SDplanNet
Sharing tools in planning for Sustainable Development

Summary of Capacity-building Needs to Advance Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation

Synthesis of Regional Perspectives from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin-America and the Caribbean

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Introduction

According to the UN Outcome document from Rio+20 (The Future We Want), the framework for moving forward with the Post-2015 Development Agenda calls for

> a more coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national, sub-national and local levels. . . and, to this end, we call on countries to strengthen national, sub-national and/or local institutions or relevant multi-stakeholder bodies and processes . . . to coordinate on matters of sustainable development and to enable effective integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. (§ 76)

This will require effective and innovative approaches to planning by reconciling priorities over time, sectors, regions and stakeholder groups in order to tailor strategies and policies to the requirements of sustainable development (SD).

In 2014, the Sustainable Development Planning Network (SDplanNet) together with its collaborating partners the Global Network for National Councils for Sustainable Development (GN-NCSDS) and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) and with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), convened a series of three regional workshops with development planning experts in government, academia and civil society in Latin America & Caribbean, Africa and Asia & Pacific. The purpose of these workshops was to explore the future of development planning and implementation practices at the national and subnational levels and identify key capacity building and knowledge-sharing needs.

ABOUT SDPLANNET

SDplanNet is a sustainable development planning network created to help government professionals at the national and subnational levels share best practices and build capacity in the preparation and implementation of strategies for sustainable development and inclusive and fair green economies.

SDplanNet is a system of regional networks operating in Asia & Pacific and Latin America & Caribbean since 2008, with a new network started in Africa in 2013. Regional advisory groups guide the work of the networks and consist of regional UN Agencies, Economic Development Organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions among others with common mandates for advancing strategy making and implementation for sustainable development and a green economy.

SDplanNet is administered by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the Africa Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPSN) and is sponsored in its current phase by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

For more information visit www.SDplanNet.org.

The SDplanNet regional workshop series focused on four core areas of development planning and implementation necessary for for achieving transformative change through the post-2015 Development Agenda and sustainable development goals (SDGs) now being discussed on the international stage. The four core areas covered include:

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1. Multistakeholder processes and institutions
2. Integrated planning for vertical collaboration at different levels of government
3. Scaling up implementation through cross-cutting policies providing multiple synergies
4. Monitoring and reporting and accountability

This paper highlights common capacity building needs identified across the three regional workshops undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Africa and Asia and Pacific (AP) that were deemed necessary for advancing the integration of sustainable development principles and green economy approaches into planning and implementation practices. It thus provides key guidance for a capacity-development agenda to be implemented during 2014 and 2015, and beyond, as countries prepare to deliver the post-2015 development agenda and the global SDGs.

The findings in this paper are based on a series of three-day regional workshops held in LAC (February, 2014), Africa (Nairobi, March 2014) and AP (Incheon, April 2014). The information is based on the discussions and notes taken during these workshops as summarized in the Regional Practice Papers that were provided for review by the workshop participants.[1] This paper also includes a synthesis of capacity-building needs prioritized during the UNOSD's "Sustainable Development Transition Forum", held in Incheon in April 2014. During this forum the regional participants had an opportunity to review the capacity needs from their respective regional workshops and expanded on priority areas for action through summary presentations and plenary discussions. A synthesis of global capacity building needs was identified (UNOSD, n.d.).

This paper is structured according to the four key planning and implementation practice areas: each section synthesizes the regional visions and ideas for the future of planning and implementation in 2030 followed by an overview of current practices and gaps. The paper concludes with a review of capacity-building needs as they were identified across regions and across the four core planning and implementation practice areas.

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[1] Latin America & Caribbean Regional Practices Paper: See Tulsie et al. (2014)www.SDplanNetLAC.org; Africa Regional Practices Paper see Urama et al. (2014); Asia & Pacific Regional Practices Paper see: Antonio et al., 2014

Key Aspects of Development Planning and Implementation

Multistakeholder Participation

Multistakeholder participation allows for multiple perspectives to be brought into the SD process. It allows for the identification and implementation of innovative policies and programs. The Rio+20 Outcome Document (*The Future We Want*) identifies multistakeholder participation as crucial for sustainable development. Establishing parternships and participation modalities is likely to become increasingly important for all stages of policy planning and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs

In terms of **a future vision for 2030**, all the regions suggested the creation of a dedicated body to ensure that multistakeholder engagement is effectively undertaken. They emphasized that the use of multistakeholder engagement is foundationally a governance issue that needs to be supported by political will as well as by trust building between those involved. To enable effective stakeholder coordination, LAC recommended the creation of a national sustainable development council or similar body whose membership is composed of key members of society. LAC and AP also emphasized the role of such a body in ensuring desirable governance structures with regards to the roles and responsibilities of governments, NGOs, private sector and industry groups, and public sector entities. In addition, Africa and AP suggested that multistakeholder participation should be actively used to oversee the policy vision for sustainable development, as well as define strategies and action plans for the short, medium and long terms. Although recognizing this diverse composition and outlining the potential procedural activities of this body, all the regions highlighted that a President or Prime Minister should chair this body, and that the other members should be a representative cross-section drawn from government departments, civil society, academia and business.

To contrast this with **current state of practices** in the three regions, national development plans are often collections of sectorally agreed objectives developed through expert feedback while considering the visions and priorities of wider stakeholder groups. In many countries in the three regions, there are state-created bodies implementing waste management, tourism, agriculture, water management: they often represent a statutorily created interest group that addresses national development issues, and thus deepens the planning process. LAC noted the use of bottom-up approaches in some countries wherein provincial, local governments or a dedicated national body meet with constituents to agree on priorities to be considered at the national level. Examples of such activities include Ecuador's "National Plan Buen Vivir," which promotes the gradual construction of a pluri-national and intercultural state based upon a participatory process in the form of citizen workshops, The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development—which was the very first council created worldwide after the Rio Summit in 1992—has been instrumental for sharing its rich experiences with similar bodies in other countries. Another example is the Republic of Benin, where the SD plan has been translated into four local languages and French to ensure effective dissemination to the public and the grassroots levels to increase its impact.

