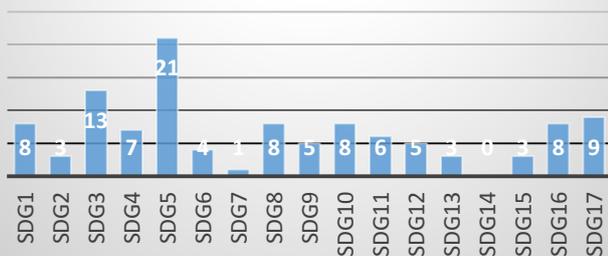


## Results Survey Implementation SDGs

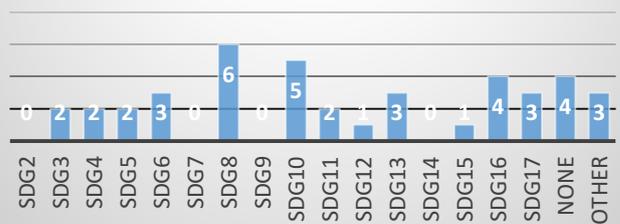
February, 2017 // Share-Net, WO=MEN and Rutgers

In December 2016 a survey was shared with 61 members of Share-Net and WO=MEN in order to further understand their activities and priorities regarding the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Netherlands and abroad. A total of 21 (34%) organisations answered the survey completely of which five members of Share-Net, fifteen members of WO=MEN, and one member of both.

Which SDGs does your organisation focus on?



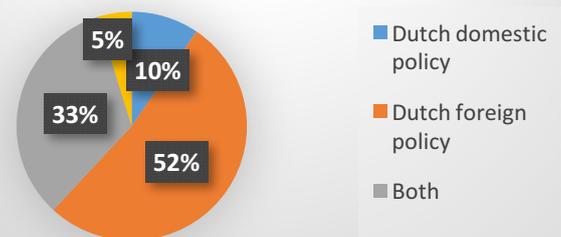
Which SDGs do you think your organisation should commit to as well?



With which type of activity is your organisation contributing to the SDGs?



Regarding the SDG targets, where is the focus of your organisation?



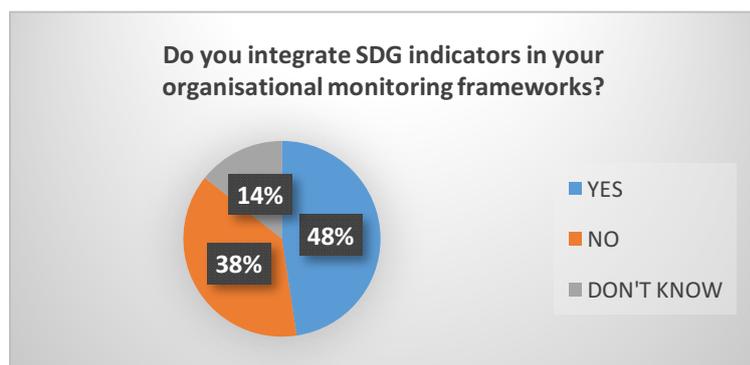
In addition to SDG5 (gender equality), most organisations are working on several other SDG targets such as SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing) and 17 (global partnerships for the goals). The majority of the organisations contribute to the realization of the SDGs internationally or both internationally and in the Netherlands. All organisations contribute to the SDGs with service delivery, capacity building, advocacy, and/or program implementation. Additionally, six organisations used other activities such as education or research to contribute to the SDGs as well.

Most organisations take the SDGs into account in all aspects of their work. Some also take the SDGs into account specifically in their development of programs and policy, in their advocacy, in their monitoring, evaluation and research (including adapting indicators), and in partnership and stakeholder management.

