Activating the 2030 Agenda.

SDG Lab Toolkit
About the Toolkit

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals (SDGs) call for collaboration and partnership like never before. Achieving the SDGs requires us to look at complex global challenges through many different dimensions. The SDG Lab was created to do just that — by acting as a connector, amplifier, question asker and innovator.

This toolkit is a living document that captures the Lab’s journey by providing insight into the methods, tools and techniques that, if used, can enable you or your organization to deliver on the Agenda. The toolkit can be used as the foundation for your own lab or to inspire new ways of working, it can help you in:

• Localizing the SDGs to your context
• Building a lab
• Experimenting with others
• Testing new tools
• Trying new ways of working (think multi-stakeholder and integrated)
• Finding out what works and what doesn’t
• Connecting with new stakeholders
• Incubating partnerships
• Co-creating solutions
• Making a case for resource mobilization
• Maximizing your unique convening power
• Learning from other implementation success and challenges

sdglab.ch
“The SDG Lab was created to be a catalyst for finding synergies, breaking down silos and erasing outdated divides. This toolkit does that exactly by providing the tools and know-how for individuals and organizations who want to think and act differently and creatively in the SDG era.”

- Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General, UN Geneva (Nov 2013 – Jun 2019)

“The SDG Lab Toolkit packages the resources and insights we have used and collected along our journey in one place. With growing interest in the lab model, I hope this toolkit will serve as inspiration to others seeking ideas and help in implementing the 2030 Agenda.”

- Ms. Nadia Isler, SDG Lab Director
Thinking about building your own SDG Lab inspired initiative?

At the SDG Lab, we learned from experience how to create a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on supporting the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

#1 Charting the Way Forward
- Shape your vision and mission by having strong ideas and testing them. Stay flexible because you may miss new opportunities.
- Define what you’re not. Protect yourself against the assumptions of other people and organizations.
- Map your audience: who haven’t you heard from and what do they want?
- Be agile but move at a pace that fits your capacity.
- Find your niche that builds on what’s happening around you. Avoid duplicating efforts, there is no shortage of work when it comes to the SDGs!
- Maintain the mantra of ‘iterate, test, iterate’. It’s okay to not have anything figured out.
- Pursue feedback and learn from others.

#2 Building Multi-Stakeholder Teams*
- Aim for a mix of expertise, experience, backgrounds, generations and networks. A multi-sectoral approach requires a diverse and multi-talented team.
- Attract forward-thinkers that value risk, creativity and opportunities outside of their comfort zone.
- Seek out a balance between ‘doers and dreamers.’
- Identify your relationship builders. They are key to creating a community and staying connected.
- Choose a team leader who embodies your vision and mission. They must have credibility on the SDGs and be valued for their openness.
- Build and sustain team spirit with regular check-ins and outings.
- Have a dedicated go-to admin support person from day one.
* Team members do not need to possess all characteristics from the beginning. Team building is an iterative process.

#3 Finding risk-taking champions
- Identify the people who believe in your initiative and have the political power to give it credibility.
- Ensure their backgrounds reflect the multi-sectoral nature of the Agenda.
- Don’t be afraid to ask your champion(s) to go the extra mile, especially in the kick-off phase.
- Make your work accessible and tangible so they can use it to influence their own networks.
- Use your champions to test ideas and assumptions.
- Keep your champions engaged and informed.
#4 Dropping a pin: why location matters

- Be mindful of how your physical location impacts the perception of your initiative. For example, Mayor’s office versus community centre.
- Select a space that is accessible to your current and future stakeholders.
- Negotiate hosting arrangements that allow for agility and reduced bureaucracy.
- Take your initiative on the road. Host events and meetings elsewhere in and around your community.

#5 Sourcing flexible financing*

- Secure flexible funding that will cover your needs for at least the first two years — year one is iterating on your concept, and year two is the opportunity to test it. If you are chasing funding, particularly in year one, you will not be able to properly develop your niche.
- Seek in-kind support for staff, sponsorship of events, office equipment and supplies, and more.
- Have patient funders at the beginning that believe in your concept and are willing to share in your risk. Be prepared to go up against donor monitoring and evaluation frameworks that are not necessarily compatible with risk and innovation.
- Build a diverse pool of funders. This demonstrates your commitment to a multi-stakeholder approach. A single donor could create perceptions that your initiative is an offshoot of their mandate.

*You don’t need large sums in the beginning.

#6 Communicating counts

- Stagger your communications: avoid overwhelming your audience with too much information at the beginning.
- Be mindful of what you’re sharing and the image you’re projecting. Overstating your ambitions – and results – could backfire.
- Develop and practice your elevator pitch: neatly package who you are, what you do and where you are going.
- Craft a visually-appealing brand identity: invest in a professional to develop your look and feel.
- Create core products: a (simple) website, flyer, newsletter and business card.
- Translate ‘innovation’ in a way that is relevant. Not all stakeholders are going to be fluent in your language.

#7 Proving value

- Keep records: things as simple as growing email lists and event attendance can demonstrate sustained engagement. Use this to report back to your donors.
- Track your milestones and growing pains to tell your story. Don’t panic if you’re lacking a robust monitoring and evaluation system from the beginning.
- Share results early on and communicate the progress you’ve made. A mission statement or cohesive brand is worth showcasing.
- Conduct a baseline survey as early as possible to measure results.
- Always keep impact as your final goal. Know that everything you do has a place and contributes to your overall objective.
- Embrace skepticism as interest in your initiative.

*You don’t need large sums in the beginning.
About the Tools

The Lab has developed tools around the four following areas: Connect, Amplify, Ask Questions and Innovate. They are mutually reinforcing and represent the SDG Lab’s operational niche. They have been tested and iterated since the Lab’s founding, and have ultimately proved to be an invaluable service to our stakeholders.

Determining if these four areas will resonate in your community may require equal amounts of trial and error, not only through the listed tools but also by other methods and processes relevant to your activities.

I want to Connect.
These tools will help you create new opportunities for actors in and outside your community to co-create solutions and to exchange information, experiences and ideas for collaboration. Doing so fosters constructive interactions and strengthens multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement.

- Ecosystem of Actors p. 12
- Peer Messaging p. 17
- Randomized Lunch Trials p. 15

I want to Amplify.
Acknowledging the wealth of work already underway provides the space for actors to learn from and build on each other. These are platforms that create unique forums for telling stories of success and failure, helping to inform future policy and practice.

- Story Sharing p. 19
- Unpacking p. 22
- Failure Report p. 20

I want to Ask Questions.
A shift in mindset will be required to achieve the SDGs. Thinking, acting and investing in an inter-sectoral way doesn’t ‘just happen’. These tools will support you to ask the key questions that uncover new ways of thinking and new paths to action.

- Insight Session p. 25
- So What? Series p. 27

I want to Innovate.
These tools will enable you to provide the space for actors from various sectors to come together to tackle common challenges. They encourage experimentation with new approaches, formats and processes, as well as risk-taking and learning from failure.

- Action Areas Workshop p. 30
- Country Challenges p. 34
- Open Space p. 32
Introduction

The SDGs will not just happen on their own. Meeting the challenge of the Agenda 2030 requires us to adopt mindsets that are open to new ways of convening, engaging and working. Initiatives that engage other stakeholders open new insights and foster shared ownership of challenges and solutions. The following principles have been adopted from handbooks on co-creation as well as our own experiences and are essential for fruitful collaboration.

