HLPF 2021 VNR Countries

SDG 1 No Poverty



Regarding the results for SDG 1, it can be noted that low and medium scoring countries tend to have a slightly above-average performance (compared to each of their own total scores), but still have significant room for improvement. The spotlight reports will provide further context and concrete elements regarding the effects of the pandemic and the nature and scope of solutions provided by governments in this realm.

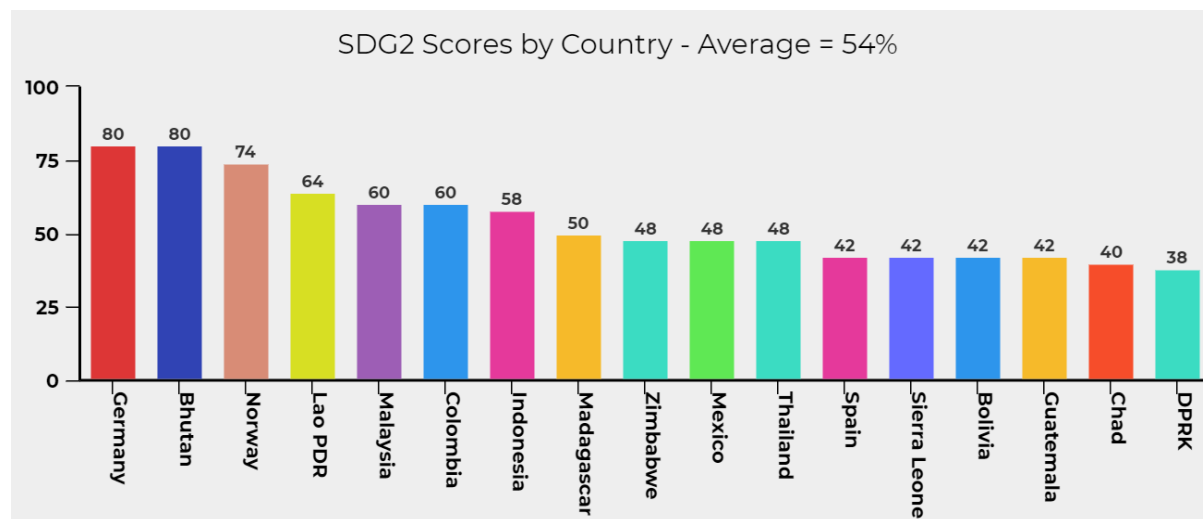
It is also noticeable that 9 out of 17 countries are rated low in this area (50% or lower), including 4 in Africa, 3 in Latin America and 2 in Asia, with DPRK, perceived to be the lowest. In the context of this goal, the lowest scoring areas overall are Civil Society Engagement (46%) and Transparency (41%), while the highest scoring areas are Institutional Support and Legal Frameworks, both with (64%).

In Zimbabwe, Guatemala and Paraguay, productive structures that are highly concentrated and natural resource-dependent imply high levels of informality, affecting incomes and undermining the pillars of social security - namely healthcare and pensions - which is compounded by the low and inefficient public spending in social programs and schemes geared towards economic empowerment.

In Guatemala, civil society also highlights the low levels of public spending for social protection - around 6% on average in 2018-20-, although in this case the policy environment isn't portrayed as particularly conducive to sustainable development.

Even in highest-scoring Norway, the spotlight report notes that poverty levels have increased since the pandemic began.

SDG 2 Zero Hunger



In Goal 2, the key areas of Legal Frameworks (64%), National Action Plans (60%) and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (60%) are the highest scoring categories, while Public Awareness (48%) and Transparency (48%) are the lowest scoring categories.

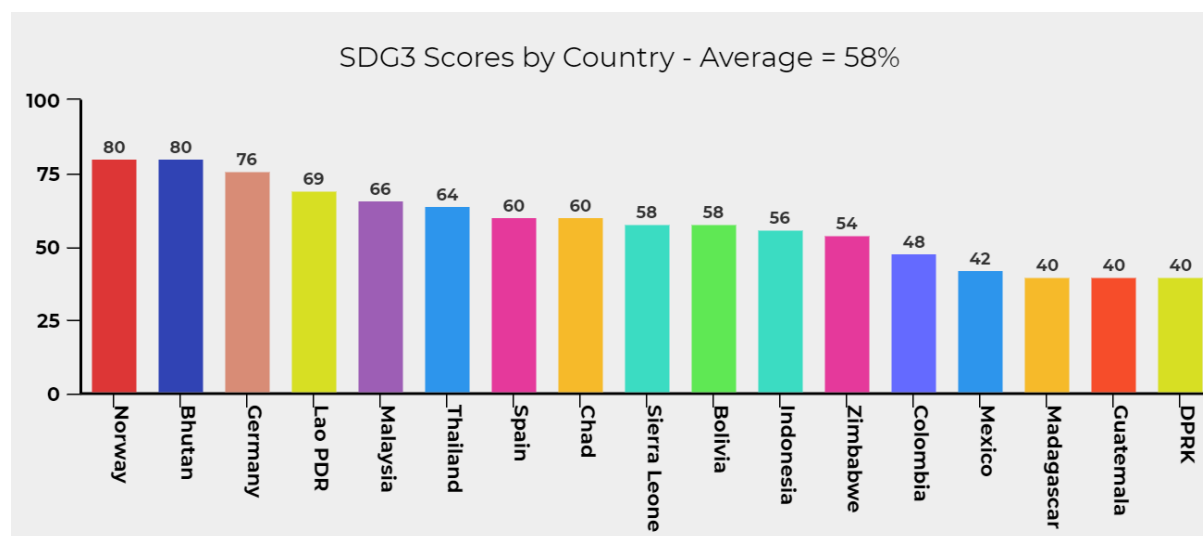
Concentration in land-ownership, land-grabbing and a monoculture-based and export-driven agro-industry are highlighted as clear challenges for equality, sustainability and resilience in food systems - particularly in countries like Guatemala, Paraguay, and Lao PDR.

In Madagascar, although the country's economy is primarily based on agriculture, the still substantial prevalence of malnutrition and undernourishment is explained by the vulnerability of the economy and the agricultural sector - which can be explained by structural inefficiencies and the extent of the effect of climate change.

Three quarters of the Malagasy population, estimated at 25 million, depend directly or indirectly on the agriculture, livestock, fishing and forestry sector. In 2018, according to the African Development Bank, the sector grew by 4.5% and 6.6% in 2017. Despite its high potential and using more than 80% of the population, the sector is unable to meet the needs of a growing population - which implies that imports of food are still important. In this context, a handful of regions in the country are reportedly establishing multisectoral approaches in order to simultaneously tackle sustainability and increased outputs.



SDG 3 Good Health & Well-being



In the context of this goal, Legal Frameworks (66%) and Institutional Support (66%) are the key areas that achieve the highest scores, while Local Implementation (53%) and Civil Society Engagement (52%) are the ones that get the lowest scores on average.

In the case of the lowest scoring countries - civil society in Madagascar reports a degraded healthcare system, with patients sometimes having to finance equipment and supplies themselves. Only a few regions in the country are currently trying to put in place improvements, mainly by increasing qualified staff.

In Paraguay, civil society reports an increasingly expensive and unequal privatized system, moving the country farther away from universal healthcare coverage. In Guatemala, it is reported that 73% of the population doesn't have access to health insurance, while in the DPRK, it is reported that an unequal and inefficient system is in place in the capital and healthcare is very limited in the regions. The prevalence of stunting and malnutrition is high, although the infant mortality rate has improved since 2018.

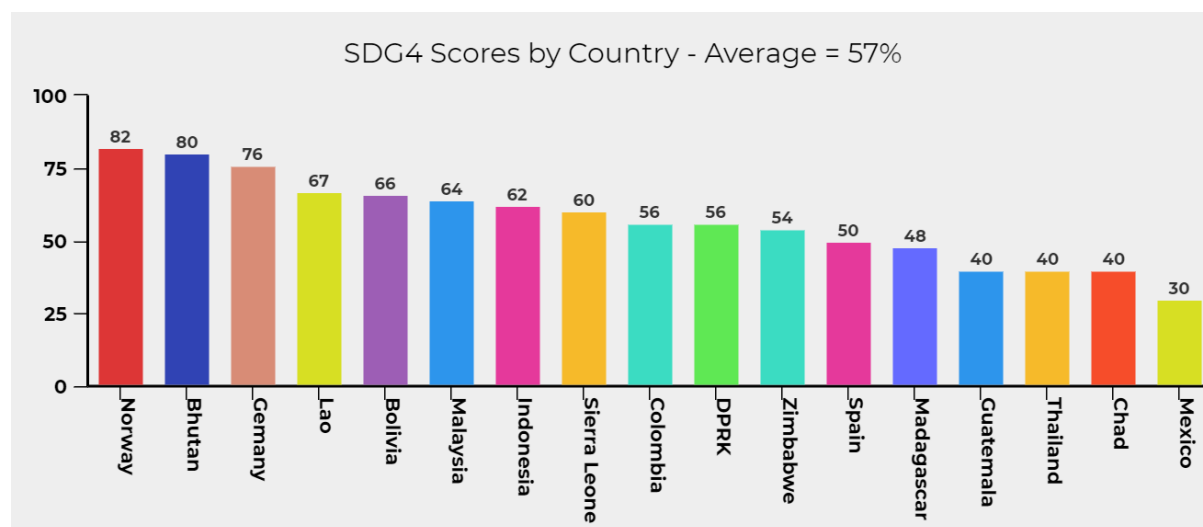
In Chad, civil society commends several policy initiatives to increase financing and management of the healthcare system, enhance accessibility for vulnerable populations and improve maternal health, among others. That said, it also highlights that there are still many challenges to implement these policies .