Across all regions, key gaps and challenges include lack of institutional and financial frameworks, mechanisms for effective consultations and incorporation of stakeholders' inputs into long-term planning.

TABLE 1. OVERVIEW OF FUTURE VISIONS, CURRENT STITUATION AND CAPACITY GAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTISTAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

VISION 2030	LAC	AFRICA	AP
Formation of a national SD council/commission or similar body for coordinating stakeholders	•	•	•
Oversees overall policy vision, defines strategies and action plans for the short, medium and long terms		•	•
Encourages cooperation, cultural acceptance, leadership, relationship building in stakeholder groups	•	•	
President or Prime Minister chairs this council as part of executive committee driving this body		•	•
The executive committee meets three times a year to review updates on their mandate/ role		•	
Adequate mechanisms for facilitation of horizontal and vertical communication and feedback	•	•	•
Each priority theme has a working committee composed of various stakeholder groups and experts		•	
Continual assessment, development of capacity and resources for meaningful participation	•	•	•
Contribution of the private sector to the success of the post-2015 agenda is recognized and it is formally represented	•	•	
The range of perspectives and interests of civil society is represented by the inclusion of NGOs	•		
Decentralized and local governance is enabled by the integration of multiple levels of governments	•	•	•
Stakeholder clusters based on sector, geography, demography, and cultures are engaged at all stages of the policy process	•	•	•
EXISTING PRACTICES	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Marked differences in the levels of stakeholder engagement for SD across different countries	•	•	•
Sector-based approach is predominant planning model (each sector develops own vision)	•	•	•
National development plans tend to be a collection of sectorally agreed long-term objectives developed through collaboratively formulated visions	•	•	•
Evidence of bottom-up approach wherein national councils and/or subnational governments meet with constituents to agree on national development priorities	•	•	•
Evidence of state-created bodies configured to represent special stakeholder interests (council/ commission or other similar)	•	•	
Evidence of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)	•	•	•
Review of development plans is often triggered by changes in government, with required changes undergoing formal multistakeholder consultation processes	•		
The voice of civil society is becoming increasingly powerful; created advocacy groups	•		•
CHALLENGES AND GAPS	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Lack of institutionalized mechanisms or frameworks for sustainable engagement and consultations	•	•	•
Predominance of sector-based planning and conflicts in integrating intra-national issues	•	•	•
Development visions/plans do not consider the longer-term perspectives	•		
Lack of awareness and understanding of key SD issues by stakeholders participating in the process, including institutional and public sectors at the national and local levels	•	•	
Insufficient opportunities for regional and international cooperation and sharing of best practices in sustainable development planning	•		•
Current centralized planning models do not include adequate opportunities for stakeholder participation in policy-making and planning	•		
Poor communication skills amongst stakeholders, including governments and NGOs		•	•
Inadequate resources and financing to bring stakeholder voices into strategy-making process	•	•	•
Poor implementation of stakeholder recommendations		•	

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Integrated Planning Between Different Levels of Government

The timely achievement of the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs will require bringing together insights and priorities from local, subnational and national levels and collaborative planning among all levels.

Government planners and experts in the three regions saw successful **development planning in the year 2030** as being a product of an appropriate shared national development vision incorporating the principles of the post-2015 development agenda. This vision would be crafted by relevant stakeholders in a process led by a dedicated council/ commission including relevant actors of government at national and subnational levels. This would also require developing specific linkages with global, regional, national and local policies and plans (so-called "glocal" planning) to ensure that they are harmonized with the development themes and goals relevant at each level. Based on the themes, goals and targets for achieving the vision would be identified and agreed upon, and then short- and medium-term plans would be created through collaboration among all levels of government. These goals and targets would then serve as the focal point for investments in sustainable development that are outcome- or results-based. It was suggested that innovative governance arrangements and practices that integrate vertical and horizontal collaboration could be implemented through a National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) or similar institution: it would provide horizontal collaboration through existing and new relationships across different sectors of the economy, including finance, environment and social departments, and through vertical relationships between multistakeholder bodies and governments at national, subnational and local levels.

In terms of **existing practices and capacities**, it was mentioned that subnational and local governments often had limited capacity for planning and implementation, and thus integrated planning was generally limited and strategic planning was mostly within the purview of sectoral interests. However, a movement across the three regions towards greater inclusion of stakeholders in planning and implementation processes was described. This movement was seen as being largely driven by re-configured state planning agencies that are created with a mandate for stakeholder engagement in development plans addressing national and subnational agendas. Africa noted that there are "limited good examples across countries in the region." However, some examples were noted in areas such as river basin management. In some countries, the coordination of state bodies helps to ensure coherence between national and subnational levels, and includes exemplary monitoring and evaluation reporting systems at different levels of government. In terms of specific examples, in Colombia and in Uganda, development plans take into consideration issues and priorities at the sub-county, district, and national levels, and once approved they are adopted at the local/municipal level to begin implementation. Finally in Bhutan, the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Commission ensures horizontal and vertical coordination of planning across departments and with local plans. The Development Plans in Uganda take into consideration issues at the sub-county, district, sector, and national development plans.