Co-Creation Rules of Engagement

- Gather different stakeholders from different sectors. Their diverse experiences and viewpoints foster solutions that are relevant and impactful.
- Ensure everyone contributes. All voices should be heard regardless of experience, background and role.
- Aim for quantity over quality. The goal is to generate a lot of ideas—prioritization and viability come later.
- Think blue sky. Move beyond the perceived limitations of your organization and environment.
- Promote active listening. When other people are talking, take notes and jot down questions.
- Build on each other’s ideas rather than knocking them down. Instead of saying ‘no’ try ‘yes, and...’.
- Share ideas in a visual and engaging way: drawing, acting, building... any action that motivates people to move and try new things.
- Turn on FOCUS mode. Discourage the use of phones and computers. Respect the time people have blocked and be present.
- Use simple visuals to transform your space. Posters, easel boards and sticky notes are low-cost ways to create a friendly and informal environment.
I want to Connect.

Tools included:
- Ecosystem of Actors p. 12
- Randomized Lunch Trials p. 15
- Peer Messaging p. 17
Ecosystem of Actors

What is it?

An ‘ecosystem’ refers to a distinct ecological phenomenon: it is a community of organisms and the network of their interactions among each other, and with their physical environment.

While the Ecosystem of Actors is not biological, it does build well on the analogy. It is a highly networked community of actors that interact among themselves and with many global issues and processes.

Every community by nature has an ecosystem, but more can be done to realize its full potential in addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities. This is an opportunity to activate an already existing community of actors in service of the SDGs.

Why do it?

- Opportunity to build on each other’s work and advance the Agenda as a united front.
- Transformation of culture to one that values collaboration, partnerships, knowledge exchange and support.
- Ability to translate the knowledge and expertise of actors into actionable products that support SDG implementation.
- Opportunity to develop multidisciplinary solutions to key challenges in policy and practice that would not otherwise be addressed through a single-disciplinary approach.

How to do it?

1. Talk to the right actors and potential co-conveners (get out and go door-to-door) to know their vision for their community and their unique challenges. Use what they share to draft a mission for how the Ecosystem could respond to those needs and ambitions.

2. Then, host a visioning session (p. 39) with the Ecosystem to test it. Inform the community that you’re still in the ‘prototyping’ phase — it is essential to have their feedback before locking in what the Ecosystem stands for and will be delivering on.

3. After you have a co-created mission, begin piloting tools that uniquely speak to your actors. We’ve developed Randomized Lunch Trials (p. 15) and Peer Messaging (p. 17) in response to the needs and requests of our community. Not every tool will resonate; but trying demonstrates your commitment to the community and to experimentation.

4. Conduct surveys and check-ins to have one ear always tuned in. Annual surveys (p. 40) provide insight into how the Ecosystem has grown over time, and where it is doing well and where the opportunities are to improve. In order to best evaluate impact, start with a baseline survey. Between surveys, 2 to 3 question polls can be a great way to get quick feedback on new tools or concepts you are exploring.

5. Stay consistent with communication and engagement with regular (not necessarily frequent) updates and meetings. Once the Ecosystem has been well-established and you have the right actors engaged, leverage these engagements to cross-transfer knowledge and tackle challenges individual actors may be facing.
6. There is value in getting actors talking to each other and building unexpected partnerships, and this may be enough in the beginning. But eventually, people will want to take advantage of the multidisciplinary nature of the Ecosystem to accomplish things they are not able to otherwise do alone. Depending on where you’re at in your growth stage, either make it clear when action isn’t the purpose of the Ecosystem or secure resources when you see the community is eager to take the next step.

### Points to Consider

#### Developing the concept

The first question to ask yourself is if you see an opportunity for greater collaboration between actors in your community. After articulating the need you want to address, identify if there have been similar attempts in the past. What can you learn from these attempts? If there are current initiatives, how can you build on each other’s efforts? Remember, part of your role as convener is to influence greater collaboration within the community, not to duplicate efforts.

Once you’ve established your Ecosystem, ensure that you remain agile; meaning that you’re constantly checking in with the changing needs of your community and creating, adapting and eliminating tools that no longer serve them.

#### Who to engage?

Based on what the co-conveners are mobilizing the Ecosystem around, engage actors that are working on similar initiatives but in different capacities and with varying mandates. Know that the composition of the Ecosystem will have an important impact on its dynamic (e.g. a Member State focused Ecosystem functions differently than one composed of non-state actors).

### Space

As the Ecosystem is diverse, encourage members from different organizations to host gatherings and events. This helps to instill the notion of ‘shared ownership’ of the Ecosystem.

The spaces you choose for gatherings will influence the conversation and outcomes (e.g. if people are sitting in theatre seats there will be limited brainstorming and informal exchanges).

### Conveners

The Ecosystem works as a balance between ownership and no ownership. Although it doesn’t belong to anyone in specific, there are still distinct conveners that bring legitimacy and are responsible for driving the initiative forward. The number of conveners needed depends on how many groups you need legitimacy with. For example, if your Ecosystem brings together actors from development and finance, it is best to have two conveners trusted by both communities.

The conveners should frequently reinforce that the Ecosystem is a community effort and they are simply stewarding the process.

### Resources

To be able to deliver on what you’ve promised, secure start-up funding for a dedicated staff person, a tracking system and flex funds for general convening. There is a business case to be made for interconnected and innovative communities, so look to your local and/or national governments for these early resources.

### Tracking & documenting

Moving door-to-door means a lot of names and numbers, therefore, a system to help you track these contacts is essential. In the beginning, this may take shape as a spreadsheet; however, you may need to scale to something more robust quickly.

Beyond keeping a contact database, a system that also supports segmentation and overtime engagement tracking enables you to deliver targeted communications and demonstrate impact.
In Action: Geneva 2030 Ecosystem

The Geneva 2030 Ecosystem mobilizes the capacity, skills, experience, ideas and motivation of Geneva-based actors towards realizing the 2030 Agenda. The dynamic, informal network strengthens the individual efforts of organizations by bringing them together to share information and ideas, create new partnerships and address common challenges.

geneva2030.org

Key features:

• 318 individuals as of December 31, 2018 (40% UN agency; 33% NGO; 11% private sector; 8% academia; 4% other international organizations; 4% independents).

• 161 organizations as of December 31, 2018 (41% NGO, 27% UN agency; 14% independents; 14% private sector; 5% academia; 4% other international organizations).

• Grew from 27 to 318 individuals from June 2016 to December 2018.

• Convened by one representative from the United Nations (SDG Lab), and one from civil society (IISD).

• Political support from UN Geneva Director-General Michael Møller essential for bringing faster legitimacy.

• Member States, although not part of the Ecosystem group, are invited to leverage the expertise of the community for their country challenges.

• Hosting of an annual gathering that focuses on peer-to-peer information exchange — for tips on how to lead the session, see Open Space (p. 32) for more information.

• On-going connecting activities, including Randomized Lunch Trials (p. 15) and Peer Messaging (p. 17).

• An informal innovation meeting group and short trainings were tried and eliminated because they didn’t meet the needs of the community.
Randomized Lunch Trials

What is it?
Randomized Lunch Trials is an informal, voluntary and fun way for people working in the same city to network, establish professional contacts and share ideas and knowledge.

By way of an online sign-up sheet, individuals are matched and connected to share coffee or lunch once per month. After contact has been made, the individuals decide when and where to meet, and if they would like to repeat.

Why do it?
+ Connect professionals and practitioners in an informal and fun way to help them network, act and think in a cross-sectoral way.
+ Break down silos within your city, community or professional network.
+ Demonstrate how mindsets can be shifted towards engaging and working in the SDG era.
+ Prove your value as a platform for experimenting with unconventional methods and ways to build communities.