In Zimbabwe, civil society commends the increase from 7% to 13% of the healthcare provisions in the national budget - although it also notes that 80% of the increased budget has been financed through grants from development partners, and that the pandemic has precluded a proper rollout of certain programs. Also, civil society demands increased multi stakeholder consultations and partnerships in order to implement the current healthcare strategy.

In Norway, civil society demands more access for migrants to the healthcare system. In Spain, civil society points out inefficiencies of the healthcare system regarding care for seniors and dependant persons.



SDG 4 Quality Education



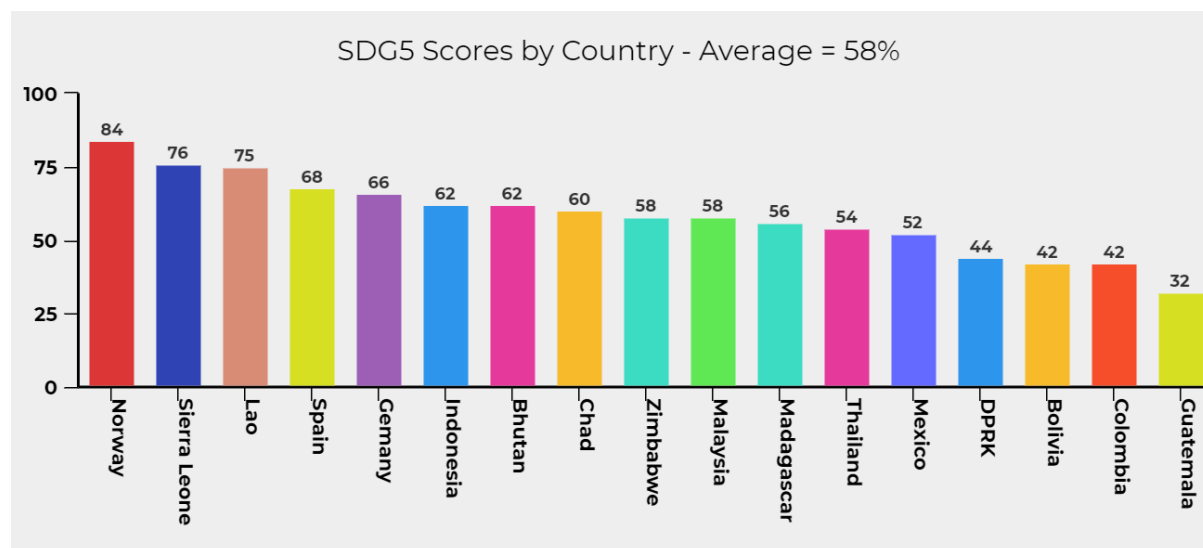
For Goal 4, the highest scoring categories are Legal Frameworks (70%) and Institutional Support (68%), whereas the areas of Transparency (50%), Monitoring (52%), National Implementation (53%) and Civil Society Engagement (53%) are the lowest scoring ones. In this Goal, Mexico is perceived to be further behind, although this may also be due to the fact that it starts from a higher original baseline than some other countries.

In Chad, there is a reform of the education sector underway - along with a set of policies aiming at improving the quality of basic education, as well as nutrition and access for girls. That said, universal primary education remains a challenge, along with quality at all levels - with low levels of alphabetisation- and the link between schools and professional apprenticeship.

In Guatemala, it seems that there is a challenging trend downwards regarding access to education. School enrollment went from 60,3% in 2013 to 56% in 2016, at all levels and it is estimated that 1.500.000 children still remain outside of the education system.



SDG 5 Gender Equality



In the context of this goal, the key areas of Legal Frameworks (70%) and Institutional Support are the ones that get the highest scores, while Transparency (50%) and Local Implementation (55%) are the ones with the lowest scores. For this Goal, it is particularly noticeable that 3 countries in Latin America have the lowest scores, including Guatemala, Colombia and Bolivia, perhaps highlighting a worrying trend for women's rights in the Latin American context. Meanwhile at the top end, Norway scores higher than the usual average on this Goal, perhaps showing that this is an area of strength.

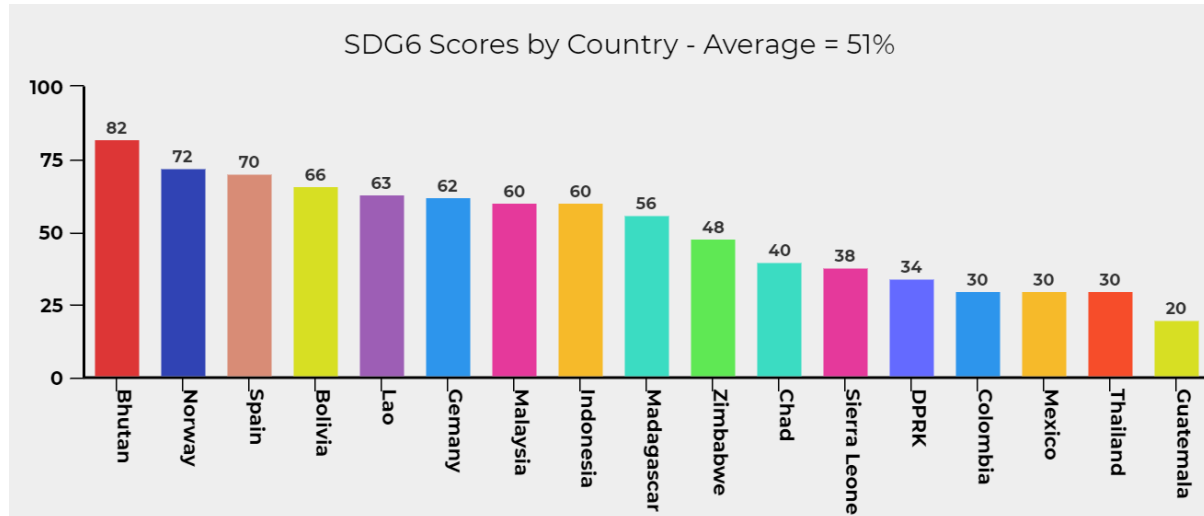
In Guatemala, even though there seems to be a sound policy environment for gender equality, with plans and strategies for the advancement of women, curbing gender-based violence and gender-proofing allocations within the national budget - the gap with actual implementation and improvement on the ground are gigantic. Women representation in Parliament is very low - 13%, of which 0.7% are indigenous women; gender pay gap stands at 25%; prevalence of gender-based violence is still very high; only 18% of women have been able to access land ownership, with men standing at 81%. In Mexico, civil society points out that the gender perspective hasn't been mainstreamed into public policies, and the current president hasn't even recognized the existence of gender inequalities. It has to be pointed out that in Mexico, an average of 10 women are assassinated daily.

In Zimbabwe, even though the constitution establishes gender equality as a guiding principle, women continue to be underrepresented across all sectors - especially in social protection schemes and economic empowerment programs, which should be particularly geared towards women.

In Spain, there are still gaps in women's labour participation and equal pay, whilst in Norway, challenges remain regarding systematic inequalities between men and women in economy, politics and business - specially for minority women and women in rural settings.



SDG 6 Clean Water & Sanitation



On Goal 6, the key areas with the highest scores are Legal Frameworks (63%) and Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (58%), whereas Transparency (41%) and Local Implementation (45%) are the lowest scoring categories.