Most important challenges and barriers were seen as being related to poor governance structures and lack of coordination among governmental and non-governmental agencies. This often included sectoral approach to planning, which hinders the development of a common vision and causes the fragmentation of planning and implementation processes (and thus poor integration) and limits the interest of stakeholders in these processes.
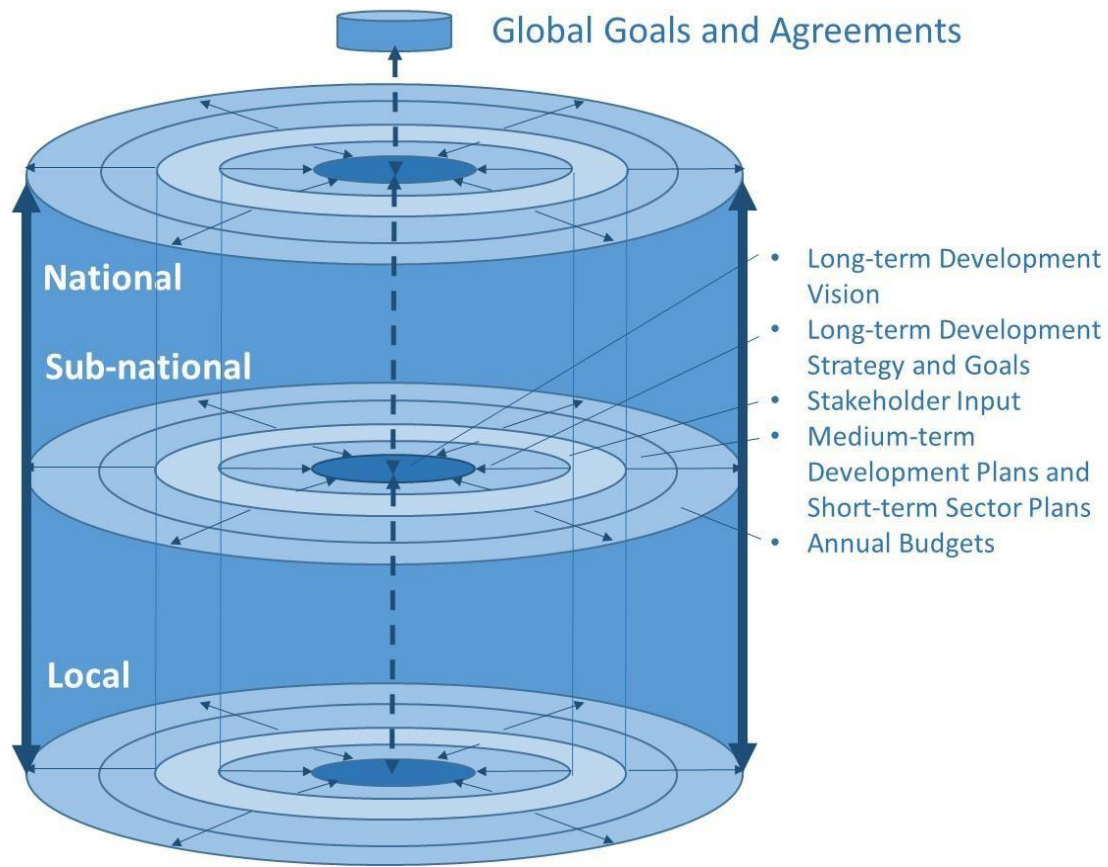
FIGURE 1. ENVISAGED INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING GOVERNANCE AND PRACTICE ELEMENTS TO ACHIEVE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL COLLABORATION

TABLE 2. OVERVIEW OF FUTURE VISIONS, CURRENT STITUATION AND CAPACITY GAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERGRATED PLANNING ACROSS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

FUTURE VISION 2030	LAC	AFRICA	AP
Development strategy is multi-decadal; identifies themes along with specific goals and targets	•		•
Communicated to all levels of government, private sector and civil society, the strategy is the focal point for investment in national development	•		•
Nested planning processes occur at national, subnational and local levels taking into account unique contexts	•	•	•
Ministries, subnational, statutory and non-governmental organizations are assigned various levels of responsibility for the delivery of results	•	•	
Vertical relationships exist between NCSD and other subnational bodies (including states, provinces, districts, cities and communities)		•	•
Empowerment of communities to implement priority actions by subsidiarity principle and capacity building		•	
Provisions are made for gender mainstreaming and consideration for vulnerable groups		•	
Experiences are shared between communities; effective communication of results to stakeholders	•	•	•
Accountability and transparency/clear responsibilities		•	•
Good monitoring system at all levels	•	•	
Political goodwill and less corruption		•	
Regular communication and feedback mechanisms	•	•	•
Integration of indigenous knowledge systems		•	
Linkages with global, regional, national and local policies and plans	•	•	•
EXISTING PRACTICES	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Varied approaches to vertical and horizontal integration	•	•	•
SIDS members are especially weak in their capacity for integration	•		•
In some jurisdictions, new or reconfigured state planning agencies are being created with mandates for stakeholder engagement in articulating development plans	•	•	•
In some jurisdictions, plans developed through wide consultations are returned to local governments and municipalities for implementation with requirements to assess and report on progress	•		
MDGs have catalyzed a deliberate integration of globally agreed development targets into national strategies, plans and commissions/councils to facilitate vertical and horizontal collaboration	•	•	
Vision-based national development planning is a shortcoming at the subnational level	•	•	•
Regional coordinating activities in cross-cutting issues such as river basins, infrastructure, energy		•	
The sectoral approach creates challenges for the active involvement of subnational and non-government stakeholders	•	•	•
CHALLENGES AND GAPS	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Lack of coordination between governmental and non-governmental agencies	•	•	•
Centralized, bureaucratic governance structure with weak institutional support	•	•	•
Poor accountability and transparency		•	
Poor implementation mechanisms		•	•
Lack of harmonized and coherent plans		•	
Lack of evidence-based planning		•	•
Poor alignment of plans against human needs and priorities		•	•
Inadequate institutional and legal frameworks to support holistic planning	•	•	•
Weak skills to explore vertical, horizontal channels for consultations and collaboration in planning	•		
Absence of a formal process to determine development priorities	•		•
Lack of flexibility of approved plans to address changing internal and external circumstances.	•	•	

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Integration Across Sectors to Improve Co-Benefits with Focus on Water, Energy, and Food Security

The implementation of the post-2015 development agenda will occur against a backdrop of economic shocks, financial strain and climate adaptation, and will thus necessitate doing more with less. To deliver on commingled issues such as water, energy and food security, it will be critical for policies and programs to address multiple issues simultaneously.

The **preferred state** of governance for SD by the year 2030 as suggested via the regional workshops varied from one region to the other. However, all regions recommend focusing on key development themes and taking a cross-sectorial approach based on a commonly agreed vision. The three regions sought to eliminate the inefficiencies and impediments to progress currently experienced in the traditional silo approach. An integrated approach was seen as critical to implementing the post-2015 development agenda. The elaborated model was dominated by the development of "sector-neutral" development themes derived from the national development visions. These themes do not concern any particular sector by being cross-cutting, and issues include poverty reduction, employment, gender, environmental sustainability. Such an approach was seen as allowing the equal participation of different sectors and levels of governments, all of which are interested in the achievement of such objectives. In an inclusive manner, pathways to achieve these outcomes are developed and agreed upon. It was also suggested that processes for screening policies, programs and projects for budgetary allocations could be used to promote synergies by giving a higher ranking to synergistic investments that yield benefits across development themes.