How to do it?
1. Set up an online registration form (p. 42) with defined eligibility criteria. When a participant registers, use this opportunity to prompt them to complete a short biography that will be used to make matches.
2. Ensure you collect consistent information from all participants, e.g. bios that identify SDG interest, place of work, etc. Don’t be afraid to exert quality control because first impressions count.
3. Create a mini Lunch Trials group to test the tool before scaling it up. Soliciting their feedback will help to ensure that the initiative resonates with your stakeholders.
4. Notify your community of this initiative and ask them to take part in the Lunch Trials.
5. Match participants monthly using a randomized process (or at a regular interval of your choosing) and let them know that they are now connected with the cover email (p. 43). Include their bios and the conversation starters (p. 44), and remind them to set up their appointment.
6. Get routine feedback and iterate accordingly.

Points to Consider

Registration
See a live example of how the 2030 Ecosystem invites participants to register or use the provided template for guidance (p. 42). Examples of eligibility criteria the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem uses are also included online.

Facilitator
Designate a focal point responsible for making the matches, sending communications and tracking participation.

Follow-up
A specific email account will help manage all communications related to the Lunch Trials. Having a designated inbox to answer questions from the community will also help you to streamline your efforts.
Tracking & documenting

Use a spreadsheet to keep record of the participants and their associated matches. Make sure to include name, email, title, organization and sign-up date for growth tracking over time.

In Action: Geneva 2030 Randomized Lunch Trials

The Geneva 2030 Ecosystem offers Randomized Lunch Trials to link its members and encourage networking in the community. The initiative was developed in response to demand from the Ecosystem and has grown from 24 individuals in 2017 to 108 in 2018. More information can be found on the Geneva 2030 website.
Peer Messaging

What is it?

Peer Messaging is the use of a platform that creates the space for peers within an ecosystem to directly exchange publications, resources and news related to the SDGs.

It may take shape as a common mailing list, a Slack or WhatsApp group, or something else. Whatever the platform of choice, the most important thing is to set the right parameters.

Why do it?

✓ Provide a non-judgmental space for people to share things that are important to them with a group of like-minded people.

✓ Share and receive information that may be outside of your direct network.

✓ Embracing ongoing communication with other stakeholders from other sectors enables you to think systemically about SDG challenges and implementation.

✓ Not needing to relay information always through the convener shifts an ecosystem’s ownership towards collective responsibility.

How to do it?

1. Select a platform for the Peer Messaging depending on how and when you expect the participants to exchange with each other. Potential platforms include a common mailing list or a Slack or WhatsApp group. (We use WhatsApp because we find it’s helpful for also getting phone numbers for quick communication.)

2. Establish guidelines for what should be shared. A sample of these guidelines can be found in the invitation template (p. 45).

3. Send the invitation to members of your ecosystem and if relevant, make the invitation publicly visible so that the network can continue to grow. Joining the platform should work on a by-request-only basis to ensure you have oversight.

4. Now that the platform has been established, it is your responsibility to moderate, without being overly prescriptive. Make sure the people that are supposed to be in the group are there and keep it local to the actors you are trying to serve and engage. At times, it may be necessary to kindly remind the participants of the purpose of the group and its rules of engagement.

Points to Consider

Invitation

See the provided template (p. 45) for guidance.

Tracking & documenting

Similar to the Ecosystem (p. 12) and the Lunch Trials (p. 15), Peer Messaging is an opportunity to grow a community. By tracking the participants that join the messaging group and their organizations, you will be able to demonstrate increased community engagement over time, showcasing your value as a convener.
I want to Amplify.

Tools included:
- Story Sharing p. 19
- Failure Report p. 20
- Unpacking p. 22
Story Sharing

What is it?

Storytelling is one of the most important activities for any organization or initiative. Sharing progress and results through effective communication engages audiences, builds interest and garners support.

The range of communication channels and platforms available today make it easier than ever before to share stories and amplify activities, and there are numerous tools to fit any budget and respond to different levels of communications expertise.

Why do it?

- Greater awareness of your work among your community and other stakeholders.
- Promotion of your initiatives.
- Reinforce your mandate.
- Attract new partners and potential funders and supporters.

How to do it?

1. Use your insight and convening power within your community to identify good practices that are having impact.
2. Be selective: stories should serve the interest of the greater community and not over emphasize single actors.
3. Share good practices using a communications tool that you can develop and manage.
4. Develop a regular and branded series to amplify good practices and stories. Providing your community with consistent content — e.g. in the form of a monthly or quarterly email newsletter — helps encourage engagement and spreads knowledge.

Points to Consider

Developing the concept

Keep it simple by telling a narrative that people can relate to and quickly understand the main takeaway(s). The best stories are those that spark interest and nudge people to act and learn more. Avoid communicating too many actions and ideas in one go.

Short attention spans mean that web and social communications must be concise. Use language that is clear and keep paragraphs and posts short. Add visuals where possible.

Platforms

Free or minimal fee website building and hosting platforms offer a quick and effective means to create an online presence. We use Squarespace, but there are many other platforms available.

Social media is another good way to connect with and reach a wider audience, as they are platforms integrated into everyday life. But don’t overstretch your capacity. Popular tools like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook are distinct and each require a dedicated effort if you want to use them effectively.

Tools like Mailchimp and Canva provide templates that take the stress out of developing them from scratch.

Related Reading

The complete guide to nonprofit social media: Strategy and design tips for success by Canva
Failure Report

What is it?
The Failure Report is a reflection on things that have not gone as planned or ideas that have not taken off. It states the failure in an honest way, and reflects on why it happened and what factors may have contributed to it. It also outlines key lessons and suggests ways to avoid it in the future.

Why do it?

☑ Recognizing and rewarding successes while also openly talking about what did not work grows a culture of innovation within your organization and the greater community.

☑ By openly discussing failures, you gain input on new ideas based on others’ experiences.

How to do it?

1. Begin an honest assessment of the failure with an internal reflection. This could be done independently or in collaboration with your greater team. Use data to provide evidence of the failure when possible.

2. Continue the assessment externally to hear directly from end-users why an initiative or an idea did not resonate with them. This may be through an open conversation with a wider audience or more explicitly with 1-to-1 stakeholder interviews.

3. You may want to use this opportunity to think more deeply about the failure and its relationship to the 2030 Agenda. How did the failure inhibit your ability to make progress on the SDGs? What should other stakeholders be aware of that may share similar challenges?

4. Write the report and share it within your organization and across the community. It may be necessary to redact the report to avoid disclosing confidential or sensitive information. By sharing it with a wider audience, you encourage dialogue and help others to avoid making the same mistakes.

Points to Consider

Developing the concept

While it is good to reflect on failures, not all are reports are suitable for them. For example, when large projects do not have the expected impact, sharing it openly could be looked as insensitive.

Because admitting failure in writing can have some communication risks, it is important to create a safe space and confidentiality terms. Avoid the temptation to find a nice label for a failure (e.g. ‘lessons learnt’). Call it what it is. This can be hard to do, but it helps with acceptance.

Follow-up

Admitting openly to a failure creates a safe space for others to contribute their own lessons learnt. After distributing the report to the relevant stakeholders, you may want to generate a community discussion around shared challenges. Convening a session on Unpacking (p. 22) or an Insight Session (p. 25) can be useful platforms to do so.
In Action: Admitting Failure to Donors

Most humanitarian and development projects are funded by government donors, and ultimately, taxpayers. This naturally makes it uncomfortable and difficult to admit to donors that some initiatives, which they supported, did not produce the desired results and may have even failed.

Historically, the UN system and other international organizations have shied away from having open discussions about failures. The SDG Lab uses Failure Reports to lead our community by example.

When attendance at the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem meetings dropped from 100+ people to 30, the Lab created a Failure Report for its donor and reframed sessions to be more participatory and action-driven.