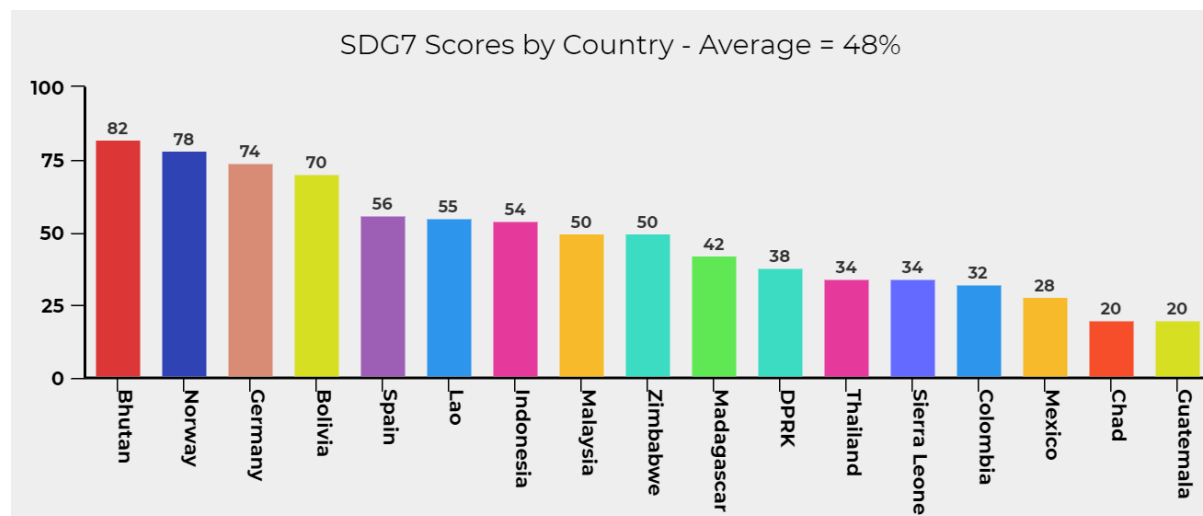
In Madagascar, 47% of the population doesn't have access to potable water sources - a percentage that is even higher in the southern region. There are a number of multistakeholder partnerships put in place in order to tackle this issue (government, development partners, private sector and civil society) - but some initiatives have been more successful than others.

In Zimbabwe, despite sound policy frameworks geared towards the realization of the right to water for all, civil society reports that budget allocations targeted for water related projects rarely cascade to the intended development projects on account of lack of financing and corruption within government agencies - which calls for the establishment of an independent sector regulator and a revamping of decision-making structures.

In Norway, civil society notes as a positive development the recent prohibition of agricultural development in mires and boglands, although it also asserts that the implementation of integrated water management system has been very slow - especially regarding the restoration of ecosystems.



SDG 7 Clean Energy



In this goal, Institutional Support (60%) and Legal Frameworks (58%) are the highest scoring key areas, whereas Civil Society Engagement (42%) and Transparency (39%) are the lowest scoring categories. Once again on this Goal, Guatemala received a very low score, alongside Chad. At the same time many of the average scores were lower than for other Goals, suggesting that there is still a long way to go to ensure clean energy around the world.

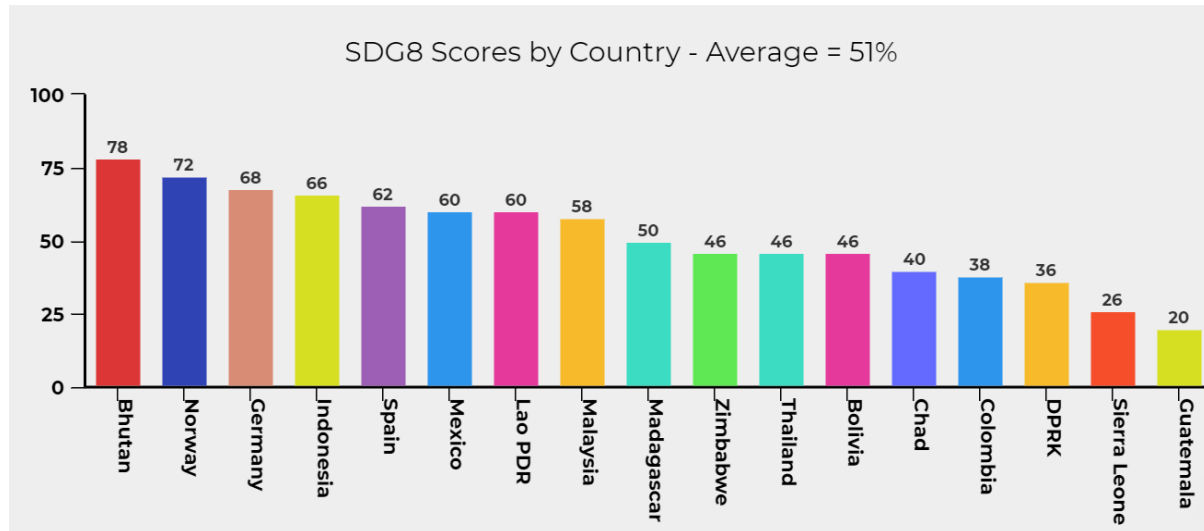
In the case of Madagascar, the percentage of access to electricity is one of the lowest in the world - 15%. Many initiatives from public and private actors are currently underway in order to improve coverage and accessibility. In the meantime though, burning charcoal will keep being a key energy source for the population, especially in rural settings.

In Zimbabwe, a national policy on renewable energy, in line with the Nationally Determined Contribution is in its beginning stages of implementation. In this context, civil society calls for ramped up public investments and incentives for the private sector in order to expand the solar-generation sector, as well as increased regulation of private actors.

In Lao PDR, increasing electricity generation through the construction a 100 additional hydropower plants -and dams- throughout the Mekong river is the main strategy from the government in order to reach energy security and exports, ignoring the ecological (deforestation and flooding of large territories) and human (forced relocations) effects of such large-scale projects. On the issue of energy security, the Alliance for Democracy in Laos asserts that these projects are financed by foreign entities, and a large portion of the energy produced is exported, increasing energy prices in the country. They suggest reinvesting the benefits from energy exports in the development of a sustainable energy mix and grid in Laos.



SDG 8 Decent Work & Economic Growth



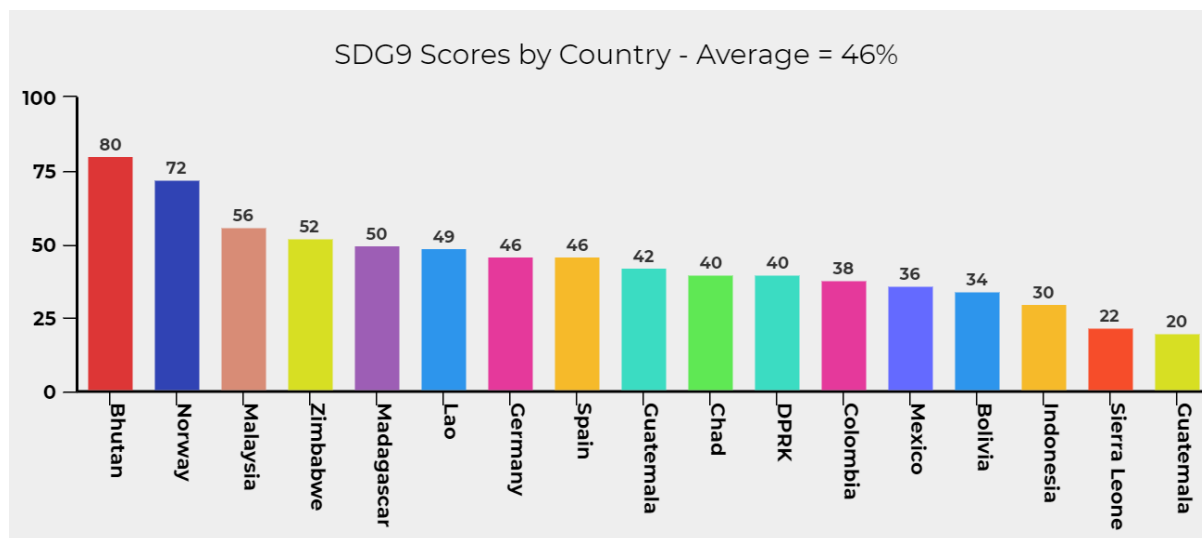
The highest scoring areas for this goal are Legal Frameworks and Institutional Support (64% for both), whereas the lowest scoring areas are Local Implementation (49%), Monitoring (48%) and Public Awareness (50%). Many countries have been hit by the recent economic slowdown and it will be important to see how this impacts on decent work and opportunities for livelihoods going forward.

In the case of Paraguay, the natural-resource intensive export-driven development model (mainly grains and meat) often obscures the full impact on the environment and the economic dimension often remains detached from its social and environmental implications. The main characteristics that have been noted include the fact that this kind of agriculture generates few jobs (70% of the workforce evolves in the informal sector), its fiscal contributions aren't significant, as well as the fact that it leaves a trace of environmental degradation - deforestation, soil pollution etc.