### Collaboration

Generally, the participants agree that a diverse pool of different stakeholders, organisations and actors are needed in order to achieve the SDGs. Most organisations state that they are either already collaborating with a range of Dutch and foreign partner organisations, policymakers, and (global) donors, or that they are still actively searching for the right partners. Some participants also cooperate with different ministries and many already work with local, regional and national governments. Yet, others still want to work more with for instance municipalities and local governments. Some organisations already work with large companies, while others would still seek partnerships with for instance Phillips, Unilever and pharmaceutical companies. Others would also like to work more with Dutch and foreign civil society organisations, and research institutions.

## Monitoring framework



Not every organisation is currently collecting data to measure their organisation's contribution to the SDG targets, and some organisations are still discussing which monitoring processes they should use. Those who measure their contribution to the SDG targets often use their existing organisation's monitoring system. Others use monitoring frameworks and data from for instance UNAIDS, UNESCO and WHO.

### Challenges & necessities within the organisation

Many of the challenges that organisations face when it comes to implementing the SDGs are connected to the **overwhelming scope of the SDGs and its targets**. For instance, some participants fear that organisations and governments might focus on only one part of the SDGs (cherry-picking) and forget the bigger picture. According to one participant, a clear timeline with short-term targets to implement the SDGs would help to further break down this framework. The enormity of the SDG agenda makes it also difficult to properly communicate the organisation's work on the SDGs towards potential partners and donors, who sometimes are not even aware of the existence of the SDGs.

The relationship between the **SDGs and other global commitments** was considered both as an opportunity and a challenge. Some participants find for instance the international human rights framework and the human rights-based approach useful tools to ensure the SDGs are realized for all. Another participant, however, found it a risk that businesses shift their commitment away from the Business and Human Rights Framework and Guiding Principles<sup>1</sup>, towards the rather softer SDG agenda. The relationship between the SDGs and other global commitments, and particularly the role and accountability of businesses could be further discussed between the members of the networks.

Several challenges mentioned by organisations concern the **monitoring and implementation of the SDGs by governments**. The Netherlands, the EU and other European countries will need to be willing to change direction in many key policy areas and truly work on implementing the ambitious targets within their own countries and abroad. We see, however, diminishing public and political support for development aid, and drastic cuts in Official Development Aid (ODA) in recent years. International development assistance, however, is crucial to ensure the SDGs are realized in the Global South as well. Domestically, it is important that governments set up clear and transparent SDG indicator tracking systems, as well as that they are inclusive in the decision-making processes when setting national priorities towards realizing the SDGs. Participants see in this context an important role for civil society, as an active partner in the entire SDG process – from planning to implementation, monitoring and review.

Participants also face several challenges **within their own organisation**. It will be difficult to accurately measure the contribution that individual organisations make towards the implementation of the SDGs. One participant states that their organisation will improve the measurement of their contribution by further breaking down the SDG targets and indicators. Some organisations will also need more knowledge and internal capacity in order to improve their advocacy work. SDG-documents,

<sup>1</sup> <https://business-humanrights.org/en/un-secretary-generals-special-representative-on-business-human-rights/un-protect-respect-and-remedy-framework-and-guiding-principles>

declarations, statements and events need to be communicated more effectively so organizations know better how they can make use of the SDGs.

### **Areas of attention and recommendations: in the Netherlands**

Almost half (43%) of the participants work on implementing the SDGs domestically, and they mentioned several gaps and areas of attention for the Dutch government regarding the implementation of SDG 3&5 in the Netherlands. First of all, participants feel that too little importance is given to the SDG agenda within the domestic context. The Dutch government should give greater importance to the domestic implementation of the SDGs – including by shifting the responsibility for implementing the SDGs across other ministries (and not just the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Moreover, the Dutch government should not just rely on existing policies and business as usual, but be willing to make investments and changes towards actual realization of the SDGs. Further, greater investments are needed in monitoring the Netherlands' contribution to the SDGs, improving transparency and by setting up a tracking system for SDG targets.