In terms of **existing practices**, there was limited application or perhaps awareness of cross-cutting policies and programs across the regions. However, climate change adaptation is one area in which an integrated approach is used, and thus cross-sector benefits are being achieved. Good practice examples do exist, however, such as in Brazil, where its social safety net program "Bolsa Família" has reduced poverty and inequality; the PRONAF program supports food security through microcredit; and the Bolsa Verde ("Green Grant")—an incentive mechanism to develop conservation and sustainable use projects. Other examples may be found in Malaysia, which has an Inter-Agency Planning Committee established to coordinate planning with input from the private sector, and in Burundi, where there are on-going efforts to harmonize policies in sectors such as water, climate change, environment, energy and food security to ensure coherence in action. The participants also indicated that sometimes it is easier to achieve co-benefits at local levels where sector interest are less central and needs are more immediate.

It was generally believed that there is a need for governments to put into place mechanisms to ensure effective and efficient planning and implementation of such cross-cutting policies. A limited number of countries have strategies, action plans and tools to ensure such implementation. For example, Bhutan's GNH Commission uses a policy screening tool to assess policy and program proposals to ensure they support the country's goals for Gross National Happiness. In this instance, policies that do not achieve a sufficient ranking are sent back to policy-makers for improvement.

Challenges and gaps are similar across regions, and include poor policy implementation across sectors, lack of coordination in policy development and implementation, lack of policy harmonization leading to institutional conflicts, and a poor understanding of the needs and interests of stakeholders.

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TABLE 3. OVERVIEW OF FUTURE VISION, CORRECT PRACTICE AND GAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTEGRATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT POLICY AREAS TO IMPROVE CO-BENEFITS

VISION 2030	LAC	AFRICA	AP
Development themes are derived from the vision for national development and, where possible, are intended to be sector neutral (e.g. poverty reduction, employment, governance, inclusion, gender safety, environmental sustainability)	•	•	•
Coming to an agreed path to achieve these thematic objectives requires the involvement of all relevant stakeholders	•		•
A process for screening policies/programs for budgetary allocations is another important tool for achieving synergies across sectors by giving preference to those that yield benefits across themes	•		•
Policies must be based on existing resources (human and material) available in the countries		•	
Policies should be demand-driven, people centred and home-grown	•	•	•
There is a coherence in policy formulation identifying synergies across the relevant sectors	•	•	•
A national innovation system coordinates activities of the different sectors of the economy		•	
Good governance and effective leadership drives the policies that were developed	•	•	•
EXISTING PRACTICES	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Silo model currently limits opportunities for creation of co-benefits across sectors, and results in a slower rate of progress towards development goals than would a cross-cutting approach	•	•	•
Application of integrated development planning tools denies cross-sector benefit opportunities	•	•	•
Climate change adaptation policies and programs use integrated approach and achieves co-benefits	•		•
MEA implementation directs efforts to achieve co-benefits across/between MEAs	•		
Evidence of cross-cutting policies being used in various countries	•	•	•
Policy formulation at local levels can also generate co-benefits	•		•
Some countries report undertaking adequate stakeholder consultations and processes leading to policy development across sectors for SD		•	
CHALLENGES AND GAPS	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Poor policy implementation across sectors	•	•	•
Lack of coordination in policy development and implementation	•	•	•
Poor monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of policies		•	•
New and emerging issues such as climate change not captured yet in national policies		•	
Corruption in high and low places of government		•	
Lack of legislative backing for the commission coordinating the implementation of SD plan		•	•
Institutional conflicts due to the lack of national coordination system or similar body	•	•	
Little evidence-based policy development	•	•	•
Poor utilization of endogenous capacities		•	•
Policies not often translated most into other local languages		•	
Lack of political goodwill to make policies that are pro-poor		•	
Legislative bureaucracies	•	•	
Poor understanding of stakeholders and their needs, interests, power, etc.	•	•	•
Lack of negotiation, communication skills (e.g., ministry focuses on a sector; municipality on a place)	•	•	•

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) systems help provide the necessary incentives to achieve commitments, as well as provide information and rationale for determining the efficiency of programs and investments. They thus enable policy-makers to take up the most efficient ways of achieving the post-2015 development agenda and related goals.

The **preferred state** of MER practices for the year 2030 differed from one region to the other. However, all regions emphasized the critical importance of effective MER systems in achieving sustainable development goals by 2030, as well as the need for MER systems to be based on SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) targets. The countries believe that MER should play a central and strategic role in informing policy-making and investments decisions, especially as it enables evidence-based policy making. The MER system will provide evidence as to what is and what is not working, and about the cost effectiveness of policy options. The countries recommended a set of six elements for the MER system to deliver on these stated purposes: indicators, baselines, data sets, capacity, participation and accountability. It was recommended that all entities responsible for policy formulation, program design, program implementation, and investment decisions be subject to the MER process. The foundation of this MER system would be the development plan with goals/outcomes that are clearly stated, universally accepted and measurable. The adopted MER system was seen as instrumental for achieving SDG targets by 2030.

In terms of **current situation and practices**, monitoring and evaluation were viewed as key to inform policy and investment decisions and better assess public sector investments. There are many examples of ongoing programs with clear MER frameworks. For example, in Costa Rica, the National Assessment System operates in the Planning Ministry (MIDEPLAN), which carries out the monitoring and evaluation of goals and policies of the national plans and conducts regular reviews. In Bangladesh the NCSD was created specifically to undertake MER. Some of these systems are managed at the Head-of-State level, and conducted by implementation agencies. In some cases, these systems are practiced by central agencies such as the ministry responsible for finance or planning. Some countries have national monitoring systems that track progress towards the goals of the national plan to gauge progress. Laws relating to public access to information are driving MER reporting. However, the predominant model is about expenditure reporting and issues of public sector investment transparency. Overall, there is increasing recognition of the value of monitoring, evaluation and reporting as a tool for improved accountability and governance. Furthermore, MER capacities and skills have improved and statistical services and information are provided at various levels of government.