In Guatemala, the mismatch between formal job-creation and the influx of young workers is significant – which keeps feeding the informal sector. Civil society also points out- regarding the sustainability of the country's economic model that remittances flows are a substantial part of the economy - amounting to 11 billion USD in 2020, equivalent to 70% of the foreign reserves generated by exports.



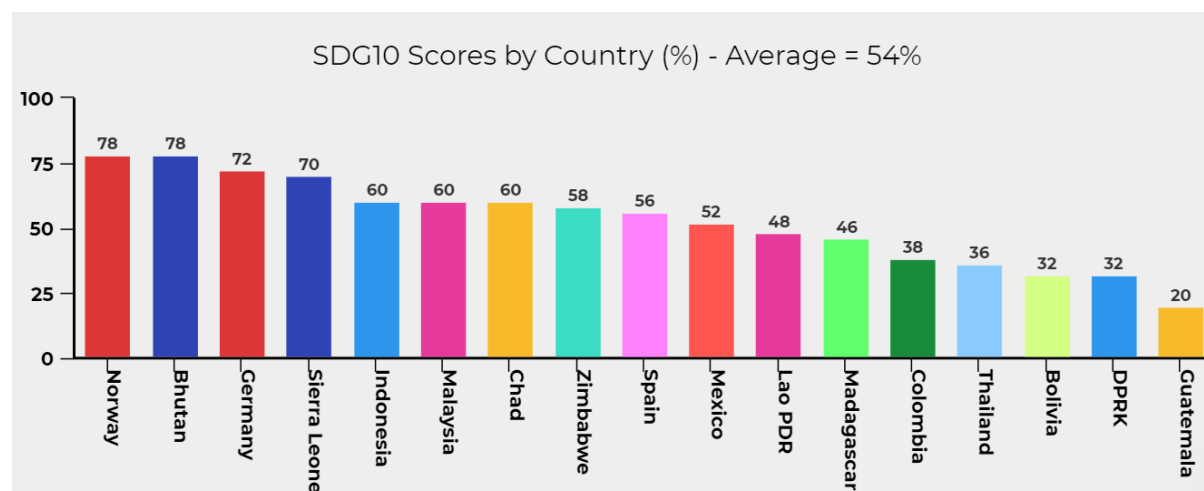
SDG 9 Infrastructure & Industrialisation



The highest scoring areas for this goal are Legal Frameworks (53%), National Action Plans (53%) and Institutional Support (52%), whereas the lowest scoring areas are Public Awareness (41%), Transparency (40%) and Civil Society Engagement with (40%).

Key issues that were raised in several countries include: the need for improved digital infrastructure, particularly in rural areas; access to support for small scale initiatives, cooperatives and social enterprises; as well as the impact of heavy industrialisation on the environment in terms of continued concerns around pollution from extractive industries and fossil fuels.

SDG 10 Reducing Inequality



On Goal 10, the highest scoring areas for this goal are Institutional Support (59%) and Legal Frameworks (57%), whereas the lowest scoring areas are Transparency (47%) and Civil Society Engagement (49%). The averages here are similar to Goal 1, 7 countries scored 50% or less, 3 in Latin America, 3 in Asia and 1 in Africa. In comparison to Goal 1, it is noticeable that only Madagascar remained in the low score from Africa, which suggests that there is a perception from the CSO coalitions that some progress was being made to reduce inequality in other African countries such as Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.

In Paraguay, inequality is high (Gini of 0,437), but rates are compounded based on ethnic background and geographical location - with indigenous populations and specific regions experiencing even higher rates.

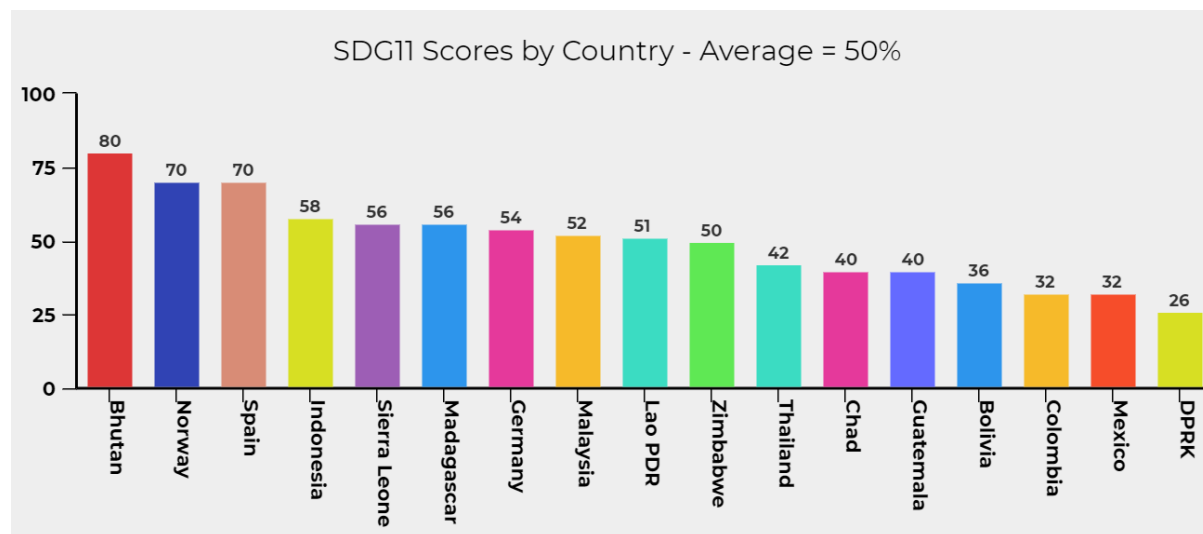
In the case of Zimbabwe, its medium scores can be explained by the success experienced regarding gender equality - but socio-economic inequalities as a whole remain high and seemingly expanding - with the Gini coefficient going from 0,447 in 2017 to 0,504 in 2019. Civil society hence calls for increasing social protection spending and better targeting of social schemes.

In Spain, civil society approves that the fact that one of the policy levers of the new Sustainable Strategy is geared towards wealth redistribution, but it also recommends also using the De Palma ratio (which seeks to measure wealth concentration by calculating the relation between the wealth of the higher 10% and the bottom 40% of population) in order to have a better grasp of inequality in all its dimensions and establish it as the benchmark for progress assessment.

In Mexico, civil society calls for more progressivity in tax systems - with special regimes for big fortunes and financial transactions, whilst Guatemala has the highest Gini coefficient in Latin-America (0,53), with the richest decile of the population possessing 42% of the country's yearly wealth, as opposed to 1,2% possessed by the first decile. This is maintained and compounded by a very regressive and inefficient tax system - in which VTA proceedings are the main source of fiscal revenue for the State.



SDG 11 Safe & Resilient Cities



The highest scoring areas for this goal are Legal Frameworks (55%) and Institutional Support (54%), in addition to Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships and Civil Society Engagement (54%), whereas the lowest scoring areas are National Implementation (43%) and Local Implementation (42%).

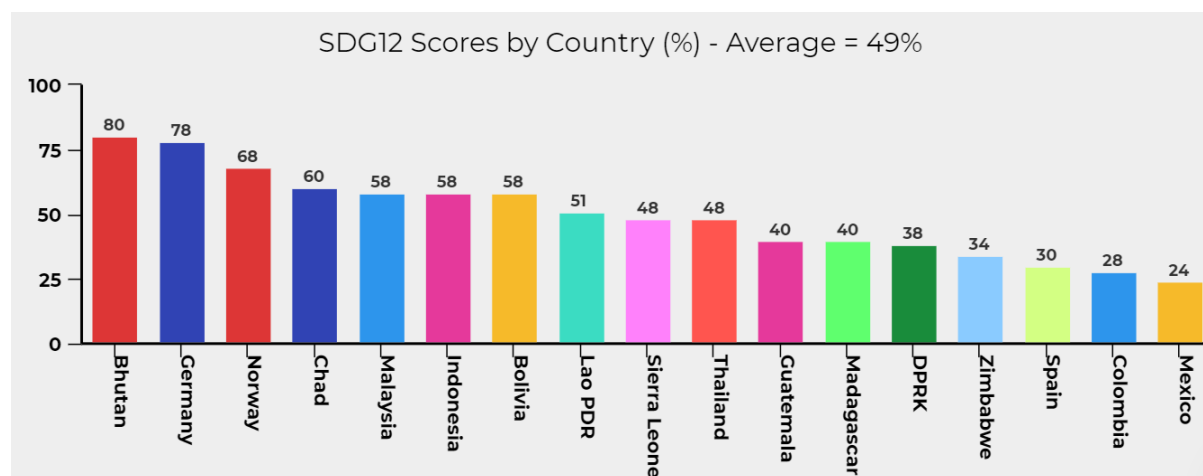
In Indonesia, improvements in the realm of sustainable transportation are mainly limited to the capital, Jakarta - although these are significant, having won the Global Sustainable Transport Award.