We strive for transparent relationships with our donors by having ongoing conversations about our work and progress. In this context, the content of the Report did not present surprises to the donor but merely created a safe space to reflect on them. The donor has asked the Lab to continue with the Failure Reports and provide more data in future iterations.
Unpacking

What is it?
Unpacking is a method to (de)brief stakeholders on a specific theme, process or event, which may be involved or complex. It can take the form of a formal plenary-style briefing or a more informal exchange among participants. This method is particularly useful to help your stakeholders stay on top of an ongoing process or activity at regular intervals.

Why do it?
- Establish regular moments in the year for your community to convene and hear from you on a specific topic or process.
- Underscore your role as a connector in the ecosystem.
- Provide a feedback loop on important developments.
- Create an environment in your ecosystem or organization where people share information, feedback in an open and trusting manner, and ideas and resources ahead of key events.
- Enable stakeholders to share knowledge, ideas and resources ahead of key events.

How to do it?
1. Select a theme, process or event that is relevant to your work and the community and that you are intimately familiar with, but may be under addressed, difficult to engage with directly or lacks a shared understanding.
2. In preparation of the session, ensure you have the most up-to-date information through desk research and/or direct engagement. Use this material to develop questions and discussion points for the session. Put the content into an easy to follow slide deck.
3. For the session itself, allocate 10 to 20 minutes for the ‘unpacking’ and follow with an informal discussion using the points and questions you’ve prepared in advance. Use this opportunity to crowdsource information that your participants have on the topic.
4. Send a follow-up email sharing the slide deck, a summary of what was discussed and key asks of the community.

Points to Consider
Developing the concept
If you plan to ‘unpack’ a theme, process or event because it is difficult for your community to engage with it directly, be aware that it is necessary to be involved yourself. Think of yourself as a translator of sorts, meaning potential travel to cover an event or a meeting. Making sure you have available resources to do so ahead of time will enable you to set the right expectations among your community.

Who to invite?
Think broadly about who the session might be relevant for, potentially in surprising ways. The real magic of Unpacking happens when people from a variety of sectors and disciplines are engaged in the session. It is an opportunity for these diverse actors to share stories, insights and challenges among each other that may not otherwise be heard.

Space & supplies
A tightly controlled venue (e.g. security restrictions) can impact participation for those coming from outside organizations. For a more engaging conversation, choose a venue that promotes informal dialogue.
Having a screen available to present a slide deck is essential for clear communication during the session.
Facilitators
Your facilitator must be credible on the subject and able to convey the most pertinent points in a coherent and easy-to-understand way. Having consistency in terms of the facilitator can help to establish rapport among the community.

Follow-up
The follow-up email to participants is essential but can be brief. It’s also a way to communicate what happened for those that couldn’t be there. Include the slide deck, links to the theme, process or event that was ‘unpacked,’ as well as key themes and community asks that resulted from the informal discussion.

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location, and any communications (e.g. invitation, slide deck, follow-up, etc.). And be sure to take some photos! Good documentation enables consistency across your team for future events and helps to demonstrate your impact as a convener.

In Action: High-Level Political Forum Briefing
The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) briefing is an opportunity for Geneva 2030 Ecosystem members to prepare for the annual meeting by:

- Sharing informal feedback on emerging themes and linking Geneva activities with what’s happening in New York (where the annual session of the HLPF takes place).

- Enabling stakeholders to test their ideas for side events and to pool resources where it makes sense.

Following the HLPF in New York, we also organize a debrief where we invite Member States and other stakeholders to participate in an open and frank dialogue on information and opportunities arising from the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).
I want to Ask Questions.

Tools included:
Insight Session
So What? Series

p. 25
p. 27
Insight Session

What is it?

Insight Sessions are highly curated, relatively informal knowledge-transfer sessions made up of Insight Seekers and Insight Sharers. An Insight Seeker presents their challenge, idea or project to Insight Sharers with different backgrounds, expertise and experiences to get feedback, ideas, information and connections that can help to enhance their project.

Insight Sharers are carefully selected and invited to the session in order to share their knowledge and previous experiences in a constructive and helpful manner.

Why do it?

- For Insight Seekers, this is an opportunity to gain feedback on their ideas from outside their immediate network and to accelerate SDG implementation.
- Through this process, Insight Sharers may also learn about new ideas, practices and tools for SDG implementation.

How to do it?

1. Talk to the Insight Seeker to understand what they want to achieve and who they want to talk to. Taking time to ensure the right people in the room is critical — know that it can be difficult.
2. Send an invitation (p. 46) ahead of time that includes the objective of the session and how the Seekers and Sharers should prepare.
3. At the beginning of the session, invite the Insight Seeker to present their challenge, idea or project to the room of Insight Sharers.
4. Give ample time for the Insight Sharers to respond. It is important to make sure everyone has a chance to give feedback, so it is best to ask the Sharers to go one by one.
5. After all Sharers have had an opportunity to respond, the Insight Seeker may use this opportunity to pose follow-up questions or share additional comments.
6. Provide an action summary (p. 47) in follow-up of the session that reveals key insights and actionable next steps for the participants.

Points to Consider

Developing the concept

The concept should be shaped by the needs of the Insight Seeker. It can be based on a challenge, idea or project that they would like to put forward for feedback.

Invitation

See the template (p. 46) for guidance on how to prepare both the Insight Seekers and Sharers for the session.

Who to invite?

Based on the needs of the Insight Seeker, invite Insight Sharers that have relevant knowledge and experience. However, challenge yourself to think outside a single thematic area or discipline — diversity in representation leads to the most unexpected and innovative ideas. Ideally, Insight Sharers come from at least four different sectors or organizations.

Space

All that’s needed for this session is a general meeting room. Round tables work best at facilitating collaborative conversations.
Facilitators
Pick a facilitator that is credible for both the Seekers and the Sharers. They should be diplomatic and able to manage different personality-types and inputs. It is important that they establish the right expectations among the group and speak clearly to the purpose of the session.

Follow-up
See the action summary template (p. 47) for guidelines on how to provide actionable follow-up after the session.

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location and any communications (e.g. invitation, action summary, etc.). Good documentation will enable consistency across your team for future sessions and help to demonstrate your impact as a convener.
So What? Series

What is it?
So What? is a multi-stakeholder event platform to ask provocative questions, demonstrate the indivisibility of the SDGs and help forge a better understanding of what an integrated approach means in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It provides the opportunity to explore connections between two seemingly unrelated SDGs. A panel of practitioners from different backgrounds and sectors are asked to address how two SDGs are mutually reinforcing in practice.

Why do it?
- Break down the complexity of the inter-sectoral aspect of the 2030 Agenda by putting it into practice.
- Activate a mindset shift in policy making, programming, budgeting, funding and partnership building.
- Showcase practices that demonstrate the added-value and impact of thinking, acting and investing in an integrated way.
- Amplify high-impact solutions and partnerships that could be replicated and scaled-up.

How to do it?
1. Identify two goals or targets from the 2030 Agenda — or two distinct issues — where there is need for a deeper understanding and practical examples of the horizontal connections. It can be strategic to build on key events or gatherings already happening in your community.

2. Invite relevant organizations (one for each goal/issue) to co-host the event — their networks can help you to reach the right panelists and audience members that may otherwise be less accessible.

3. Convene a meeting with the co-hosts to highlight concrete examples that demonstrate the added value and challenges of a systemic approach. The themes that result from this meeting can help to establish the framework for the concept note (p. 48) and panel questions (p. 49).