A significant perceived challenge is an imbalance between the supply and demand for information, a lack of ability and skills with respect to managing, analyzing and using information (particularly at the subnational and local levels), and a lack of linkages between MER systems and development objectives.

TABLE 4. OVERVIEW OF FUTURE VISIONS, CURRENT PRACTICE AND GAPS IN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

VISION 2030	LAC	AFRICA	AP
Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) has a central and strategic role in informing policy-making processes and investment decisions	•	•	•
MER contributes to evidenced-based approach and accountability	•		•
The MER system is founded on clear goals, robust data sets to establish baselines, measure progress	•	•	•
Stakeholders at all levels facilitate the MER process	•	•	
All entities responsible for policy formulation, program design and implementation, and investment decisions are subject to the MER process (e.g., government ministries, cities, towns, village councils, statutory corporations)	•	•	•
MER system design is based on principles of transparency, accountability and good governance	•		•
The outcomes of the development plan are clearly stated, universally accepted and measurable	•		•
Reports are released to agencies responsible for the development goals, public, decision-makers	•		
Systems are in place to facilitate policy and goal reviews based on MER outcomes	•		•
Capacity development is undertaken to enable meaningful participation by all stakeholders	•	•	
MER frameworks and processes are mandatory for all development partners	•		•
Clear goals are set at the national and subnational levels that align with global SD goals		•	
Goals have clear indicators that are SMART-specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound at national and subnational levels that mirror the global indicators	•	•	•
MER system addresses participatory monitoring taking local knowledge into consideration		•	
MER system enables trust building among stakeholders	•	•	•
EXISTING PRACTICES	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Overall, there is increasing recognition of the important role of MER, but the predominant model is based on expenditure monitoring	•	•	•
Existing monitoring and evaluation networks have assisted countries in developing and implementing MER systems and processes	•		•
Some MER systems are managed at the Head-of-State level and conducted by the agencies responsible for program implementation	•		•
Some MER systems are managed by a central agency (usually the ministry responsible for finance or planning)	•	•	•
Central bodies oversee the engagement of the public and other stakeholders in the monitoring process	•		
Laws on public access to information drive MER reporting and public access to these reports	•	•	•
The predominant MER model concerns expenditure and public sector investment reporting	•		
At the subnational level, there is evidence of municipalities conducting public hearings to allow public's participation in MER process	•		
Low capacity in terms of expertise to deliver a systematic, evidence-based view		•	•
CHALLENGES AND GAPS	**LAC**	**AFRICA**	**AP**
Imbalance between supply and demand for information to support policy formulation and planning	•	•	•
Lack of horizontal and vertical information flows	•	•	•
While at the state (federal) level the skills are there, at local levels skills are lacking with respect to managing, analyzing and using information	•		
Excessive red tape—too much paperwork and bureaucracy in many information processes	•	•	•
Monitoring reporting and accountability are not sufficiently linked to development objectives	•	•	•

Synthesis of Future Planning and Implementation Practices

Participants from the three regions, along with the respective coordinators of the SDplanNet regional networks, had an opportunity to take a synthetic view of the future practices described in the above sections at the first "Sustainable Development Transition Forum" hosted by the UNOSD in South Korea from April 9 to 11, 2014. Table 5 presents this synthesis, including European perspectives covering the prioritized areas such as multistakeholder participation in institutions and strategy development, using integrated planning approaches, implementing cross-cutting policies and programs, and advancing monitoring and reporting efforts to support accountability.

During the forum, participants gave high importance to multistakeholder participation in SD strategy and policy development. It was emphasized that having diverse perspectives provided by stakeholders representing different institutions, interests groups, NGO's and coming from different regions increases the quality of the strategies and policies as well as the buy-in and support for the policies when they are translated into action plans and implemented. A core part of the future priorities focused also on communication to and across diverse stakeholders' groups and the public to make sure that their interest and input on implementing SD priorities are properly accounted for.

A key component of the planning process that was very strongly emphasized during the focus was the importance of integrated planning that enables policy-makers to consider cross-sectorial linkages over longer time horizons and across multiple levels (i.e., from local to national and vice versa). While the participants viewed such planning is a prerequisite for effective implementation of SD, they also recognized that most of the policy-makers lack tools on integrated planning and for monitoring budget allocations in an integrated manner.

To operationalize the integrated planning process a mechanism must be created to integrate cross-cutting policies and programs by ensuring close collaboration between different sectorally focused institutions such as ministries, departments. It would use approaches such as mainstreaming to help policy-makers integrate cross-sectoral perspectives into day-to-day implementation.

Like the regional workshops, the forum discussions also prioritized monitoring, reporting and accountability. This included recognizing the importance of good data availability to support evidence-based policy-making, using different means of monitoring (including participatory systems) and, finally, actively integrating outcomes of the monitoring efforts with progressing implementation of goals and priorities to make sure that implementation is effective and responsive to trends indicated from the monitoring efforts. Finally, they also prioritized regular reviews of the goals and implementation of national strategies.

TABLE 5. SYNTHESIS OF REGIONAL INSIGHTS ON THE FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE AND PRACTICE DEVELOPED AT THE UNOSD SD TRANSITION FORUM

