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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

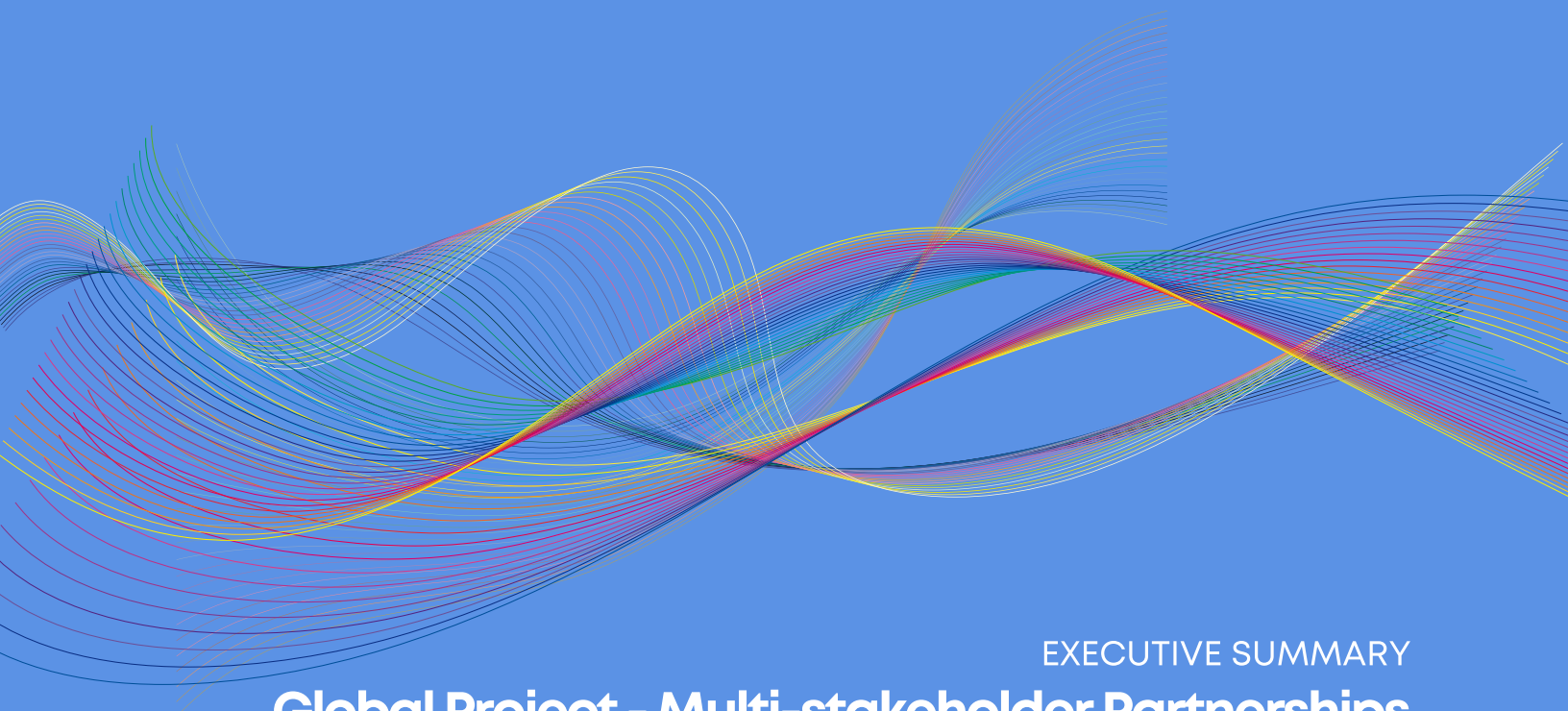


COVID-19  
RESPONSE



UN75  
2020 AND BEYOND

SHAPING  
OUR  
FUTURE  
TOGETHER



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# **Global Project - Multi-stakeholder Partnerships in the 2030 Agenda - UNDESA**

