Sustainable Development Goals 17 for Climate Change

The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to address environmental, social, global, and economic challenges. The SDGs were a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals and assumed a common vision for the year 2030. Efforts to achieve the SDGs must be carried out in an integrated manner, respecting the three pillars of sustainable development, which are economic, social, and environmental.

1. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) established the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the United Nations Development Summit in Rio de Janeiro (RIO + 20) held in 2012. Its main goal was to conceive targets that would be undertaken to address environmental, social, and economic planetary challenges. On 25 September 2015, 193 United Nations countries approved the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs—also known as the 2030 Agenda—were intended to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. The SDGs were a continuation of the Millennium Development Goals and assumed a common vision for the year 2030 that would broaden the vision of politicians and officials beyond their short-term national interests [1]. Sustainable Development Goal 17 (SDG 17) makes specific reference to the formation of global partnerships for development. The premise regarding this point is that these partnerships mobilize the exchange of knowledge, experience, technology, and other resources to better manage the remaining sixteen SDGs. Although SDG 17 is sound in theory, in practice, there is still a considerable caveat on how to best implement this theory.

Firstly, here will analyze the potential viability and effectiveness of SDG 17 "Partnerships for the goals" (i.e., more specifically, Targets 17.16 and 17.17, which relate to multi-stakeholder partnerships). Secondly, it analyses the relationship between SDG 17 and SDG 7 (relating to affordable and clean energy). Finally, it analyses two case studies that highlight the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships in renewable energy projects using two wind farm projects located in south-western France in the department of "la Vienne" (département no. 86); the first in the communes of Thollet–Coulonges and the second in the commune of Liglet. The article will end with a set of conclusions and future directions section.

Energy is one of the biggest pillars of climate action. According to the UN Development Program (UNDP), energy accounts for 73% of human-caused greenhouse gases. Therefore, energy efficiency initiatives are key to curbing this, and the development of renewable and clean energy projects is presently being encouraged all over the world. Worldwide in 2022, the renewable energy capacity rose by 10%. With respect to the SDGs, the theme of energy is covered by SDG 7, "Affordable and clean energy", the objective of which is to ensure electricity for all while encouraging growth and aiding the environment at all levels. Through SDG 17 and the involvement of multiple actors via the development of multiple-stakeholder partnerships between businesses, civil society, and others, it will be possible to work together to try to curb climate change, which, in turn, might make the achievement of some development goals more difficult.

2. The SDGs

According to the United Nations (UN), the definition of Sustainable Development is "(satisfying) the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This definition of the term "Sustainable Development" is encompassed in the 1987 Brundtland Report, which was developed by the World Commission on Environment and Development and aimed to develop long-term solutions for any matter related to sustainable development. Among the points addressed are the roles of the international economy, population and human resources, food security, species ecosystems, energy, industry, and proposed legal principles for environmental protection [2].

The new SDGs came into force in 2015. There were 17 goals and 169 targets, and they were part of the acceptance of a document entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" [3]. The seventeen SDGs were established with goals at the country level; therefore, the strategies developed vary according to the priorities of each State. Similar to the MDGs, the SDGs were a statement of aspirations, a voluntary agreement rather than a binding treaty [1].

Efforts to achieve the SDGs must be carried out in a holistic and comprehensive manner, taking into account the three pillars of sustainable development, which are economic, social, and environmental. The SDGs urged companies to harness their creativity and innovation to address the challenges of sustainable development. They promote collaboration between all sectors of society using a bottom-up approach. The three main categories of stakeholders (i.e., businesses, governments, and civil society) must work together and with others to ensure long-term sustainability [4]. The development of the SDGs founded a new paradigm in sustainable development as a result of the appreciation of business as an essential social actor alongside governments and civil society [5][6][7].

The business world is key in promoting synergies between necessary actors by conducting business responsibly, inclusively, and sustainably, sustaining livelihoods, reducing poverty, and promoting technological innovation. For example, regarding SDG 1, business has been one of the main drivers in some countries to help them recover from poverty. This is why governments, donors, the United Nations, and NGOs have become involved with businesses to help catalyze business investment and to better incorporate responsibility, sustainability, and inclusiveness. Companies have an extensive environmental, economic, and social footprint due to the broad scope of their activities and the multiple actors with whom they engage to maintain their supply chains. They have a direct influence and impact on risk mitigation at different levels and, consequently, also on actively promoting environmental, economic, and social well-being. Examples of mitigation actions include addressing environmental degradation arising from its operations and preventing human rights violations, such as child labor.

3. SDG 17

Sustainable Development Goal 17 entails the creation of global partnerships, making reference specifically to multi-stakeholder collaboration between all sectors of society. However, although the context of multi-stakeholder partnerships may be very well described on paper, the questions linked to the main challenges are the following: How to promote collaboration between stakeholders as varied as governments, scientists, and NGOs? How will it be possible to ensure that they work together in a systematic way to achieve the shared vision of the Sustainable Development Goals?