In Lao PDR, planning hasn't been able to follow and manage urban population growth patterns, the population living in cities is expected to grow to a third of the total population of the country in the next few years.

In Mexico, civil society commends the formulation of more inclusive social housing policies, which are embedded in social policy frameworks - instead of economic considerations - and have benefited from a multi sectoral approach in their formulation.



SDG 12 Sustainable Consumption & Production



For Goal 12, the highest scoring area is Legal Frameworks (61%), while the lowest scoring areas are Transparency (43%), Monitoring (43%) and Local Implementation (43%). This is an area where Germany scored more highly than average, suggesting that this is an area where Germany has good examples to share.

In the realm of sustainable production and consumption, in Zimbabwe, civil society asserts that a framework is in place - both from a policy and institutional point of view. However, a lack of resources hinders its implementation. Also, there is a lack of transparency regarding monitoring data, which limits informed participation of citizens in the public debate.

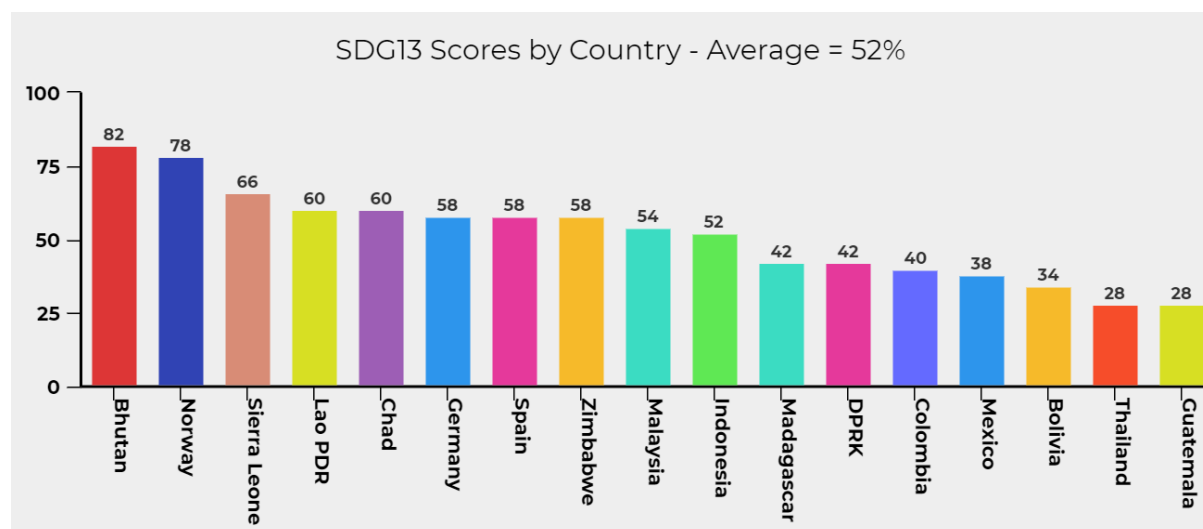
In Spain, the civil society coalition recommends that public procurement policies and practices should be amended in order to increase the amount of SMEs and independent workers participating in public markets, as well as increasing the adoption of open public procurement calls to include social and environmental criteria. Civil society also calls for the establishment of multi stakeholder observatories of public procurement in each city with more than 50.000 inhabitants, as well as the regions and national government agencies.

In the DPRK, the unscientific timber extraction has led to soil nutrient depletion, which is linked to less arable land and lower agricultural outputs, which in turn has led to major post-harvest inefficiencies.

In Norway, civil society calls for a concrete and holistic plan for transitioning from a linear to a circular economy.



SDG 13 Tackle Climate Change



On Goal 13, the highest scoring category is Legal Frameworks (68%), whereas the lowest scoring area is Local Implementation (41%).

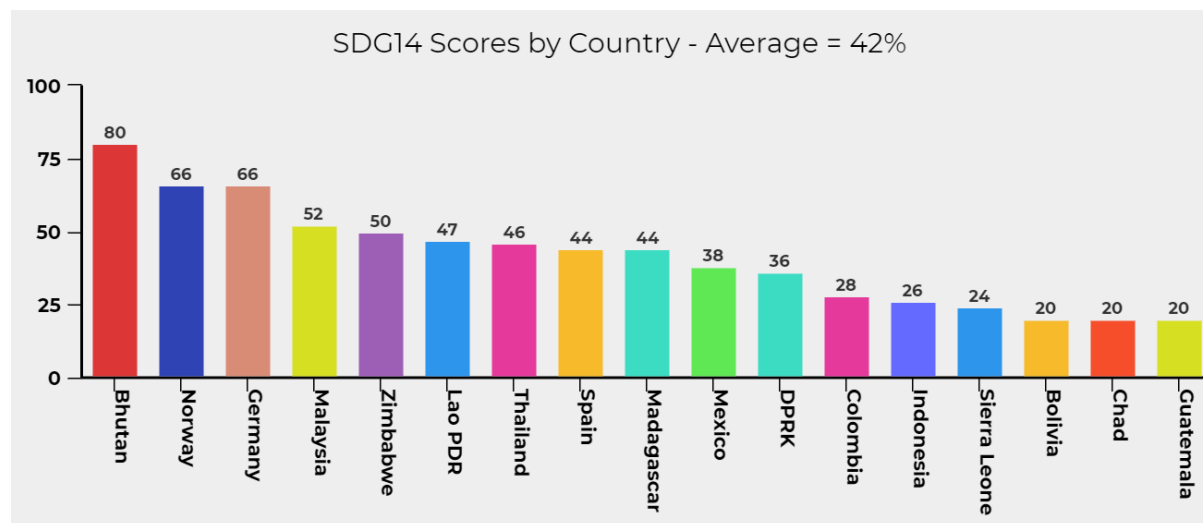
It is interesting to note that Chad scores higher than average on this goal, perhaps due to additional steps taken to reduce climate change impacts and identify some innovative steps. In this country, climate-change is one of the biggest issues for sustainable development, with land and biodiversity degradation, as well as widespread desertification in the foreground. Civil society notes however that there is a legal and policy framework in place, which includes a national policy and strategy - and would explain the higher score-. However, there is no overarching institutional agency in charge of coordinating implementation and monitoring impact. Also, more international support is needed for adaptation.

In Paraguay, the long-awaited National Environmental Plan is still being formulated - as well as its associated mitigation and adaptation programs. It is recommended that these policy frameworks should be completed as soon as possible - especially the adaptation plan, given the extreme vulnerability of the country to the effects of climate change (most vulnerable country in South America according to the Climate Change Vulnerability Index).

In Indonesia, despite a comprehensive policy framework for the different dimensions of climate change - National Adaptation Plan, Long-Term Strategy on Low Carbon Development, Medium-Term Development Plan (which has been 'greened'), National Energy Policy with a target on Renewables (23% of the energy mix by 2025)-, civil society asserts that results haven't been consistent so far. The government still extends permits for fossil fuel extraction and there has been no significant effort in order to reduce emissions. There is also a need for increased adaptation education and support for the citizenry.

In Bhutan, the impacts of climate change and its changing weather patterns on the activities of farmers are increasing - for livestock raising, crop productivity, etc, although behavioral changes are slow. Policy-wise, the government is currently formulating a national plan for adaptation, and it has put in place a incentive schemes for electric vehicle adoption - which includes a higher taxes for fossil fuel vehicles, and tax credits for electric vehicles.

SDG 14 Life Under Water

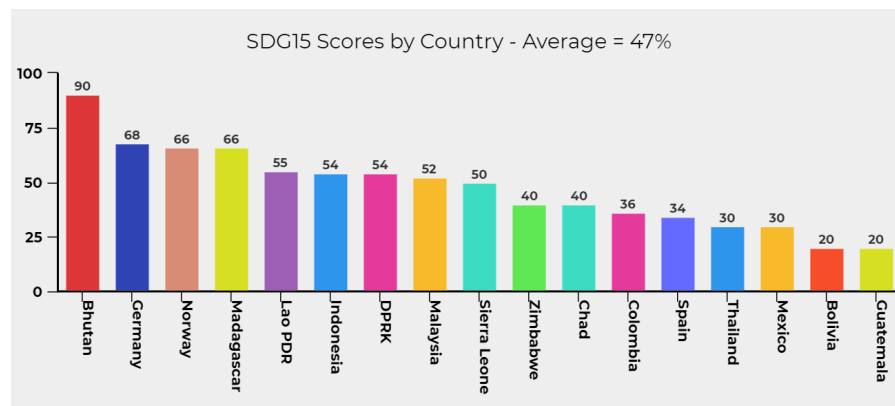


The highest scoring category for this goal is again Legal Frameworks (52%), whereas the lowest scoring area is Transparency (35%). It is particularly noticeable that 6 countries all score very low for this area, including 3 in Latin America, 2 in Africa and 1 in Asia. When taken together with Goal 6, this suggests that water pollution is a major cause for concern in a number of countries.