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AREA	PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES
Multistakeholder Institutions & Strategy	• A multistakeholder council serves as champion and bridge across policy cycles and is a legislated part of the national strategy and planning process. • The multistakeholder council is chaired by the president/prime minister with strong political commitment. • Non-state actors from across civil society are actively participating in the planning and implementation process. • Communications and information are considered integral to participation, and embrace the science-policy interface. • Communication and public awareness on sustainable development form a core practice of government. • Awards for sustainable development innovation and action are regularly announced and provide attractive content for journalists.
Integrated Planning	• A single development strategy that incorporates sustainable development as its core is adopted. • There is deeper engagement by finance and planning ministries and models for promoting mainstreaming within line ministries. • A "glocal planning" (global to local) approach is used to achieve vertical alignment and coordination among levels of government in the development planning process and provides access to information, and a space for participation in the planning process, and capacity building at the local level. • Budgets are set and monitored based on achievement of goals rather than individual programs. • Rule of law is considered in capacity development for improved planning and implementation practices.
Implementing Cross-cutting Policies and Programs	• There is a close relationship between science and policy. • The screening of policies and programs to achieve national goals, including cross-cutting goals is a required part of the approval process. • Exposure to natural shocks is considered, and therefore risk management is a cross-cutting issue. • A horizontal planning approach is used to achieve cross-cutting goals such as gender mainstreaming, renewable energy and using such tools as poverty impact assessment and devolution and decentralization. • Policies provide incentive for action.
Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability	• Ground-based data is a critical component of the evidenced-based aspect of policy-making. • Monitoring and reporting is based on disaggregated data, participatory monitoring, and SMART measures. • An Ombudsperson for Future Generations regularly audits and reviews progress toward goals, and oversees a reflexe process to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation of the plan and key policies and program. • Peer reviews of the national strategy and plan are conducted on a regular basis.

Source: UNOSD (n.d.).

Towards a Capacity Building Agenda for Preparing Countries to Implement the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs

This section presents capacity building needs for the planning and implementation practice to help countries implement the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs. The outcomes are based on the discussions during the UNOSD's Sustainable Development Transition Forum, when the regional participants had an opportunity to review the capacity needs from their regional workshops and identify priority areas for action. A synthesis of capacity building needs for the three regions is listed in Table 6 (see UNOSD, n.d.).

Across regions, capacity building agendas share many common needs irrespective of the specific situation of the region/country. It is also noteworthy that many of the issues are intertwined, and thus there is often significant overlap between capacity building agendas. For instance, multistakeholder participation was seen as critical to integrated analysis and planning, sectoral integration, and the development of monitoring, evaluation and reporting (MER) systems. Meanwhile, effective MER was also described as being foundational to adequate integrated analysis and planning and sectoral integration. MER is also critical for effective stakeholder engagement because stakeholders must be properly informed about programs and policies in order to be meaningfully engaged in planning and implementation processes.

With regard to multistakeholder participation, key issues included the relative lack of a common vision and clarity of goals for participation, lack of processes and tools for formal (and effective) methods to ensure meaningful stakeholder participation at the national and subnational levels, as well as the need to promote education and awareness of issues to ensure that all stakeholders are well informed and able to participate in policy processes.

In the area of integrated planning between the national, subnational and regional levels of government, most countries used sectoral approaches to planning, which are seen as detrimental to vertical and horizontal collaboration. Furthermore, multistakeholder engagement was seen as critical to achieving greater collaboration. In all regions, tools and approaches that help create effective collaborative processes to develop overarching development visions and procedures to achieve these outcomes are instrumental. It was proposed that integrated planning needs to be mandated by legislation. Also crucial are the tools for (and examples of) linking integrated planning with budget allocation, departmental action plans, and trade-off assessments across sectors and regions.

Integrated planning is closely tied to the *implementation of cross-cutting policies and programs* that aims at demonstrating how policies are incorporating national and subnational SD goals and targets in the short-, medium- and long-term plans. Capacity needs included support with using of policy screening tools to identify synergies and trade-offs, tools for cost-benefits analyses and capacity support for local governments where the actual implementation tend to occur and the capacities are often weak.

In relation to monitoring, evaluation and reporting, all the regions emphasized the need to improve data collection, analysis and to advance dissemination of monitoring outcomes to all stakeholders and to develop skills and capabilities of agencies to undertake adequate MER to enable countries to successfully monitor their pursuit of sustainable development goals. While both regions elaborated on norms and procedures to make this possible, the countries also suggested the need for credible auditing mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring of policy impacts.

Summary of Capacity-building Needs to Advance Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation

TABLE 6. OVERVIEW OF CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS AS PRIORITIZED BY EACH REGION AND GROUPED BY THE KEY THEMES

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION AREA	PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES
Multistakeholder Institutions & Strategy	• Communication to effectively encourage stakeholder participation (including international processes and how they can impact on local development planning, LAC). • Understanding the perspective of other stakeholders and negotiation skills (LAC). • Multistakeholder councils/bodies with power devolution systems, harmonized committee (Africa). • Involving municipalities in the national, subnational planning process - role for the NCSD (Africa). • Training on multistakeholder participation (on all aspects of process, AP). • Forecasting and scenario building (Africa). • Improving transparency and accountability (AsiaPacific). • Better clarity of goals and understanding (AsiaPacific).
Integrated Planning	• Decentralization of policy and planning processes (LAC). • Legislation for integrated planning (LAC). • Allocation of adequate budgeting resources (Africa). • Tools for long-term planning (AP). • Having an overarching planning institution that is sensitive and flexible and takes care of varying needs of the country and specific regions (AP). • Tools and examples of trade-off assessments (AP). • Setting of achievable objectives that are clearly segmented between departments (AP). • Allow for planning at different levels and provide opportunities and mechanism for sharing and learning at each levels (AP);
Implementing Cross-cutting Policies and Programs	• Sensitivity analysis - CBA (cost-benefit analysis) and other tools (AP). • Political pressure for unviable policies (AP). • Creating tools and approaches to connect strategies and budget – how? (AP). • Local government capacity to implement policies (AP). • Screening of SD dimensions of policies /tools (AP).
Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability	• Data collection and access to information (LAC). • Local-level information management (LAC). • Standards for quality data collection and analysis, a national framework for MER (Africa). • Auditing mechanisms (Africa). • Data quality and statistical validity (AP). • Monitoring of policy impact (AP). • Regional harmonization of data definition (AP).

Source: UNOSD (2014).

Summary of Capacity-building Needs to Advance Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation

Strengthening and Coordinating Communities of Practice

Government planners and experts in all regions discussed the important role that Communities of Practice (CoP) play in helping countries share knowledge of good practices for SD planning and implementation, and in building relevant capacities at systemic, institutional and individual levels. The regions identified existing networks and a set of actions and processes to help ensure that the Communities of Practice are strengthened and effectively coordinated.