The objective of SDG 17 is to enhance and improve the way in which global partnerships are executed and revitalized in the areas of finance, technology, trade, capacity development, policy coherence, partnerships, and data. To accomplish this objective, two main working approaches have been presented. The first entails the creation of global alliances encouraged by governments, thereby reinforcing collaboration and development. Secondly, the latter may be complemented by the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships operating at all levels (i.e., global, national, and regional levels) to incorporate knowledge and experiences to achieve the other sixteen SDGs. The latter opens the discussion on how the different stakeholders should best work to achieve their specific goals [8].

SDG 17 promotes the "right way" of collaboration between different actors through the formation of multi-stakeholder partnerships, which are essential to foster sustainable development. The premise regarding this point is that these partnerships promote the exchange of knowledge, experience, technology, and other resources between the different parties to achieve the global development agenda of 2030. Strong partnerships must encourage increased participation, inclusion, and diversity, along with involving international cooperation and coordination [9]. However, reality shows that the position and involvement of different stakeholders often vary, leading to inconsistent goal setting and consequent ineffective results. Therefore, there is an urgent need to determine how multi-stakeholder partnerships can be improved to promote and increase the participation and inclusion of these often-under-represented stakeholders.

This cooperative and co-production approach is highly aligned with a multi-governance context. Multiple governance is defined as the compendium of the different ways undertaken to manage common affairs of both individuals and institutions (i.e., both public and private) [10]. Traditional governance was often associated with a single group of actors, which in most cases was the government; however, the situation is changing thanks to the participation of an increasing number of different stakeholders, so today's governance is not reserved for a single actor [11][12][13]. "Traditional modes of state regulation have come to be considered as limited in their scope, effectiveness, authority or legitimacy, when they try to address global environmental problems" [11] (p. 366), such as those encompassed by the SDGs. This change in governance has come to give, over time, an increasing role to non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations,

civil society, local governments, and companies. There are examples of signed multi-stakeholder agreements ranging from initiatives by non-state actors to certification projects for initiatives related to timber, mining, or sustainable tourism.

The concept of "co-production" is presented by Von Schnurbein [8] in the field of public services, wherein he highlights the importance of including citizens in the provision of public services. At present, the term is utilized in a broader context, such as the governance, creation, and management of public services [8]. Joshi and Moore [14] highlight the significance of long-term co-production, whereby the alliances formed between different stakeholders and the resources are committed by all the groups involved. The co-production concept can be applied to the SDG scenario, as, according to SDG 17, a multi-stakeholder context is necessary to enable production and provide resources for accessing technology and to ensure worldwide availability and supply.

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One of the main priorities of SDG 17 is the development of multi-stakeholder partnerships. In 2018, progress was made in this type of association in 51 of 114 countries. These associations are not only between states but also between different social actors. The big question that now arises is how all these different actors from the public and private sectors, as well as civil society, can work together to promote and carry out the goals of the SDGs? Undertaking a multi-stakeholder approach to governance helps to; (1) ensure the participation of a greater number of said parties, (2) identify and overcome the barriers that could hinder the participation and commitment of the actors, (3) develop a multi-stakeholder network as proposed by SDG 17.

Negotiated agreements tend to produce fairer, more efficient, and stable solutions compared to decisions that have been made unilaterally (i.e., for example, by national governments). This shows that governance approaches based on multi-stakeholder participation are considerably better than traditional ones. Therefore, project stakeholders should be involved at all levels of governance, from local to regional to international. At each of these levels, agreements need to be developed and negotiated to ensure that the multi-stakeholder governance context is maintained. Most public collective governance initiatives are based on facilitating transparency, accountability, and (stakeholder) participation. These three critical components are essential to strengthen governance at all levels. In this sense, SDG 17 is useful to promote global alliances and multi-stakeholder governance in a world that is totally interconnected between national and local governments, companies, civil society, and academia.

Regarding SDG 17, multiple actor governance is based on targets 17.16 and 17.17, as mentioned below:

17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, particularly developing countries.

17.17 Foster and promote the formation of effective alliances in the public, public–private, and civil society spheres to mutually benefit from the capabilities, experience, and strategies of the respective alliance partners in pursuit of agreed common goals.

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has led to considerable progress since it came into force in 2015 (although this progress was uneven between developed and developing countries). However, the context of COVID-19

has led to a re-examination of the achievements made during this period (i.e., from 2015 to 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a black swan event creating a situation in which complex systems evolve unpredictably, bringing about unforeseen changes and transformations that affect power structures and relationships, and this is precisely how it has occurred in these circumstances with the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of promoting global collaboration between different sectors and stakeholders. Countries, as a consequence, have had to adapt their processes accordingly to this context. The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships can be perceived in the development of COVID-19 vaccines. An example of the latter is the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), where it is possible to witness a scenario of a collaboration between governments, scientists, companies, civil society, philanthropists, and community organizations [16].