4. Send an invitation with all details relating to the event.

5. Host the panel: keep it informal, encourage an open dialogue and ask bold, tough questions.

6. Provide timely follow-up including overall concept, main takeaways and lessons learnt and memorable quotes.

Points to Consider
Developing the concept
Be balanced between demonstrating the indivisibility of the 2030 Agenda and not getting lost in a world of theory. The link you are making between two goals/targets/issues should connect to practical examples that ground the discussion.

Invitation
When selecting a date, be cognizant of other events that may be happening at similar times so as to not compete for attendance.

Send out the invitation one month prior — too long beforehand and people can forget when it is upcoming. Follow-up one week before with a kind reminder.
Who to invite?
The panel should convene different stakeholders from different sectors — it can also be interesting if they’re at different points in their career. Having a variety of perspectives pushes the panelists to think critically and provokes a greater diversity in answers. A gender-balanced panel is a must.

The event invitation should be sent to a diverse audience to ensure a dynamic group of actors from your local community.

Have the participants register using a platform like Eventbrite or Google Forms in order to track names, organizations and how they heard about the event.

Space & supplies
Book an accessible event space: a tightly controlled venue (e.g. security restrictions) can impact participation for those coming from outside organizations.

Facilitators
Ask your moderator to keep it informal, underscore the ‘unexpected connections’ when possible and prompt speakers for concrete examples.

Follow-up
Use your communication platforms — like a newsletter, blog or social media — to provide a recap to your community. Capture the overall concept, main takeaways and lessons learnt and memorable quotes from the panelists. Share with photos if possible!

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, panelists and their organizations, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location, and any communications (e.g. concept note, invitation, panel questions, recap, etc.). Good documentation will enable consistency across your team for future events and help to demonstrate your impact as a convener.

In Action: SDG Lab ‘So What?’ Series
The SDG Lab has hosted several So What? events since 2017. Recaps of these events are featured on our website.
I want to Innovate.

Tools included:
Action Areas Workshop p. 30
Open Space p. 32
Country Challenges p. 34
Action Areas Workshop

What is it?
This is an exploratory ideation workshop for existing or intended collaborations with the aim of identifying action areas such as future workstreams, research opportunities and beyond.

Why do it?
✓ Get your collaboration(s) to result in actions.
✓ Gain insight into the unique activities of your various partners.
✓ Create a space for co-creating and prioritizing workstreams.

How to do it?
1. This workshop strings together five different exercises, adapted from design thinking methodologies. Not all exercises may be relevant to your objective or fit within the time frame you have available — and that’s okay. Identify which ones are most important and start from there.

2. Before jumping into the sessions, share the agenda and establish the rules of collaborative brainstorming using the slide deck (p. 50). Split participants into table teams of no more than 10 participants per table, making an effort to have multi-disciplinary teams.

3. **Session one:** Within your table team, take 20 minutes to identify existing and future workstreams (p. 51) of each partner, using a poster-sized sheet of paper and sticky notes. Reserve the last few minutes for table leads to report what was discussed to the full group.

4. **Session two:** Within your table team, and based on the new insight into everyone’s workstreams, take another 20 minutes to capture on sticky notes ideas for future action areas using a new sheet of paper. Remember, there are no wrong ideas! Now is the time for quantity over quality. Again, reserve the last few minutes for table leads to report what was discussed to the full group.

5. **Session three:** As a large group, plot the sticky notes from exercise two on a 2x2 matrix (p. 52) that can group action areas along relevant variables that help with decision making; these will vary based on your collaboration. You will find that this is not necessarily a straightforward process, but it will push for critical conversation between all participants.

6. **Session four:** Now is the time for prioritization through individual voting, otherwise referred to as ‘dotmocracy’. Participants should use six dot stickers each to vote on the action areas where they have the greatest interest; a participant may use up to two dot stickers on the same idea. Use the selection criteria provided in the slide deck to guide the process.

7. **Session five:** Participants will naturally want to continue expanding on the action areas, however, in a session of this length there isn’t enough time to fully develop the concepts. Discussion of next steps ensures momentum is not lost and there is a clear path forward. Split among the table teams the highest rated action areas from session four (one action per team). Using the action planning canvas (p. 53), work together to identify immediate next steps.

8. After the session, hold everyone accountable to the next steps with timely follow-up. We find that it’s helpful to use a platform like mural.co and keep close record of what was discussed by plotting the sticky notes on a virtual white board and sharing the link with everyone. At a minimum, consolidate the next steps from the canvas and share those with the participants.
Points to Consider

Invitation
See the Insight Session invitation template for guidance (p. 46).

Who to invite?
This session is most effective when the group works across common themes, has expressed interest in collaborating or is already collaborating.

You need actors from two different organizations (think multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral) at a minimum; however, three or more can be even more fruitful. Keep in mind that the number of participants you have impact the number of action areas you will be able to dive into in the final session.

Space & supplies
All that’s needed for this workshop is a general meeting room. Round tables work best at facilitating collaborative conversations. Have easels, sticky notes and markers on-hand for the breakout sessions.

Facilitators
The facilitator must have the capacity to follow up.

Follow-up
Reference the Insight Session action summary template (p. 47) for guidelines on how to provide actionable follow-up after the session.

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location, and any communications (e.g. invitation, slide deck, mural.co board, action summary, etc.). Good documentation will enable consistency across your team for future sessions and help to demonstrate your impact as a convener.

Related Reading
See The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design from IDEO and the DIY Toolkit from Nesta for more ideas on how to facilitate ideation during the workshop.
Open Space

What is it?
Open Space is a ‘self-organizing’ session that capitalizes on the collective intelligence of participants. As the host, you will bring the overarching theme that responds to a community need. The session is considered self-organizing because what’s exactly discussed within that frame is spontaneously chosen by the participants based on their most pressing ideas, challenges and opportunities.

Why do it?
- Approach the complexity and interconnectedness of issues in SDG implementation in a short period with a simple methodology, and without the need to hire keynote speakers or draft meticulous schedules.
- Facilitate unique opportunities in co-creation and idea exchange between diverse actors.
- Shift individual ownership of issues and solutions to collective responsibility, while demonstrating the need for an inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach.
- Insight into the ideas, challenges and opportunities the community is facing.

How to do it?
1. See the points to consider for pre-event planning and logistical preparation. Be sure to send an invitation (p. 54) ahead of time.
2. At the start of the session, use the first 10 minutes to welcome the participants to the Open Space. Start by sharing the principles of Open Space and the ‘law of two feet’ using the slide deck (p. 55). Then, introduce the theme of the day.
3. Use the next 20 minutes to invite participants (first come, first serve) to pitch a topic they want to discuss (30 seconds each). This can be something they are dealing with in their own work or an issue they want to explore. Each pitch will be assigned a table number using the table map (p. 56).
4. Make the table map with the topics visible to all participants. Everyone is free to choose which tables interest them or where they want to contribute.
5. Open Space is free flowing so at any point an individual can choose to move to another topic table, or a group can split into two or merge with another. This is the beauty of Open Space: the conversation serves you so you can choose how you want it to be structured. This open exchange will last for one hour.
6. At the end, table leads should be designated. They are responsible for presenting a 2-minute report-back on what was discussed at their table to all participants.
7. Provide simple documentation of the event via email to all participants. Share high-level notes from the 30-second pitches as well as the final report-back.

Points to Consider

Developing the concept
The theme should be kept broad so people can easily contribute, yet strategically respond to a community need. ‘Resilience’ or ‘energy’ are two examples.
Invitation
Depending on how open or adverse the participants are towards spontaneity, customize the invitation (p. 54) that you send ahead of time. For those that are more adverse, it can be helpful to provide them with the theme beforehand so that they are able to reflect on the topics or ideas they wish to share.