In addition, specific SDGs and targets on gender equality, access to contraceptives, maternal health services, sexual and gender-based violence, and comprehensive sexuality education require a larger focus in the domestic SDG implementation – as much is still to be improved in these areas within the Netherlands as well. In particular, participants are concerned about the inequality in achieving these targets – whereby more vulnerable groups are being left behind. Finally, participants feel that the Dutch government needs to involve organisations that focus on gender equality and women's rights in the Netherlands more closely in order to be effective in addressing these targets.

### **Areas of attention and recommendations: The Netherlands internationally**

The majority (85%) of the organisations that participated in the survey work internationally, in particular in development cooperation and identify a number of areas of attention. Participants are concerned about the decreasing financial support for development cooperation, in particular for civil society organisations, and recommend that this support is maintained.

Although the Dutch government already prioritizes gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) within its development policy and therefore directly contributes to the realization of SDG 3 and 5, participants call for a more consistent mainstreaming of gender equality across all international activities, policies and programs (including on security, and foreign trade). Attention needs to be paid for instance to gender equality at work, support for female entrepreneurs, sexual and gender based violence and harm reduction, and gender equality in relation to natural resources. Within the existing Dutch SRHR policy, some draw attention to the importance of good midwifery as a key factor in improving maternal health; and public-private partnerships for example for the provision of basic healthcare services. Moreover, participants feel that the Dutch government should collaborate more closely with global and regional initiatives that are important in the area of SRHR – an example is the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition.

More generally, participants feel that the Dutch government should prioritize policy coherence, to ensure the international activities of the Netherlands (whether it is through trade or development cooperation) truly contribute to sustainable development. Participants find it important that policies and programmes by the Dutch government are inclusive and that decision-making is transparent – involving civil society organisations (their inputs, data, capacity and shadow reports). More should also be invested in the application of innovative technologies to engage communities in development and collect data. Participants indicate that the Dutch government should involve local partners, diaspora and grassroots organisations more so that the SDGs can be implemented in an inclusive manner, and so that development aid truly focuses on local challenges.

### **Conclusion**

In short, although the answers to the survey varied greatly, there are some key points that most organisations brought up. First of all, all organisations are aware of the SDGs, and work with them in one way or another, even if it is just as a guideline or vision for the future. The SDGs need to be addressed with a holistic approach as all goals and targets are related to each other. The comprehensiveness of the SDG framework is both a strength and a challenge, as it makes it difficult to measure progress and achieve all goals. A large variety of public and private stakeholders in all levels of society need to collaborate efficiently and effectively if the Netherlands wants to reach the

SDGs targets. Clear communication and transparency is essential, and the existing knowledge, data and capacity from all organisations need to be used properly. Finally, there needs to be a system that efficiently monitors the progress made by the Dutch government and other stakeholders towards the SDGs. Only if the Dutch government is willing to prioritise the implementation of the SDGs within their domestic and their foreign policies, it will be possible to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

**Concrete questions for the Dutch government:**

1. How can we ensure that in the agreement for a new cabinet (after elections), the SDG framework will receive sufficient commitment and political weight, moving it out of the hands of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs across other (line) ministries?
2. Given the increased attention to Universal Health Coverage in many low and middle income countries, what is the position of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs on universal health coverage and will it incorporate this in their SDG work?
3. How will the Dutch government address the current lack of financial support for both the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs?
4. How will the significant data-gaps in the Netherlands (only 30% of global indicators can currently be measured by the Central Bureau of Statistics) be filled so we can actually identify gaps and monitor progress?
5. How are the different ministries planning to use the capacity and knowledge that already exists among different stakeholders in the Netherlands (including among WO=MEN and Share-Net members)?
6. The Dutch government is progressive in its SRHR policy, in a global polarizing context. How can we adequately respond to this polarization, remain in conversation with non-like-minded countries/people, while keeping our progressive voice?
7. How will the government involve and motivate the local communities and stakeholders (in the Netherlands and abroad) in realizing the SDGs?
8. Most poor people live in middle income countries. How can we reach the SDGs in these countries when donor countries are withdrawing from these countries and governments in those countries at the same time fail to 'leave no one behind'?