## **Dominican Republic**

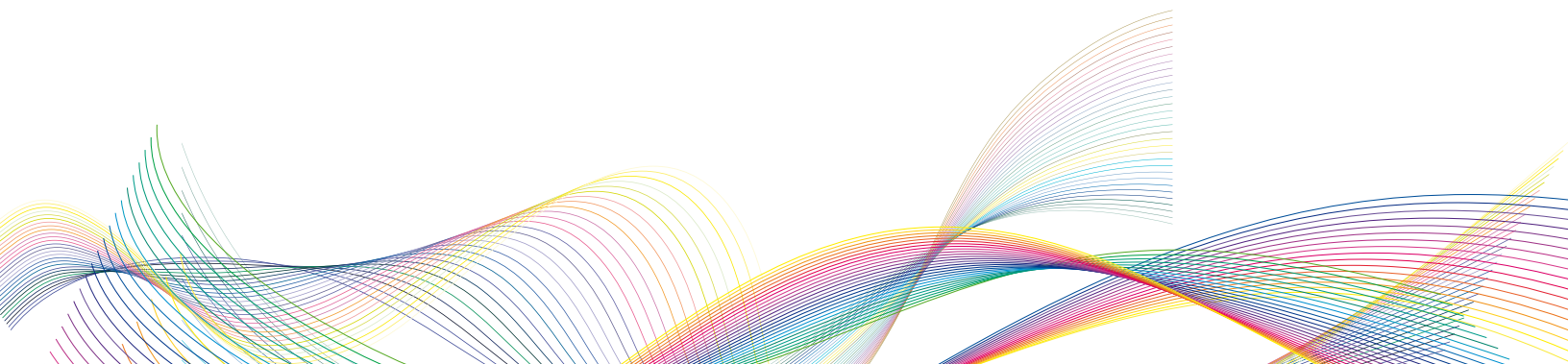
Impact, capacities, opportunities, and  
challenges of Multi-Stakeholder partnerships in the 2030 Agenda and  
the National Development Strategy (END) in the Dominican Republic.

**May 2021**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Impact, capacities, opportunities, and challenges of Multi-Stakeholder partnerships in the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy (END) in the Dominican Republic.

The Dominican Republic has made great efforts to incorporate and align the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the National Development Strategy (END in Spanish) and other national planning instruments, with an alignment of over 74%.

During the first years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda various processes were conducted, including an Integrated Rapid Assessment (RIA), the Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support process (MAPS), a Voluntary National Report in 2018, and a follow-up Report for the 2019 High-Level Political Forum. These exercises identified some of the challenges and opportunities that the country is facing while implementing the 2030 Agenda and the END.

Although the country has maintained economic growth rates of over 5% during the last decade and has been able to reduce poverty levels, inequality is still a serious concern and there are challenges that persist, linked to the need to strengthen institutions, improve access to public services, build public trust in judiciary systems and achieve a more transparent and efficient State. This requires increasing and improving the quality of spending in all spheres. Regarding partnerships to achieve the SDGs, the fiscal restriction is one of the main barriers to implementing the 2030 Agenda, expressed in a very low tax pressure (around 14%) and growing public debt. As we enter the Decade of Action, with only 9 years to go until the 2030 deadline and in a context of huge global challenges, strengthening partnerships will be essential in the Dominican Republic to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda.

There is evidence that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are jeopardizing the development progress and poverty reduction of recent years. To ensure that no one is left behind, building strategic partnerships will be essential to efficiently use available resources and strengthen and complement our collective capacities.

This study focuses on the need to expand and strengthen solid partnerships and improve the participation of civil society, the private sector, academia, and territorial organizations in the coordination and governance architecture of the Sustainable Development Commission, guaranteeing the existence of innovative and alternative space for articulation and to ensure the capacity to mobilize necessary resources.

To this end, it is proposed to develop and implement an **action plan aimed to strengthen and expand participation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the END**. This plan should be integrated and aligned with other existing roadmaps and strategies developed by the country and should consider key elements regarding mechanisms of coordination and participation, awareness, and dissemination of the Agenda 2030 principles, territorialization, resource mobilization, monitoring, and accountability.

### Impact, capacities, opportunities, and challenges of Multi-Stakeholder partnerships in the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy (END) in the Dominican Republic.

To carry out this study a literature review and analysis have been developed, as well as bilateral dialogues and an online consultation with over 180 stakeholders. Moreover, a questionnaire was prepared and applied to 22 prospects for partnerships, among them, non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy framework. Also, response measures to the pandemic were an essential approach to understand the analysis and exercise.