Who to invite?
For Open Space to work well, you need at least 30 people in the room. However, we’ve done it for up to 600. Based on the theme you plan to address, invite participants that have relevant knowledge and experience, yet challenge yourself to think outside a single thematic area or discipline. They don’t necessarily need to have high titles, but they do need to care about the topic at hand and be willing to be actively engaged.

Space & supplies
The space must be large enough to accommodate ‘rounds’ (5 to 10 people each), either as tables with chairs or just circles of chairs. It is possible to have a space with multiple rooms where the participants are free to move between them. Before your participants arrive, number the rounds and update the table map accordingly (p. 56).
Have easels, sticky notes and markers on-hand for the rounds.

Facilitators
Depending on the size of the group and the venue, consider having two facilitators from the convening organizations. They should have high energy and be able to push participants to step outside their comfort zones. It is important that they establish the right expectations among the group and speak clearly to the purpose of the session.
If possible, have a third person available to support note taking during the Open Space.

Follow-Up
Reference the Insight Session action summary template (p. 47) for guidelines on how to provide actionable follow-up after the session.

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location, and any communications (e.g. invitation, action summary, etc.). Good documentation will enable consistency across your team for future sessions and help to demonstrate your impact as a convener.

Related Reading
Harrison Owen’s ‘Brief User Guide to Open Space Technology’
Chris Corrigan’s ‘Open Space Technology Planning Resources’
Michael Herman’s ongoing collection of ‘Open Space Technology Practices’
‘Open Space Facilitator Resources’ from Open Space World
Country Challenges Workshop

What is it?
The Country Challenges Workshop taps into your unique ecosystem to help a country, organization or other entity find solutions to a challenge they are facing (from practical to paradigm shifting).

Why do it?
- Give visibility to challenges in communities that are under-addressed and under-served.
- Engage different and unexpected partners around a singular challenge and support their capacity to take action.
- Develop an ‘out of the box’ solution that responds to a challenge, while also capitalizing on your community’s value.

How to do it?
1. Propose a bilateral meeting with the country/organization to establish the contact, gain insight into the challenge they are facing and articulate the objectives of the upcoming workshop.
2. After the meeting, write a summary report for the country/organization that captures action points, deliverables and timelines.
3. Ahead of the workshop, prepare a participants’ briefing kit that provides an overview of key information required for an effective session: a project brief with the challenge(s) clearly articulated, and the bios of the participants and their organizational profiles.
4. Draw on the multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder expertise of your ecosystem and identify relevant actors. Send personalized invitations that acknowledge what you think their contribution could be.
5. Ask participants to reflect beforehand on the challenge and, if time permitting, to prepare a presentation on the value (e.g. skills, expertise, experience, resources, etc.) they can bring to the challenge.
6. During the workshop, have participants do a ‘tour de table’ of their potential contributions to the challenge. Following this, allow for breakout sessions in small groups for ideation on potential routes to action. Afterwards, have table leads pitch their ideas to the full group.
7. Following the workshop, develop a summary report that outlines outcomes and next steps.
8. Nurture any opportunities that resulted from the workshop. If you have the capacity, act as an informal secretariat to enable action (e.g. secure funding, develop proof-of-concept, find technical assistance, etc.). Once you take on this role, be prepared to provide ongoing support and guidance. Therefore, find ways to make this relevant and valuable to the organization you represent.

Points to Consider

Developing the concept
The concept should be shaped by the need of the country/organization that has the challenge. To get at the objectives of the workshop, unpack the proposed challenge with a bilateral conversation.

Invitation
See the Insight Session invitation template (p. 46) for ideas on how to prepare one for this workshop. Attach the participant briefing kit and kindly request that the materials are reviewed in advance.
Who to invite?
Based on the challenge at hand, invite stakeholders that have relevant knowledge and experience. However, challenge yourself to think outside a single thematic area or discipline — diversity in representation leads to the most unexpected and innovative ideas. Ideally, participants come from at least four different sectors or organization types.

Space & materials
All that’s needed for this session is a general meeting room. Round tables work best at facilitating collaborative conversations. Have easels, sticky notes and markers on-hand for the breakout sessions.

Facilitators
Pick a facilitator that is diplomatic and able to manage different personalities and inputs. It is important that they establish the right expectations among the group and speak clearly to the purpose of the session.

Follow-up
Reference the Insight Session action summary template (p. 47) for guidelines on how to provide actionable follow-up after the session.

Tracking & documenting
Document key points such as objective, invitee list, participant attendance and their organizations, organizing costs and location, and any communications (e.g. participant briefing kits, invitation, action summary, etc.). Good documentation will enable consistency across your team for future sessions and help to demonstrate your impact as a convener.

Related Reading
See The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design from IDEO and the DIY Toolkit from Nesta for suggestions on how to facilitate ideation during the workshop.

In Action: ‘Niger 2.0’ Country Challenge
Niger has established a national ‘digital revolution’ plan to provide broadband infrastructure to improve internet access in rural and remote areas of the country. Named ‘Niger 2.0’, the project will enable the implementation of an e-government system to improve access, efficiency and effectiveness of public services. It represents a vital component of Niger’s efforts towards the SDGs.

In March 2018, the SDG Lab hosted a minister from Niger who was introduced to International Geneva-based actors working on issues related to ‘Niger 2.0’.

A series of bilateral meetings were organized with UN specialized agencies and programmes, other international organizations, governments, private sector and civil society. The interactions focused on providing new resources and ideas to the minister in pursuit of the government’s ambitious vision.

A one-day workshop, co-convened and facilitated by the SDG Lab and a Geneva-based partner, Impact Hub, enabled the sharing of experiences and ideas on how to accelerate the ‘Niger 2.0’ project. More than 20 actors from the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem joined the workshop, bringing different expertise areas relevant to the project.

Thanks to the involvement of the SDG Lab, Niger was able to secure funding and visibility for their ‘digital revolution’ plan.
Additional Resources

Here are additional methods, tools and techniques developed by organizations within the Geneva Ecosystem that can support your work. If you or your organization have something else to be shared, please drop us a note at sdg-lab@un.org.

Process related
- The Open Seventeen: SDG Solution Kit – crowdsourcing from Citizen Cyber Lab, Citizen Science Lab Zurich and GovLab
- Tools for Systemic Thinking from Reos Partners
- Toolbox for Meaningful Spaces and Processes for Collaboration from Collaboratio Helvetica
- Initiatives with Impact: Unleashing Bottom-Up Innovation in International Organizations from Université Genève – UNIGE

Assessment related
- Making the Link: UN International Accountability Mechanisms from Plan UN Geneva
- Parliaments and the SDGs: A Self-Assessment Toolkit from Inter-Parliamentary Union – IPU

Technology related

Human rights related
- A Human Rights-Based Approach to Data: Leaving No One Behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner – OHCHR
- Human Rights Indicators Tables: Updated with the SDGs from OHCHR
- International Human Rights Standards and Recommendations Relevant to the Disaggregation of SDG Indicators from OHCHR
- United Nations Human Rights Report 2018 from OHCHR
- No One Will Be Left Behind: The Role of United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms in Monitoring the SDGs that Seek to Realize Economic, Social and Cultural Rights from Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights – ADH
- Research Brief on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and SDGs from ADH
SDG related

- SDG 3 / SDG 6 / SDG 11 / SDG 12: Chemicals and Waste Management: Essential to Achieving the SDGs from World Health Organization - WHO
- SDG 4 / SDG 8 / SDG 10 / SDG 13: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region from UN Economic Commission for Europe - UNECE
- SDG 5: Girls' Rights Platform from Plan UN Geneva
- SDG 5: Gender Responsive Assemblies: Agenda for Concrete Action from International Gender Champions - IGC
- SDG 5: A “How To” Checklist for International Gender Champions from IGC
- SDG 5 / SDG 8: Joint Declaration on Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment from IGC
- SDG 5 / SDG 8: Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development from UNECE
- SDG 5 / Disarmament: Gender and Disarmament Pack for Multilateral Practitioners from IGC
- SDG 8: Decent Work for Sustainable Development Resource Platform from International Labour Organization - ILO
- SDG 8: Decent Work and the SDGs: A Guidebook on SDG Labour Market Indicators from ILO
- SDG 8 / SDG 12 / SDG 14: Tourism 4 SDGs Platform from World Tourism Organization - UNWTO

Additional Resources
Tool Templates
How do we imagine the [region/city/place] community contributing to the 2030 Agenda?