In 2020, the 2030 Agenda Accelerator was created by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and The Partnering Initiative in collaboration with several other stakeholders to considerably aid and speed up the creation of effective partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the Agenda's main goals is to construct stakeholder alliances to help institutions establish stakeholder alliances (i.e., between different stakeholders such as civil society, business, government, NGOs, foundations, academia, and others).

4. The Limitations of SDG 17

SDG17 has been criticized because it focuses primarily on the economic pillar of sustainability—although, in theory, it does strive to address all three pillars equally (i.e., the environmental, social, and economic pillars). Moreover, the SDGs were established to expand the scope of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were initially created to provide development assistance from "providers" to "recipients", thereby widening the SDG approach beyond development so as to include multi-stakeholder partnerships.

It can also be argued that the original purpose of the MDGs has not been abandoned today, even with the development of the SDGs, but that the SDGs represent a wider and more effective concept in pursuit of more ambitious goals. "The classification of multi-stakeholder partnerships as (merely) "public, public-private, and civil society partnerships" presents a restricted view of the wide range of possible multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as levels of work to be able to meet the SDG targets" [17] (p. 32), hence the need to widen the base and scope of stakeholder participation in pursuit of the SDGs.

Flexibility needs to be promoted by multi-stakeholder partnerships. However, nowadays, there is a limited scope of collaboration that can result from multi-stakeholder partnerships. If the perspectives and viewpoints of the different social actors were to be considered, innovative standpoints could potentially be developed to manage the complex global challenges presented by the SDGs [17]. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can potentially encourage transformation from a political context, as well as empower the most vulnerable and marginalized actors. Additionally, the creation of a lessons-learned repository through the projects and initiatives performed via multi-stakeholder partnerships will help extend knowledge and create a shared comprehension of the importance of the role of different actors in society and in advocating change [18][19]. Exchanging knowledge should therefore be a priority to consider for the development of global alliances. However, complex problems often arise that are caused by the scarce data and information available nationally, which leads to data deficiency challenges at both regional and global levels [20].

Furthermore, the exchange of knowledge is essential to develop global alliances.

Data collection regarding the SDGs has always been a problem and was exacerbated during COVID-19 [20]. Recent studies suggest that there is currently a lack of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in advancing the transition toward sustainable development [3]. According to statistics from the United Nations, data is available for only 61% of countries. Part of the reason for this situation is the closure of many offices during the pandemic. This lack of data is responsible for the incomplete information on the many kinds of multi-stakeholder associations in existence, thus hindering the sharing of knowledge between them and with others. Therefore, knowledge-sharing and accountability are key to being able to comply with the SDGs. A problem that should be highlighted here is the lack of metrics to measure how exactly this will be achieved [1]. However, what is clear is that there is an evident need for multi-stakeholder partnership evaluation methods to attain information based on academic data [9]. According to van der Ven et al. (2016), the transformation toward the achievement of the SDGs will likely change the way the current political and economic systems work [21]. However, there is not enough quantifiable information to use as a basis to allow this change to begin.

According to Maltais et al. [22] from the Stockholm Resilience Institute, there are several recommendations that could be made in this regard:

- Develop a multi-stakeholder platform to promote the participation of actors from different sectors and social levels and collect information from already existing platforms.

- Give more prominence to less powerful groups that are not normally represented on multi-stakeholder platforms. Such a platform could facilitate addressing the complex and systematic issues highlighted in the different SDGs [23].

- Determine how multi-stakeholder partnerships handle conflict situations.

- The information to be collected should include data on the risks and potential of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

- Develop typologies and mapping exercises that could provide an overview of the different types of partnerships [9].

There is, therefore, a need for awareness-raising on how associations can be created and bring alongside both economic and social value for society, organizations, and people, thereby complying with the three pillars of sustainability. Moreover, collaborations should be encouraged both at the administrative and organizational levels (global, regional, national, and local) to connect actors across sectors and at different levels of society [18]. In this respect, innovation is key. New ways of working should be promoted via the promotion of a wide range of non-conventional sets of actors. The joint development (co-production) of knowledge and solutions to the SDGs will surely be enhanced with the participation of a broader range of stakeholders.

According to Pattberg and Widerberg [24], there are nine recommendations that could be made to improve the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships [24]:

- An optimal partner mix.

- Effective leadership.

- Establishment of specific objectives.

- Sustainable financing.

- Management of work processes.

- Periodicity in monitoring, reporting, and evaluations.

- Active meta governance.

- Favorable political and social context.

- Adapt and adjust to the context of the problem.