The consultation was focused on the following topics:

- Level of participation and empowerment in the High-Level Inter-institutional Commission for Sustainable Development (CDS) for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy (END 2030).
- Measures that could be applied to strengthen the participation and empowerment of the organizations that currently participate in the (CDS).
- Identification of potential new partners (Organizations with the potential capacity to get involved in initiatives or projects related to the END 2030, the 2030 Agenda, and the response to the impact of COVID-19
- Recommendations of the stakeholders consulted to expand and strengthen partnerships to promote the 2030 Agenda and the END.

The questionnaire was developed in joint work with the Technical Secretariat of the Interinstitutional Commission for Sustainable Development, the Directorate of the Center for Non-Profit Associations (CASFL), and the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU, in Spanish). supported in the mapping of entities for the consultation process. It is also important to highlight that this process was developed considering the **UN75 National Consultations and participatory dialogues**.

The main findings and recommendations are detailed in the next section of this executive summary.



# Stakeholders' mapping

The mapping exercise aimed to identify the relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the END and place them in the area in which they contribute or could contribute to collective efforts:

The National Commission for Sustainable Development (CDS, in Spanish) is the body in charge of the governance and articulation of the 2030 Agenda, including the link to the formulation of public policies and integration into national planning instruments. It is made up of 48 entities, of which 32 (67%) are governmental institutions and 16 (33%) are non-governmental entities. Of the latter, 16 are civil society organizations, 5 are entities of the private sector and 1 represents the union sector.

The weight of the private sector in the composition of the CDS transcends that of the five business organizations since 4 of the 10 civil society organizations that make up the CDS belong to companies. In addition to the CDS, there are 4 subcommittees, People, Prosperity, Planet, and Institutional Development, which are also composed of government institutions, civil society, and the private sector.

The mapping of participants in the governance of the 2030 Agenda in the country shows that several of the 16 non-governmental organizations represented in the CDS are networks or are integrated by groups of associations. In fact, around 150 entities constitute the membership of civil society organizations that are members of the CDS that operate as networks or partnerships, which indicates a degree of representation of civil society that goes beyond the 16 organizations. In addition, the Dominican Federation of Municipalities (FEDOMU, in Spanish) is part of the CDS, which is an entity composed of 158 municipalities or local governments across the country.

Other organizations have also been integrated into the implementation efforts of the 2030 Agenda in various areas through 8 association agreements, signed by the United Nations System (UNS) and the government.

Regarding the UN, the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) signed between the Dominican Republic and the UN has a network of 79 partners, of which 25 are non-governmental entities, committed to contributing to three strategic areas: a) Poverty, food security and environmental sustainability; b) Social services and gender equality, and c) Institutional strengthening and human rights.



Photo: Mildred Samboy/UNDR

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# Participation and coordination

There is a wide presence of non-governmental organizations in the country, many of them with capacity, potential, and interest in joining initiatives aimed at promoting the advancement of the 2030 Agenda. However, there is still space for opportunity to expand and strengthen the partnerships, capacities, and participation of civil society organizations, academia, private sector, and municipalities in planning, implementation, and monitoring, as well as to further articulate the different levels of inter-institutional coordination and promote a greater commitment of stakeholders with the objectives and goals of the Agenda. The consultation has revealed limitations in the functioning of the existing instances and mechanisms of participation that must be overcome.