What kind of community do we envision being within the next five years?

How to use it?

Depending on the number of participants you have, you may want to split into table teams or do this activity as a large group.

Using a poster-sized sheet of paper, like a table top easel, draw a horizontal line across the middle of the paper.

As a group, respond to the posed questions and capture ideas on sticky notes (one idea per sticky note).

If working in teams, designate table leads at the end of the session to present to the larger group.

Use the ideas captured during the visioning session to build the mission of the Ecosystem.
**Ecosystem of Actors**

**Annual survey**

---

**About you**

1. Which type of organization do you represent?
   - UN
   - NGO
   - Government
   - Private Sector
   - Academia
   - Independent
   - Other

2. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Other
   - Prefer not to say

3. What is your age range?
   - Under 18
   - 18-25
   - 25-35
   - 35-50
   - 50+
   - Prefer not to say

---

**Looking back**

4. How do you feel the following elements of the community have changed since the founding date of Ecosystem?
   - Much worse
   - Somewhat worse
   - More or less the same
   - Somewhat better
   - Much better
   - Not sure

---

5. How much would you attribute these changes to the existence of the [name of your Ecosystem]?  
   - Not at all
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Very much

---

**Effectiveness of Ecosystem**

7. How useful do you feel the Ecosystem is for innovation, connecting and convening?  
   - Not at all useful
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Very useful

---

**Innovation & experimentation**

8. Do you feel more equipped with innovation tools, processes and thinking as a result of the Ecosystem?  
   - Not at all
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - Very much

9. Does the Ecosystem provide you with opportunities to experiment that would otherwise not be available?  
   - No
   - Yes
   - Unsure

---

**Connections & collaboration**

10. How useful is the Ecosystem in building professional connections?  
    - Not at all useful
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Very useful

11. Do you feel more connected to others working on the SDGs as a result of the Ecosystem?  
    - Not at all
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Very much

12. How effective is the Ecosystem in fostering collaboration?  
    - Not at all effective
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Very effective

13. What do you feel is the level of collaboration within the Ecosystem?  
    - Not at all collaborative
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Very collaborative

---

**Relevance & helpfulness**

14. How relevant and helpful is the Ecosystem to you in advancing your work on SDG Implementation?  
    - Not at all relevant
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
    - 4
    - 5
    - Extremely relevant
Ecosystem activities & operations

15. How do you view the following Ecosystem operations and processes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations/Logistics</th>
<th>Does not meet expectations</th>
<th>Meets expectations</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process design/facilitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. How useful are the following Ecosystem activities for innovating, convening and connecting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity 1</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
<th>A little useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Pretty useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website: (...)</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
<th>A little useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Pretty useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

17. How useful do you think the following Ecosystem communication tools are for innovating, convening and connecting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website: (...)</th>
<th>Not at all useful</th>
<th>A little useful</th>
<th>Somewhat useful</th>
<th>Pretty useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
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</table>

18. Do you think the Ecosystem is using an effective mix of tools (online and in-person) to engage members in the discussion and collaboration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Open-ended questions

19. What is one thing you think the Ecosystem excels at?

20. What is one thing you think the Ecosystem needs to improve on?

21. What do you hope to gain from and contribute to long-term participation in the Ecosystem?

22. Any additional comments you would like to share?

How to use it?

The Geneva 2030 Ecosystem administers a variation of this survey annually, using Google Forms. Depending on the mission, values and activities of your Ecosystem, it should be updated accordingly.
How to use it?
This is the registration form the SDG Lab uses to invite participants to join the Randomized Lunch Trials.
This enables us to capture essential information needed to make the matches, such as the participant’s organization, title and bio, as described in the tool.

Live version
Geneva 2030 Randomized Lunch Trials registration form
How to use it?

This is the email cover letter the SDG Lab uses to send the monthly matches for the Randomized Lunch Trials. Including the short bios of the matches helps the participants to prepare for the Lunch Trial in advance.

Dear [Name 1] and [Name 2],

The Randomized Lunch Trials for [month] have arrived!

Please find below your match's biography. We suggest that you find a time this month to go for lunch or coffee and get to know each other and your respective work. We have prepared a list of conversation starters to get you started.

Biography [name 1]

Biography [name 2]

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact [add the name and email of the person in charge of the programme].

Warm regards,

[Name of person in charge of the programme]
How to use it?
These are conversation starters the SDG Lab shares with participants to help kick-off the conversation in a thoughtful way.

Live version
Geneva 2030 Lunch Trials conversation starters

Worried about getting the conversation started?
Fear not, here are questions to kick things off:

- Where are you from, originally? Have you lived in other countries or regions? Which one was your favorite?
- How long have you been in Geneva? What do you like most about the city?
- What brought you here today? How did you hear about Randomized Lunch Trials? What kinds of people are you hoping to meet?
- What is the subject of your formal education? Does it relate to the work you do now? How?
- What is your organization’s purpose? How does it go about its work?
- How long have you worked in this thematic area and/or organization?
- How did you begin working on the SDGs?
- Which SDGs are you actively implementing/supporting? How?
- What is the most innovative approach to SDG implementation you have seen so far?
- Do you have any specific projects related to the SDGs that you have been working on recently? What are some of the challenges you face in this project? What are the opportunities?
- What are your job responsibilities? What is a typical day like? What skills do you need to be successful in your role?
- What is the most valuable learning (formal or informal) experience you have ever had?
- Where can I learn more about your organization/work/initiative (e.g. website, social media, etc.)?
- Are there any resources (e.g. courses, events, videos, books, tools, etc.) that you recommend I look into?
How to use it?

This is the invitation the SDG Lab uses to invite participants to join the Geneva 2030 Ecosystem WhatsApp Group. It is sent to potential participants via email.

By including the platform guidelines in the invitation, you establish important expectations and ground rules for use.

WhatsApp is just one of many platforms. This invitation is tailored to the use of this platform, however, you may choose to use another option such as email, Slack or Microsoft Teams.

Live version

Geneva 2030 WhatsApp Group invitation

Join the [Name of Group] [platform (WhatsApp, Slack, etc.)] Group!

Overview

The [organization] has established an informal [platform] group where participants can share events, publications, resources and news related to [topic]. The group is made up of individuals from [stakeholder type] that have an interest in being informed on [topic].

To Join

Send a request to [name] at [phone number]. The message should state: "[Name of Group] Request: First Name, Last Name, Organization". You will be added to the group and receive a confirmation message.

Guidelines

This is an open, peer-to-peer group that functions on common sense principles. Users are asked to be concise and clear with their messages (under 20-50 words). Events should include date, time and location information. All posts should have directions about where users can find more information. Users are also asked to ensure that the information they are sharing has a clear link to [topic].