Mapping of Regional Actors

Network maps were developed for each the regions from the vantage point of the SDplanNet to provide a view of the constellation of actors that have an interest in and mandate for advancing development planning practices generally and the integration of SD principles more specifically.

The network maps for Latin America and Caribbean, Africa and Asia & Pacific are provided in Figures 2, 3 and 4, respectively, and show the countries and organizations that the SDplanNet regional networks were able to engage with during the 2014 regional workshop series. Overall, 41 country government participants took part in the regional workshop series including 14 from LAC, 15 from Africa and 12 from Asia and the Pacific. Among the participants, approximately 60 per cent were from planning- and finance-related departments. In addition, 31 different organizations participated in the regional workshop series representing a cross section of United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, and consultancies.

A number of other networks and organizations that were not directly engaged in the regional workshop series were identified as being important to future efforts of SDplanNet in relation to capacity building and knowledge sharing for integrating sustainable development into planning and implementation processes and institutions at the national, subnational and local levels.

- **Latin America & Caribbean**: Redeplan (network of planning ministries), Latin American Centre for Public Administration (CLAD), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).
- **Africa**: East African Sustainability Watch Network; Network on Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa; Sub-global Assessment Network; UNDP; SDSN.
- **Asia- Pacific:** Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network; Low Carbon Research Network; Sustainable Mekong Research Network; Asian Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network; Promotion of sustainability in Postgraduate Education and Research (ProSPER.Net); UNDP; SDSN
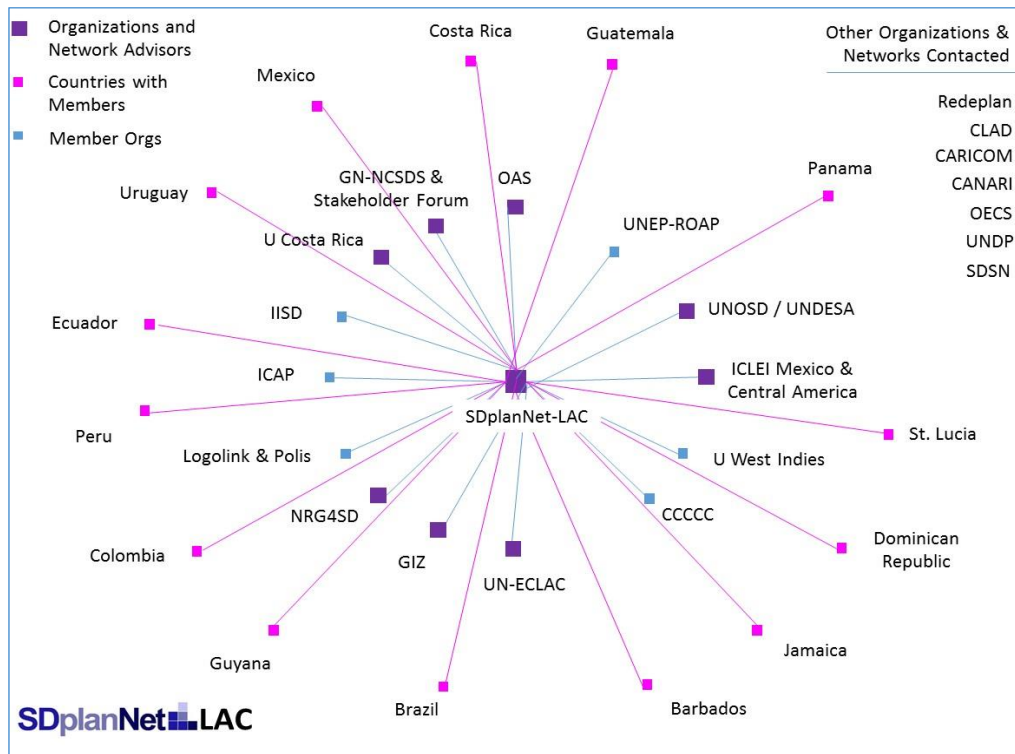
FIGURE 2. SDPLANNET-LAC NETWORK MAP OF ACTORS FOR THE 2014 REGIONAL WORKSHOP SERIES
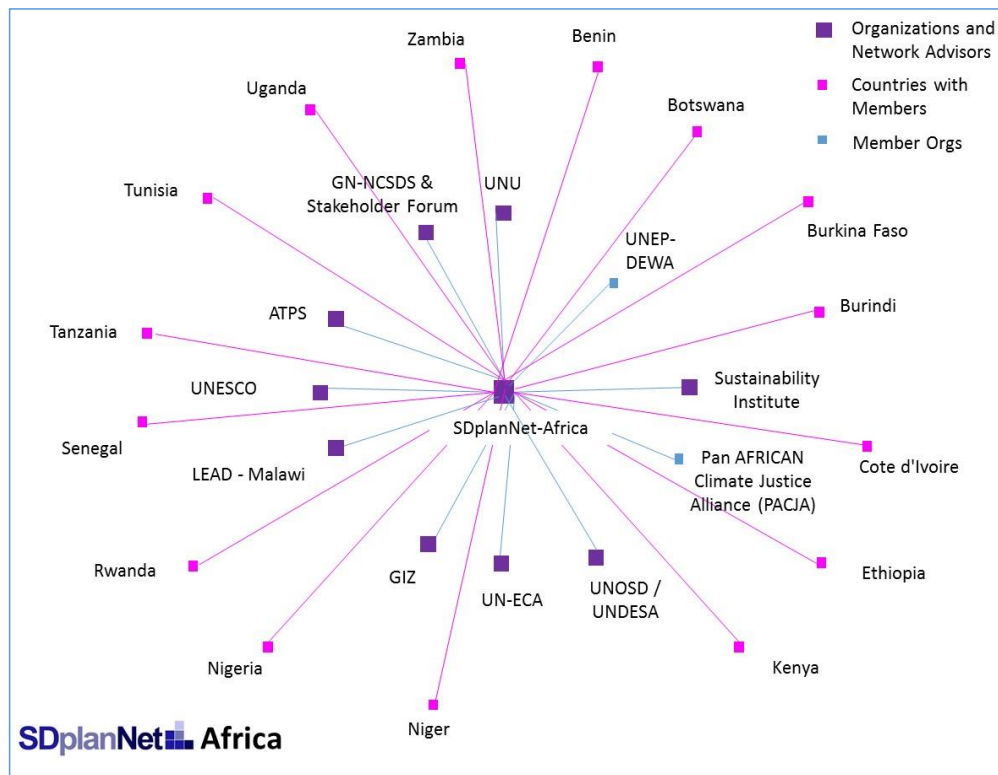