## To improve the coordination mechanisms, actions such as the following are proposed:

- Reactivate the Inter-Institutional Strategic Committee to strengthen the articulation of the actors that compose the Subcommittees.
- Standardize CDS meetings and other bodies of governance of the CDS, as well as dialogue and accountability to non-governmental actors. Although close to a third of the 180 consulted organizations stated that they have participated in instances of implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the 2030 END, 20% declared that in the last two years they had not participated in any meeting, and 40 % expressed that their opinions were rarely or never considered.
- Strengthen the work of the CSD Subcommittees through specific action plans, under the responsibility of each Subcommittee, developed with the active participation of non-governmental actors.
- Prioritize efforts aimed to materialize partnerships with non-governmental actors that show greater interest and capacity to participate in the development and implementation of existing or pending roadmaps, as well as the execution of specific and innovative projects or initiatives related to the SDGs.
- Coordinate actions and create synergies within intergovernmental spaces that have been insufficiently used to expand and strengthen partnerships for the articulation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the National Development Strategy, such as the CASFL, the Municipal Development Councils (through the General Directorate of Territorial Planning and Development - The Municipal League) and the National Economic and Social Council (CES, in Spanish).
- Promote agreements between governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations to develop joint initiatives in specific areas of the CDS work plan and components of the National Multi-year Public Sector Plan related to the SDGs.
- Articulate ongoing initiatives with Dominican business associations to create innovative mechanisms and initiatives to further include and commit them.
- As the government is designing a coordination mechanism to articulate and align international development actors with national priorities, it is also necessary to establish the connection with the CDS coordination architecture.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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# Awareness and outreach of the 2030 Agenda

Although efforts have been made to disseminate the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, they must be renewed and intensified to achieve greater commitment from all stakeholders. **25% of the 180 non-governmental organizations consulted in the process of preparing this report stated that they had little or no knowledge about the 2030 Agenda, and 34.5% declared that they had no knowledge of the 2030 END.**

To broaden the knowledge and commitment of different actors with the 2030 Agenda and the 2030 END, and promote their participation in initiatives and projects related to these instruments, it is proposed:

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Develop an awareness-raising campaign, focused on key sectors, through the dissemination of information and persuasive messages advocating for their participation in initiatives to support the SDGs. As the 2018 Voluntary National Report states, the approach to the awareness-raising process must consider that different codes of communication are required to impact and reach all audiences, and to do so it will be crucial to activate and renew the messaging adapting it to the new context.

Explore mechanisms for the use of social networks, apps, and the use of mass short message services (SMS) to disseminate those messages.

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Coordinate awareness spaces with government authorities at all levels around the meaning means, and importance of articulating the END and the SDGs in all planning and executive instruments.

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Articulate partnerships with the Cultural and Orange Ecosystem sector to explore how to communicate key messages that are adapted to different provinces and localities, considering culture, and target groups, and population.

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# Territorialization

National legislation orders the establishment of Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Development Councils which constitute spaces for the participation of civil society, academia, and the private sector in the country's planning process. Business associations, as well as Chambers of Commerce and Production, Education institutions, Professional unions, agricultural associations, neighborhood associations, and non-governmental organizations, are part of these bodies.

Strengthening Development Councils while improving the national planning process would contribute to facilitating progress towards SDG 17 and, thereby, support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 2030 END. Unfortunately, these councils are not yet functional across the country. According to the General Directorate of Territorial Planning and Development (DGODT in Spanish), in 2019, out of 158 municipalities in the country, 112 had operating Development Councils and 97 had municipal development plans. On the other hand, of the 32 provinces of the country, only 11 had functional Development Councils.

Advancing in the territorialization of the SDGs and the END with the participation of interest groups requires a set of strategic actions, such as:

Coordinate efforts of the CDS and its subcommittees with the General Directorate of Territorial Planning and Development, the FEDOMU, and the Municipal League to strengthen local capacities to align the SDGs and the END to territorial development plans.

Prioritize efforts to articulate the SDGs and the END with the Municipal and Provincial Development Plans, especially in those municipalities and provinces that have Councils or Spaces for the articulation of Development in operation.

Develop spaces for the design of local initiatives through the application of collective intelligence and behavioral perspectives, which guarantee multi-actor partnerships for the articulation of mechanisms of cooperation and mobilization of alternative resources.

Start the implementation of actions to strengthen the Municipal Development Councils and the territorialization of the SDGs in a group of selected municipalities. Based on the experience obtained in the first group of municipalities, expand these actions to other territories.



# Resource mobilization

Financial restrictions have been one of the main obstacles to achieving greater progress towards the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in the country and a first-order limitation to the participation of non-governmental entities in initiatives and concrete actions to support the SDGs and the END.