Notifications

Notifications for [platform] will be according to your own phone’s settings. [Directions for how to ‘mute’ notifications; WhatsApp example: If you wish to ‘mute’ notifications for the group and check periodically at your own leisure without being prompted, simply enter the group, click the group title at the top of the screen, click ‘mute’ and select the length of time you would like to go without receiving notifications from the group.]
Insight Session: [Topic]

Date, Time & Location: [blank]

Invitation:
[Reason for Insight Session and an overview of the challenge to be addressed; include why you have asked them to participate]

Challenge Context:
[Greater detail about challenge to be addressed, such as specific data figures, relevant actors, rising opportunities, etc.]

Agenda:
[First 10 minutes]: Framing and introductions, [your organization]
[Next 10 minutes]: Overview of [topic], [Insight Seeker(s), name and organization]
[Next 30-60 minutes]: Tour de table using framing questions, Insight Sharers, names and organizations listed below
[Next 30-60 minutes]: Open discussion

Framing Questions:
The invitees all bring a unique perspective on [topic]. The [your organization] will convene them to share their experience and advice for furthering this work and draw important links to opportunities for utilizing this work in implementation. The following questions will be the basis of discussion:
• [Strategic questions the Insight Seeker(s) may want to address]
• [...]

What do we ask of Insight Seekers?
• Come to the table with an open mind and willingness to learn from people with different perspectives and expertise.
• Openly share your initiative or idea — both the opportunities and the challenges.
• Value diverse viewpoints and inputs and utilize the information and connections gained in the session to enhance the idea.

What do we ask of Insight Sharers?
• Bring relevant past knowledge and experience to the table.
• Share in a constructive way that aims to enhance the project and its objectives.
• Where possible and appropriate, share information and connections that may help to accelerate or amplify the idea.

Invites:
Insight Seekers:
[Name, organization, perspective]
Insight Sharers:
[Name, organization, perspective]

How to use it?
This is the invitation the SDG Lab uses to invite participants to take part in an Insight Session. It is sent to invitees via email. It provides you with a basic template that you may adapt to suit your unique context and objectives.
How to use it?

This is the format the SDG Lab follows when creating an action summary after an Insight Session or other collaborative meeting. It is sent to participants via email.

This summary is not meant to serve as a complete record of a meeting but rather an action map of key follow-up steps. It may be used as a guide for your own follow-up communications.
So What? Series: [SDG #] & [SDG #]

Date, Time & Location: [blank]

Context of So What?:
[Detail around purpose of the So What? series generally and the specific context and reasoning behind why you have chosen the stated SDGs/topics/themes].

Format:
The event will be a 'bar stool-style' dialogue between 3–5 speakers and a moderator from [organization]. The agenda format is as follows:

Introduction of topic and speakers by [name of moderator] (5 minutes)
[Name of speaker, organization] (10 minutes)
[Name of speaker, organization] (10 minutes)
[Name of speaker, organization] (10 minutes)

Interactive discussion (40 minutes)

Reception (1 hour)

Key Questions:
[See following template for panel questions]

Logistic Needs:
[e.g. bar stools, microphones, screens, etc.]

How to use it?
This is the outline the SDG Lab follows when (co-)creating a concept note for our So What? Series and reflects the important things to be considered during the planning stage. It can also help to inform the invitation that you send out to your community.

The template can also be shared with potential partners for them to fill-in their ideas for a So What? event.

The outline may be adapted to best fit the needs and purpose of your organization’s event.
**So What? Series:** [SDG X] & [SDG Y]

Key Panel Questions:

• How do [SDG X] and [SDG Y] mutually reinforce each other and ensure progress in sustainable development?

• What are the incentives for policy makers and practitioners to look at [SDG X] through the lens of [SDG Y], and [SDG Y] through the lens of [SDG X]?

• What are some clear examples of when you have addressed [SDG X] and [SDG Y] simultaneously and what were the outcomes?

• What changes are needed to maximize the benefits of connecting [SDG X] and [SDG Y]?

**How to use it?**

It is important to think of key questions ahead of time to make best use of the panel, however, advise your facilitator to be flexible to take interesting turns in the conversation as the opportunity arises.
How to use it?

The slide deck template can be downloaded online as a powerpoint document.
How to use it?

Poster-sized sheets of paper, like a tabletop easel, work well for this exercise.

Draw a horizontal line across the middle of the paper.

Using three colors of sticky notes, plot areas of existing work, differentiating between priority (P) and secondary (S), and future areas of work (F). Remember, one idea per sticky note!
How to use it?

Poster-sized sheets of paper, like a tabletop easel, work well for this exercise.

Draw a 2x2 grid across the middle of the paper and the variables you will be plotting against.

As a group, plot the ‘concept’ sticky notes based on your chosen variables. Remember, one idea per sticky note!

Sample variables

- Smaller, faster, cheaper < > Large, multi-year, big budget
- Single discipline < > Multi-discipline
- Thematic (single SDG focused) < > Systematic (Agenda focused)
- Low importance < > High importance
- Low impact < > Paradigm shifting
- Low urgency < > Great urgency
- Low risk < > High risk
Name of action area:

Objectives: What do you hope to achieve?

Who do you need to engage?

Immediate next steps:

How to use it?

For individual or small group work, use size A4 paper for the canvas.

If working in a big group, the canvas can also be drawn on poster-sized sheets of paper.
Open Space:

**Topic**

Date, Time & Location: [blank]

Invitation:

Open Space is referred to as a ‘self-organizing’ methodology because the agenda, topics and organization are chosen by the participants.

The overall theme of the gathering is [theme] but what exactly we discuss within that frame is up to you!

You are invited to bring forward ideas, challenges or opportunities you are currently grappling within your own work in regards to the above theme and these topics will drive the day’s agenda.

**Decide if you want to lead a topic!**

We will have space for individuals to explore a topic they are grappling with in their work. This could be a specific challenge or opportunity that you may want new perspective on, or an issue area that you have been struggling with and want to see what other people think about it. No one needs to sign up to present a topic in advance, it will happen on site, but it is good to ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there any issues or ideas where collective intelligence would be helpful to expanding my thinking?
- Am I working on anything that could benefit from new perspectives and ideas?

Get in the mindset!

We want to thank you in advance for taking time from your busy schedule to connect with your fellow community! To be present in the moment, we ask that you prepare by reflecting on the following questions:

- What do I hope to get out of this gathering?
- Is there anyone in particular I would like to meet?
- Is there any specific knowledge I would like to share?

How to use it?

A variation of this invitation is used by the SDG Lab to invite participants to take part in an Open Space event. It is sent to invitees via email. It provides you with a basic template that you may adapt to suit your unique context and objectives.
Open Space Slide deck

How to use it?
The slide deck template can be downloaded online as a powerpoint document.

Session 1: Workstreams
20 minutes
Create overview of current areas of focus as a result of exploration.
Team A
Team B
Team C
3 minutes each
Report back to the full group

Session 2: Brainstorm Action Areas
RULES
THERE ARE NO BAD IDEAS
- Divergent thinking - No Solutions
- Go for Volume
- Build on the Ideas of Others
- One idea per post-it

Session 3: Classify Action Areas
VARIABLE 1 VS. VARIABLE 2

Session 4: Prioritize Action Areas
DOTMOCRACY
4 PER PERSON
Some Criteria to Consider:
- Feasibility to ship now
- Impact to the business
- Contribution to a meaningful outcome
- Collaborative potential

Session 5: Action Planning
Name of Action Area:
Objectives: What do you hope to achieve?
What do you need to engage?
Immediate Next Steps

That’s a wrap!
How to use it?

A similar table map can be created on a projected slide deck or word document, or as a printed map, as long as it is visible to all participants.

Each square represents a table and should correspond to numbered tables in the room.

After the topics have been chosen by the participants, write them in the squares to signal where each discussion will be taking place.