It is, therefore, very easy to question how realistic the scope of multi-stakeholder partnerships and SDG 17 are. The use of benchmarking exercises will prove useful to find out why some multi-stakeholder partnerships are more successful than others in achieving the targets set by the SDGs.

5. SDG 17 and Climate Change

The main aim of the staging of the Paris Agreements in December 2015 was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. United Nations Former General Secretary Ban Ki Moon, during the adoption of the Paris Agreement in COP-21 in Paris, noted that the Paris Agreement was a monumental triumph for both people and planet and that it set the basis to progress towards ending poverty, strengthening peace, and ensuring a life of dignity and opportunity for all. Regarding the SDGs, the global problem of climate change is tackled by SDG 13, titled "Climate action". The SDGs present hope for the future of climate change policies.

What is important to highlight is that as negotiations of the Paris Agreement (i.e., under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and the SDGs are being managed in different platforms and there is presently a problem regarding the fact that both cannot provide data and information and relate sufficiently to each other, there is therefore still

room for improvement in this regard. The argument is that countries should nationalize their own SDG targets and measurement criteria so as to be able to incorporate climate change into their national agendas.

The 17 SDGs (and 169 targets) incorporate certain elements of climate policy that are associated with the following:

- Mitigation of greenhouse gases (GHG).

- Adaptation to adverse impacts of climate change

- Finance.

- Technology transfer for developing countries.

- Capacity building for all stakeholders.

- Encouraging cooperation and partnerships among all.

These elements are encompassed in the climate policy of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Ari (2017) carried out an analysis of how these elements were associated with the different SDGs. Regarding SDG 17, climate change issues are relevant as regards (1) finance, (2) technology transfer, (3) capacity building, and (4) cooperation and partnerships. Making specific reference to technology (i.e., environmentally sound technology), regional and international cooperation should be encouraged.

By default, SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) are very much associated with the Paris Agreements. Similar to SDG 17, SDG 13 had an interconnection percentage with the Climate Agreements of 66.7%. SDG 7 emphasizes that all planetary citizens should have access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy. Furthermore, through this goal, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are reduced, thereby diminishing the effect of climate change. SDG 7 is associated with the climate action elements of climate change, technology transfer, cooperation, and partnerships, as well as finance elements. Finally, with respect to SDG 13, which represents climate action, there was an interconnection percentage of 100% between the latter and the six key Climate Change Agreement elements, as would be expected [25].

Further evidence focuses on how the Paris Agreement commitments are interconnected with the 2030 Agenda normatively and empirically. Most of the latter seem to demonstrate how climate change makes the achievement of some development targets more difficult to achieve. On the other hand, actions to mitigate climate change may, in turn, affect the other SDGs.

An assessment is necessary to determine the synergies and trade-offs between climate impacts and climate action in relation to the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. It is of considerable concern that climate change might influence all facets of sustainable development, making it essential to understand how climate change can enhance the SDGs and vice versa. However, although it is widely accepted that the two are related, there is limited research at the SDG level regarding potential synergies and tradeoffs [25]. A holistic perspective is therefore necessary in this respect.

It can be observed that most SDG targets (i.e., 15 out of the 17) have one or more targets that enable or reinforce climate change. SDG 17 does not seem to have any direct linkages to associations with climate. The absence of highlighting in red indicates the absence of identified evidence. According to the authors Nerini et al. [26], this lack of evidence does not necessarily mean there is the absence of an impact of climate change on the achievement of the SDGs [26]. As shown by Ari [25], there are associations between the climate action elements and SDG 17, highlighting that the formation of global alliances is necessary to try to help curb climate change [26]. Looking back at the rest of the SDGs, climate change is bound to affect the achievability of the goals that are associated with the well-being of human beings, such as employment, food, and water availability. The shortage of water, for example, may directly affect people´s health by curtailing their access to drinking water and sanitation. The same can happen with how climate change may impact agricultural lands, potentially affecting populations through the diminishment of crops and potentially leading to malnutrition [26]. Moreover, the knowledge and evidence regarding sustainable development and climate action appear to be rather dispersed and are divided between many different institutions, locations, and disciplines, both locally and internationally. This represents a critical obstacle to achieving an integrated and holistic understanding of the potential impacts of the SDGs on climate action. Such shared knowledge and shared experience are essential for the development of awareness and policy support programs aimed at curbing the problem of climate change. Currently, the way things are handled prevents progress in this respect. Firstly, climate development research requires there to be integration regarding methods used across different disciplines, such as the natural sciences, engineering, and humanities. Interdisciplinary research, in this regard, should be promoted as it facilitates the following benefits: (1) greater legitimacy, (2) the ability to

retain cutting-edge scientific talent, as well as (3) the transmission of useful and necessary knowledge to society [27]. Furthermore, more efforts are needed to be able to develop practical frameworks to explore the associations among the different SDGs [28][29].

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