In Madagascar, partnerships between civil society, grassroots communities - especially of fishermen- and development partners have been somewhat effective in promoting sustainable management of marine resources. In this context, civil society calls for building on these partnerships with development partners in order to put in place environmental protection units at the local and subnational levels.

In Lao PDR, the Alliance for Democracy asserts that the main issue regarding the sustainable management of bodies of water is the Mekong River Delta- which plays an important role in the economy of Laos, covering nearly 90% of the country's area and is a major source for supporting food security and water availability. That said, its capacity is largely hindered by competing economic, ecological, and political interests - mainly related to the massive development of hydropower plants and gold mining. Civil society groups are calling for a moratorium on the construction of hydropower plants until the impacts on nature are further determined, and promoting the construction of treatment plants for polluted waters that currently make it into the river.

SDG 15 Life on Land



The highest scoring category for this goal is Legal Frameworks (61%), whereas the lowest scoring category are Transparency (41%) and Local Implementation (41%). The overall average in this area remains low, but slightly higher than life in the water.

In Zimbabwe, civil society reports that, although the policy framework for environmental protection and restoration is rich, its implementation is eroded by the corruption brought by the economic potential of extractive activities and real estate developments. Wetlands are thus being sold as residential stands in urban areas, granting mining licenses to Chinese companies in protected areas, like the Hwange and Gonarezhou national parks. Enhancing environmental protection would hence entail the creation of a properly independent and ethically sound conservation agency.

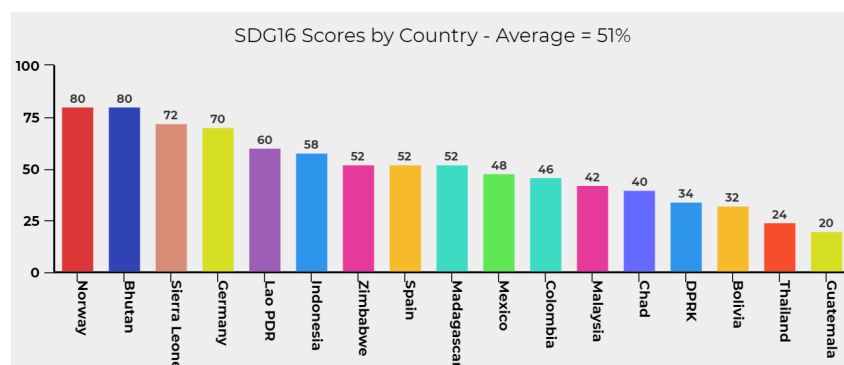
In Lao PDR, as reported by the Alliance for Democracy in Laos, the rate of deforestation since the 1970's has been staggering. In 1975 over 70% of the country was still covered with rainforest, whereas in 2019 it was only around 38%. The main drivers of deforestation are illegal logging and the construction of massive dams for hydropower plants. The Alliance thus calls for enforcement of the already existing laws that would preclude this kind of wide-ranging deforestation - which would also entail ramping up the fight against corruption.

On the economic interests vs. environmental stewardship debate, Norwegian civil society asserts that Norway's development model has prioritized resource exploitation ahead of biodiversity and ecosystems. The civil society report further notes that none of the Aichi Biodiversity targets - which constitute the base for most of the SDG 15 targets have been met by the country.

It is particularly noticeable that Bhutan scores very highly in this area. The Constitution of The Kingdom of Bhutan provisions that at least 60% of forest coverage has to be maintained as part of its total land area - an objective that has been far exceeded, given that forest coverage currently stands at more than 70%. In this context, Bhutanese civil society also points to the fact that there are various laws that seek to regulate businesses based on the exploitation of forest resources. Also contributing to forest conservation is the Bhutan for Life project, launched in 2017, which is dedicated to permanently protect Bhutan's network of protected areas, which constitutes 51% of the country. In the realm of public awareness, June 2nd is observed as Social Forestry Day, on this date, every citizen is invited to plant trees across the country.



SDG 16 Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions



The highest scoring category for this goal is Legal Frameworks (64%), whereas the lowest scoring area is Transparency (43%) and Local Implementation (45%). In this key area, both Guatemala and Thailand scored very low, while most countries scored low or medium, and only 4 countries received a high score: Norway, Germany, Bhutan and Sierra Leone. All countries are starting from very different baselines, so the specific conditions of each country will be understood in more detail in the Spotlight reports.

In Madagascar, on the subject of security and justice, civil society asserts that although there have been significant efforts regarding building a governance set up for fighting corruption both in police forces and within the justice system- which include a central anti-corruption bureau and decentralized anti-corruption agencies- , these institutions are still very much viewed as corrupt. That said, the general sentiment about anti-corruption efforts by the government has improved.

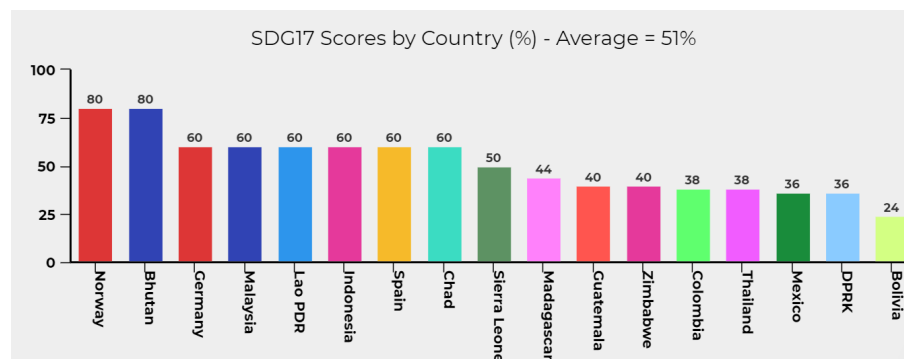
In Zimbabwe, efforts towards both national reconciliation -National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC)- and bridging political divides - Political Actors Dialogue (POLAD)- are valuable, although their multi-stakeholder nature could be strengthened by broadening the scope of civil society organizations involved. Regarding corruption, the Zimbabwe Anticorruption Commision has been created - although civil society points out that accountability and inclusion remain key to properly tackle corruption within the country.

In Spain, civil society asks for the repeal of a security law that curtails most dimensions of civic space - freedom of assembly, expression, information - as well as for the formulation of a wide-ranging strategy for the support of civil society and the protection of human rights defenders and environmental activists.

In Lao PDR, the Alliance for Democracy asserts that there is no active rule of law in the country, since there is no separation of powers - which implies that the judiciary isn't independent and access to a fair process is limited.

In Guatemala, the party system and wider political elites are viewed as corrupt and ineffective. As a result, the democratic consensus has eroded - with less than half of the citizenry supporting democracy as the right political system for the country. Regarding the judicial system, it is understaffed and corrupt - which promotes impunity and further entrenches violence and corruption within the society: the country is one of the most corrupt in the world, ranking at 150 out of 180 in the Transparency International list, and is one of the most violent countries in the world.

SDG 17 Partnerships



The highest scoring categories for this goal are Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (59%), Legal frameworks (58%) and Institutional Support (57%), whereas the lowest scoring areas are Transparency (44%) and Public Awareness (41%). For this Goal, Guatemala was perceived to be somewhat more successful, but this time Bolivia was seen to be in the very low category.

In Indonesia, the Ministry for Planning has put together a comprehensive framework for multi stakeholder partnerships - comprising parliament, CSOs, academia and private sector-, in order to include all actors in coordinating and executive mechanisms within the SDG governance structures, organizing working groups on different pillars and conducting outreach initiatives, opening input-collection processes for the VNR, as well as engaging with citizen-generated data initiatives. That said, the civil society report suggests that although this process was very prominent during the first years of implementation, the intensity of collaboration has declined -especially since the pandemic began.

In Madagascar, a substantial part of development efforts involves partnerships with technical and financial partners - bilateral and multilateral development aid agencies, decentralized cooperation schemes, and international NGOs. Civil society reports that a multi stakeholder platform for monitoring and coordinating the development partnerships has been put in place, in order to generate real-time information on programming, disbursements and results made in the context of these projects.

