

SDG Partnership Symposium

Unleashing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships

A celebration and a call to action

17 September 2023, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, 31st Floor, Nomad Tower, 1250 Broadway, New York

Background

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development lies a fundamental principle: the imperative of inclusive participation by all stakeholders in its implementation. It is widely recognized that the collective efforts of nations, organizations, stakeholders, and individuals are indispensable for achieving the ambitious 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

When done well, multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) can leverage resources of all kinds from across societal sectors to create innovative solutions, unlock finance, operate at scale, deliver system transformation, create new standards in sustainability and transfer knowledge and technologies. However, despite their immense promise, it is evident that MSPs are not yet being systematically harnessed, nor are they being cultivated in sufficient numbers to confront the magnitude of challenges we face. Moreover, many of these partnerships are falling short of delivering the level of impact and effectiveness demanded by our global aspirations.

At the start of 2023, the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator (an initiative by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and The Partnering Initiative), Partnerships2030 (GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) and the Global Forum on SDG Advisory Bodies embarked on a research and awareness-raising campaign, focusing on the essential questions: ‘what’s holding back more and more effective collaboration’ and ‘what do we need to do to deliver a wholesale shift in global partnering practice and impact’?

Initial findings from a global partnership study

The activities of the campaign – including events, interviews, and a global survey - have informed the development of a study on the state of partnership enabling factors, including challenges to their incorporation, and what’s required to build them up at scale. The results are fascinating and comprehensive, providing a sobering snapshot of the current environment for partnering as well as a clear steer for what we collectively need to do to support partnerships to fully deliver on the SDGs and climate goals. Findings include:

- **91% of survey respondents** believe that professionalizing partnering skills and competencies would improve MSP impact, but **only 13%** said that training was accessible in their countries. Further, **93%** believe they would deliver better and faster partnerships if their organization was better set up and institutionally optimized for collaboration.
- **Only 24%** felt that current funding models are strongly or fully effective in maximizing innovation, quality, and impact, with **96%** agreeing that funders need to adjust their approaches if they want MSPs to deliver greater impact. **And they've told us exactly what they want funders to do.**
- **93%** believe partnerships platforms are essential or important catalysts of partnerships for the SDGs and climate, and yet there are surprisingly few such platforms around the world. Most respondents (**52%**) thought they should be multi-stakeholder, rather than being run solely by the government (**3%**) or even the UN (**11%**).
- And for the first time we have new evidence on how certain key 'building blocks' lead directly to greater MSP impact.

SDG Partnership Symposium

On Sunday 17 September in New York, on the eve of the SDG Summit, the campaign will host the SDG Partnership Symposium. Join leaders, practitioners and SDG champions from governments, foundations, business, the United Nations, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to:

- Be the first to hear and discuss the results of this groundbreaking study on the current state of partnership enabling factors and what can be done to accelerate the take-up of MSPs.
- Share your experiences and gain fresh insights on your own organizational approach and what you can do to increase the impact from your partnerships or the partnerships you support.
- Network over a glass of wine while watching the sun set over the Manhattan skyline.

Organizers

The event is organized by the campaign partners above and kindly hosted by APCO Worldwide.

Participation

The Symposium will be held as an in-person event with no virtual participation. Due to limited space, interested parties must apply at: <https://forms.gle/VbnT2nAh3aqeSWNx6> (deadline **11 September 2023**). The organizing partners will notify selected participants by 13 September 2023. Please note that there are no associated costs to attend, and there is no funding support available.

Programme

Time	Agenda item
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6:00 - 6:30 PM	Opening drinks & networking
6:30 - 6:40 PM	Welcoming remarks
6:40 - 7:00 PM	Presentation of key findings and launch of new study “ Shifting the system: How to unleash the power of partnership for the SDGs and climate action ” plus a Call to Action
7:00 - 7:45 PM	High-level panel debate on the state of partnerships for the SDGs- Unleashing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships
7:45 - 8:00 PM	<p>(Optional) discussion in groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your experiences and what can YOU do to deliver greater partnering impact?
	Continued networking - drinks & hors d'oeuvres