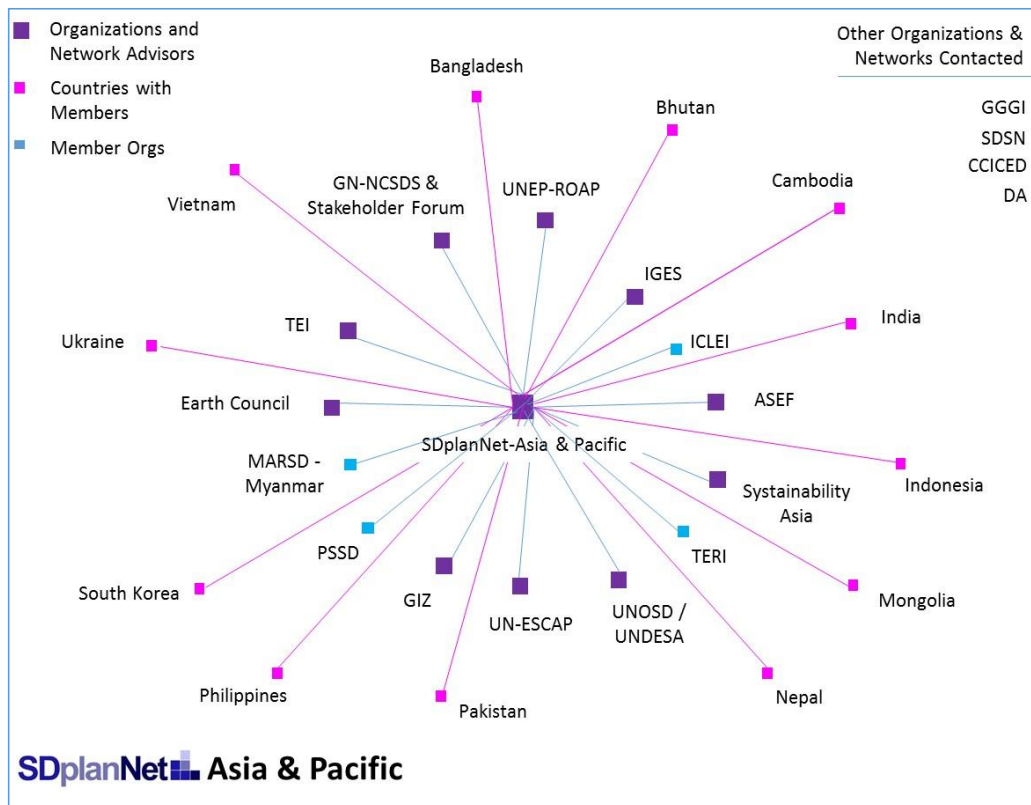**FIGURE 3. SDPLANNET-AFRICA NETWORK MAP OF ACTORS FOR THE 2014 REGIONAL WORKSHOP SERIES**

Summary of Capacity-building Needs to Advance Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation

FIGURE 4. SDPLANNET-ASIA & PACIFIC NETWORK MAP OF ACTORS FOR THE 2014 REGIONAL WORKSHOP SERIES

Recommendations for Strengthening and Coordinating Communities of Practice

Recommendations were made in all regions for strengthening and coordinating existing CoPs. A synthesis of these recommendations was developed at the UNOSD SD Transition Forum and is provided below. The specific recommendations made by each region can be viewed in the respective Regional Practice Papers.

- **Strengthening**: For meaningful engagement in these CoPs there needs to be specificity in the intended membership and topics covered—for planning, for implementation, for monitoring, etc.; Need for effective communication and information flow among members in the community; Need for atmosphere of trust; Clarification of roles.

- **Better coordination**: Continue mapping key actors; Avoid creating new networks every time a new project starts; Strengthen coordination among global/UN organizations to effectively mobilize resources; Providing core funding to secretariats; Increased face-to-face meetings; Constant feedback; Involvement of private sector; Communication and collaboration among similarly mandated networks operating at different levels (global, national, subnational and local); Create incentives for regional practitioners to share good practices within and beyond regions; explore fewer GHG emission mdoe of meetings.

- **What works**: Dedicated CoPs with appropriate caretaking/moderating; Needs to be clearly defined in scope (the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network has a finance CoP and this works well); Regular contact through the array of social media approaches.

- **What doesn't work**: Blogs and passive feeding of information; Inconsistent contact which allows time to forget; Never meeting face to face.

- **How do we know if things are working**: Google analytics; Phone interviews; Face-to-face meetings once per year; Ask for examples of what members are using in terms of tools.

- **What could SDplanNet do specifically?** Conduct regular surveys on needs (e.g. through Survey Monkey); Online debates on topics/tools of interest with synthesis at end of two weeks; Highlighting a member and their interest/achievements; Facilitate twinning opportunities.

There was discussion at the UNOSD Forum about the subtle yet clarifying difference between a network and a community of practice (CoP). It was generally understood that a CoP is a specifically defined practice area of shared interest among actors, whereas a "network" is usually more broadly defined. The Asia-Pacific Adaptation Network was given as an example of a shared interest network on the broad topic of climate change adaptation, whereas the network's financing for adaptation CoP is a more specific arena of discussion and effort within the broader adaptation network. This provides important insights for future work and organization for the SDplanNet family of networks.

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About SDplanNet

SDplanNet is a sustainable development planning network created to help government professionals at the national and sub-national levels share good practices and build capacity in the preparation and implementation of strategies for sustainable development or development plans that incorporate sustainable development principles.

SDplanNet is administered by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the Africa Technology Policy Studies Network and is sponsored in its current phase by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The 2014 Regional Sustainable Development Transition Series
Preparing to Deliver the Post 2015 Development Agenda at the National and Sub-national Levels

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