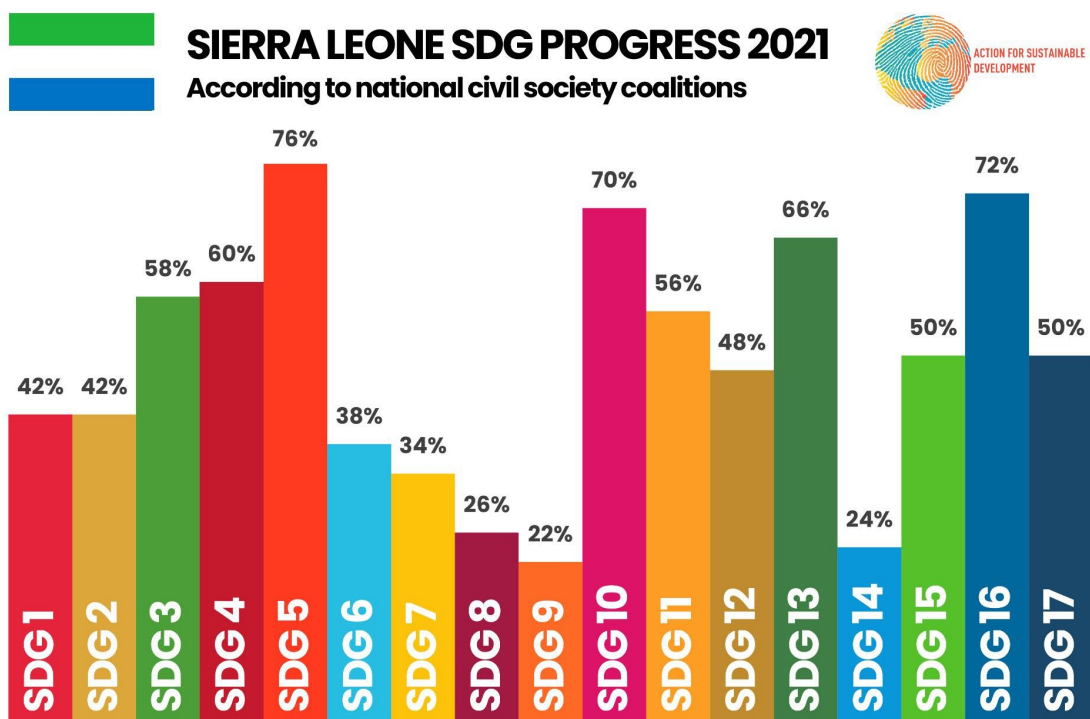
In Zimbabwe, civil society also reports that the Government has put in place some partnerships towards implementation of the SDGs with development partners, civil society organizations, and the private sector. In this context, the major partnership remains the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The ZUNDAF (2016-2020) although further improvements are needed. Civil society calls for institutionalization of civil society's role as an oversight agent and as a partner for implementation, especially by fully operationalizing the monitoring framework built with civil society's inclusion.

In Spain, civil society calls for a concept of international cooperation that encompasses every dimension - including Spain's contribution to protect and foster global public goods (on human rights, gender equality and climate change), in addition to development aid and foreign trade. In this sense, civil society recommends that this renewed conception of international cooperation is embedded in the overarching concept of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, with a set of relevant indicators for assessment.

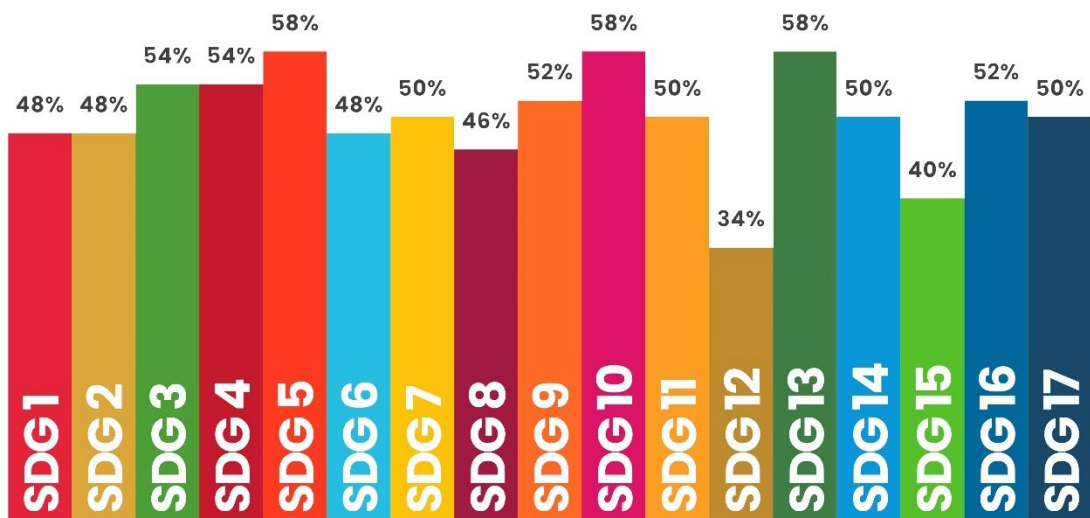


4. Analysis of Scores by VNR Country

The results can also be presented to highlight the state of progress per Goal in a country, which enables a visual understanding of the position in diverse countries. You can find and share them below:



ZIMBABWE SDG PROGRESS 2021
According to national civil society coalitions





ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

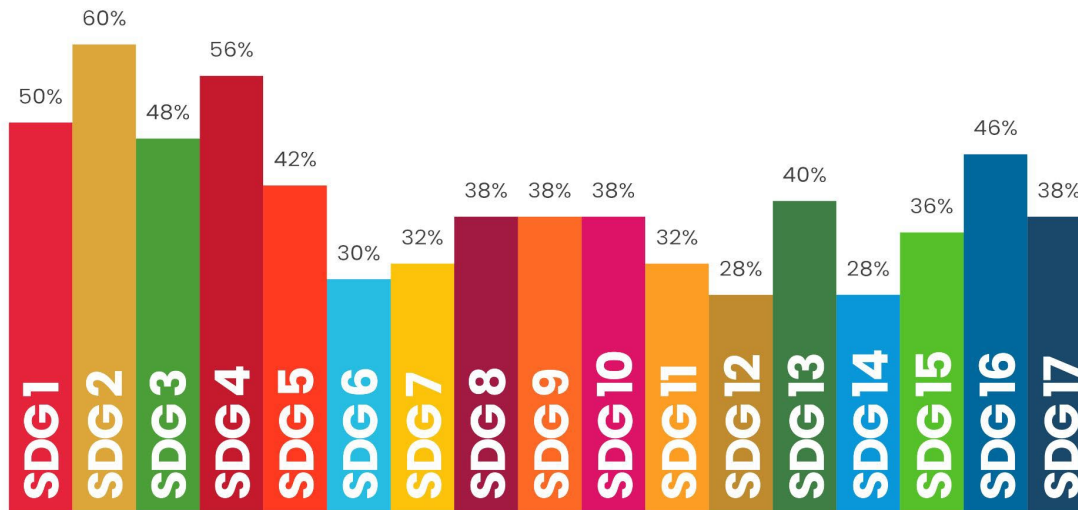


COLOMBIA SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

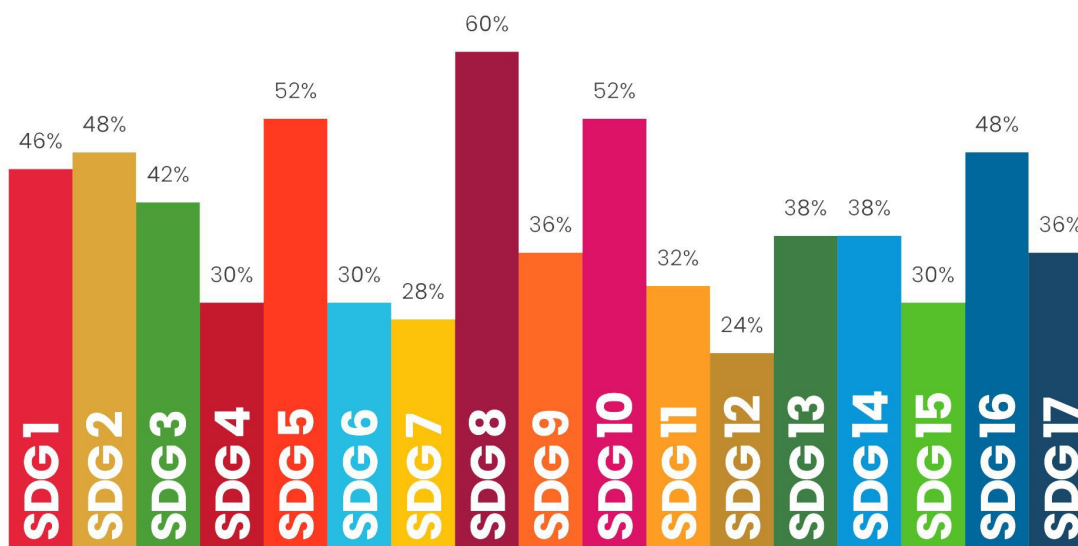


MEXICO SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



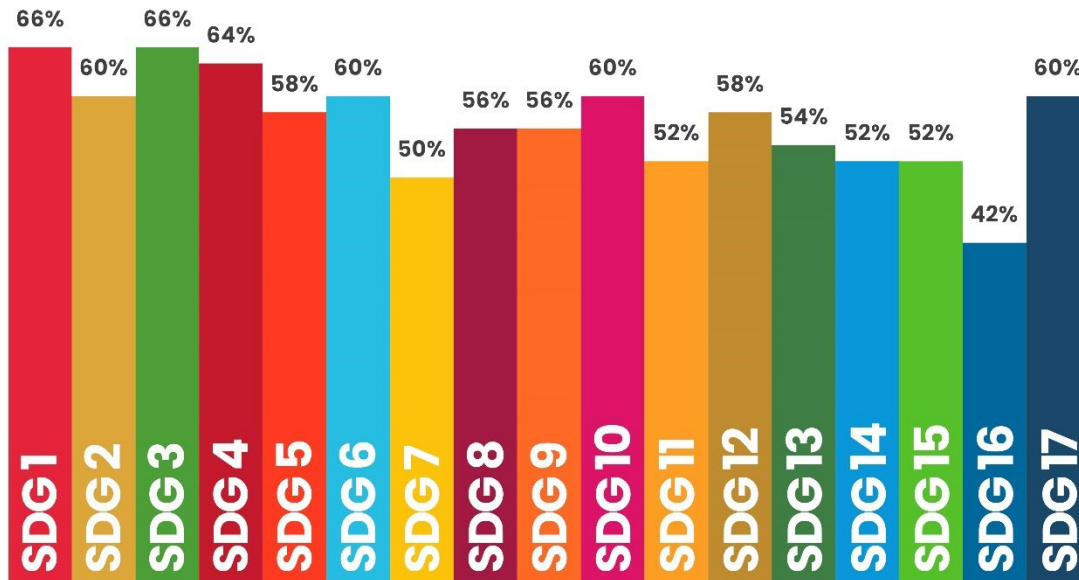


MALAYSIA SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



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DEVELOPMENT

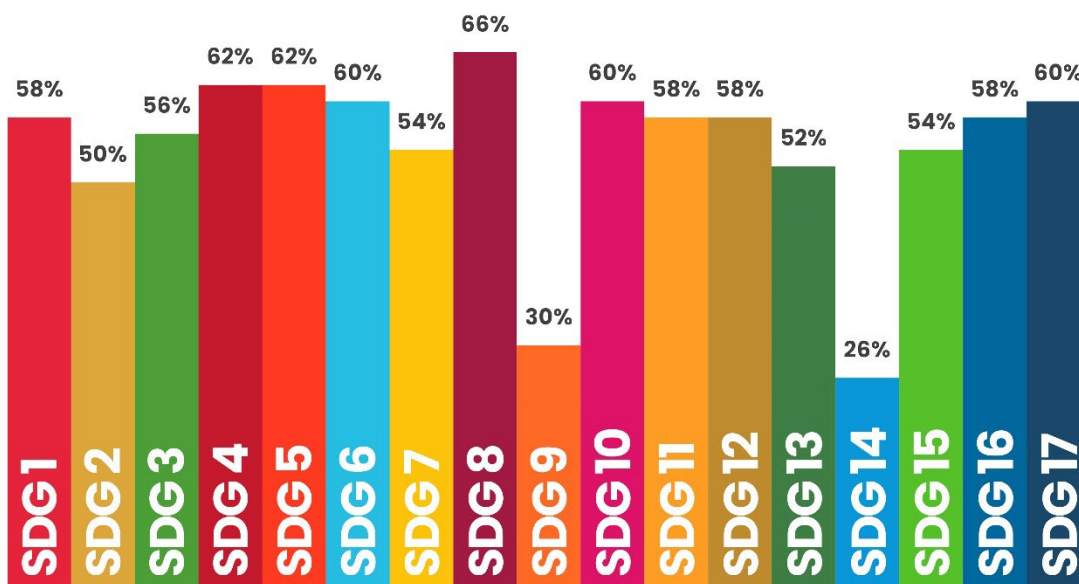


INDONESIA SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



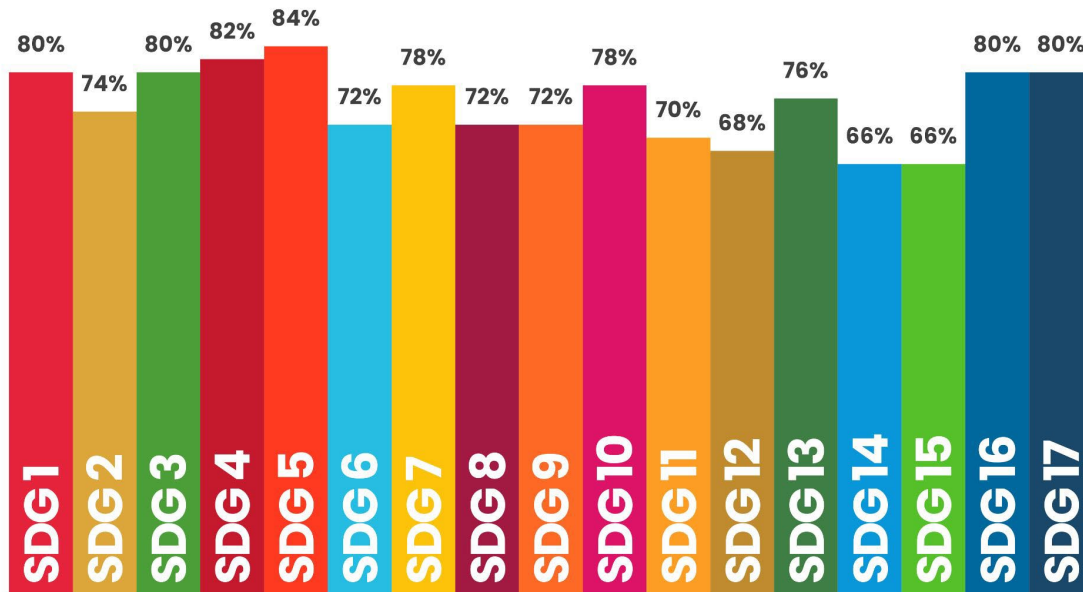


NORWAY SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
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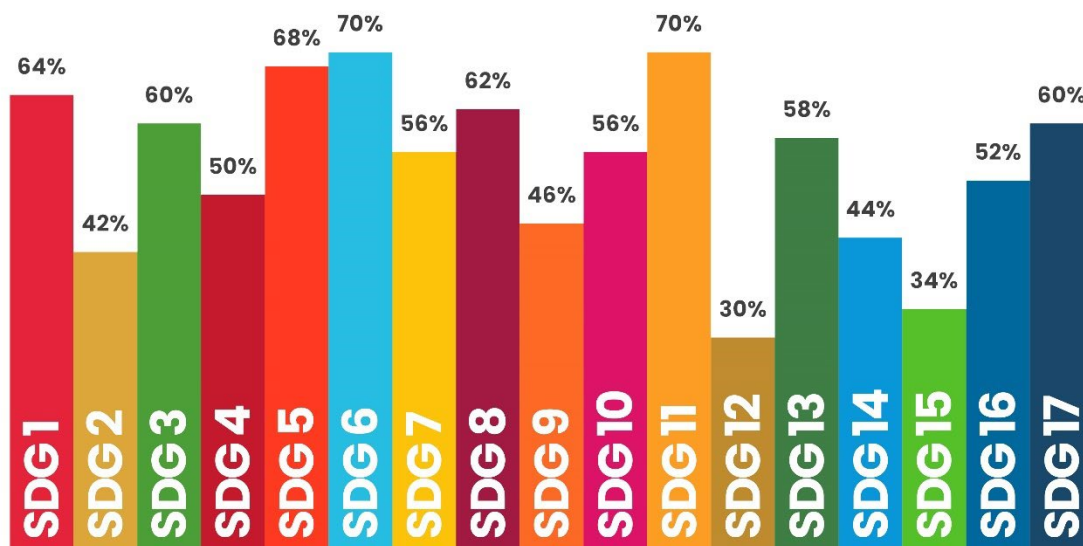


SPAIN SDG PROGRESS 2021

According to national civil society coalitions



ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT



Acknowledgments

The process of developing the People's Scorecard has been a collaborative effort.

The drafting team included Nicolas Sautejeau and Oli Henman of Action for Sustainable Development.

Particular thanks go to Anselmo Lee, Rilli Lapalainen and Sylvia Beales for their strategic engagement on the methodology; to Uchita de Zoysa, Alessandra Nilo, Florence Syevuo and Yared Tsegay for sharing their insights on jointly developing national reports and scorecards; and to Clara Sanchiz for the visual representation and infographics.