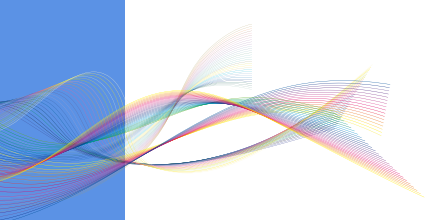
In this sense, it should be noted that the availability of internal sources has been markedly insufficient to meet the objectives and goals of the END, a gap that has widened since 2016 with the incorporation of the additional commitments assumed by the country within the framework of the Agenda 2030 and, recently, with the greatest demand for resources to face the COVID-19 pandemic. The political, economic, and social forces have not been able to reach the fiscal pact mandated by law, aimed at financing sustainable development, and guaranteeing long-term fiscal sustainability. On the other hand, the Dominican Republic's access to Official Development Assistance funds has decreased as a consequence of being classified as an upper-middle-income country, while there is an increase in the participation of private sources of financing and a decrease in multilateral and bilateral sources.

Different non-governmental non-profit organizations receive funding from the State, for which they must be registered with the CASFL, a dependency of the Ministry of Economy and Development (MEPyD in Spanish). As of September 2020, there were 2,994 non-profit associations registered in said body, of which 1,790 are dedicated to activities related to the SDGs and the END of the People subcommittee, 223 to Prosperity, 110 to Planet, and 871 to Institutionalality. Of these associations, 2,244 (75%) are entities qualified to receive public financing. In 2020, 1,325 associations were assigned a public budget, equivalent to 44% of the total registered entities and 59% of those were authorized to obtain financing from the national budget. In all the municipalities of the country, there are non-governmental organizations registered in the CASFL, which represent a potential channel to promote the territorialization of the SDGs and the END.

The mobilization of resources to promote the implementation of the SDGs and the END, and strengthen the response, with the more active participation of non-governmental actors, requires multiple interventions, among them:

Reactivating the functioning of the Financing Committee and encourage the Ministry of Finance, a member of the Committee, to consider the initiatives identified by the CDS in the public investment priorities and in the formulation of the national budget.

Promoting, through the CASFL, a greater channeling of resources from the national budget through civil society organizations for the development of initiatives and projects associated with the SDGs and the END, as well as mitigating the repercussions of COVID -19.



## Resource mobilization

Based on the evaluation of the DGODT, propose to the central government to increase the number of transfers to municipal governments that have duly formed Development Councils, active participation of local non-governmental actors and local development plans aligned to the SDGs and the END. Considering cooperatives and local cooperation associations for the articulation of local means of financing and mobilizing resources.

Completing the coverage of the computerized platform for identifying the budget allocation, to monitor the prioritization of the allocation of public funds to interventions related to the PNPS, the SDGs, and the END 2030.

Strengthening workspaces and coordination with business sectors to articulate mechanisms for mobilizing alternative and innovative resources for financing SDG and the END (Blue, Green, Social Impact Bonds, Crowdfunding, Blended Finance, Articulation of the Orange Economy, among others).

Exploring and developing a coordination space with international cooperation, connecting the CDS coordination architecture with the coordination structure being designed by the Vice Ministry of International Cooperation of MEPyD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic (MIREX, in Spanish). These spaces should explore the potential for coordination at the technical and sectoral level and at the level of the CDS financing committee.







# Monitoring and accountability

Promoting and making a more effective participation of civil society, the private sector, and academia in the entire monitoring and accountability process implies giving them broad access to information, as well as broadening and deepening consultations with said actors in the preparation of monitoring and evaluation reports. The CES, a body made up of representatives of the business sector, the labor sector, and the social sector, including academia, has among its powers to coordinate the process of monitoring, social oversight, and accountability for the implementation of the END. Given the degree of alignment between the END and the SDGs and the END, it is pertinent to coordinate efforts between the CDS and the CES to generate synergies in the process of inspection and accountability on the progress of the SDGs and the END, as well as the results of the response to COVID -19.

Among the actions proposed to help strengthen social oversight of the implementation process of the SDGs and their alignment with the END 2030 and are the following:

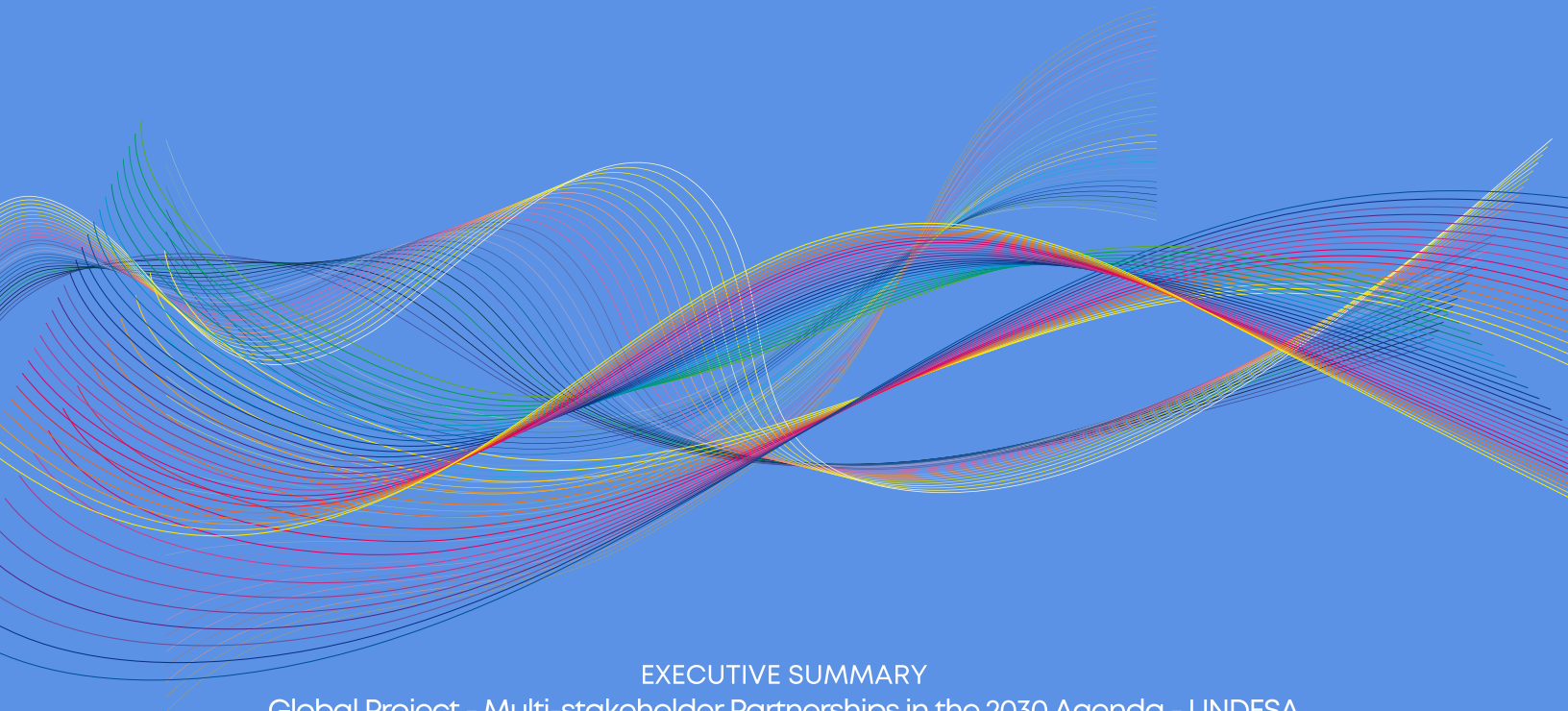
Activate the Committee of Indicators, update the matrix of indicators, complete the quantification of the goals of the indicators and send periodic information on the implementation of the SDGs to the non-governmental actors participating in the governance mechanisms of the Agenda 2030 and the END 2030.

Continuously update the CDS Portal, so that the public could know without delay the level of compliance with the SDGs and the END.

Submit annual reports on monitoring, accountability, and evaluation of the achievement of the SDGs, the END, as well as the results of the response to the pandemic, guaranteeing broad participation of non-governmental actors.

Articulate and create synergies between the CSD and the CES in monitoring compliance with the SDGs, the goals, and targets of the END 2030, and the response plan to COVID-19.

Develop and implement an action plan aligned, complementary and transversal to other current plans, which includes the recommendations and key principles in matters of strategic partnerships and participation could guide the work of the National Development Strategy and the CDS governance structures during the coming years, ensuring that the efforts, resources and capacities of all development actors and agents in the country are reinforced and complemented in the most effective way.



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