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# Shaping sustainable futures: Multi-stakeholder perspectives on government-business partnerships for achieving the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objective:** The objective of this study is to examine government-business partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean to support the 2030 Agenda, focusing on bypassing negative future scenarios and achieving key milestones.

**Research Design & Methods:** Using a qualitative futures study approach, we gathered data through 28 face-to-face focus groups in seven countries, involving diverse stakeholders. Discussions centred on future scenarios balancing economic growth with climate change resilience and biodiversity conservation.

**Findings:** A critical need for multi-stakeholder collaboration was revealed in fostering business development that supports regenerative economic recovery post-COVID-19 while mitigating climate change impacts. The study extends the Montiel *et al*. (2021) model, demonstrating its effectiveness across various business types and economies.

**Implications & Recommendations:** By creating a future-positive scenario on how to circumvent detrimental outcomes and support sustainable development goals (SDGs), this study offers fresh insights for societal and economic actors on actionable strategies to close the gap in the SDG compliance.

**Contribution & Value Added:** The research provides a unique set of actionable opportunities in each country, along with a comparative analysis of sustainable development strategies. It also proposes refinements to Montiel *et al*.'s (2021) externality framework, contributing significant new perspectives to the literature.

**Article type:** research article

**Keywords:** sustainable development goals (SDGs); multi-stakeholder collaboration; regenerative economic recovery; climate change resilience; biodiversity conservation; Latin American and Caribbean; sustainable development

**JEL codes:** O13, Q56, Q58

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## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) represent a global commitment to address pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges by 2030 (Ziemba *et al*., 2024). As we approach this critical deadline, the need for effective strategies to achieve these goals becomes increasingly urgent. This study focuses on a key aspect of this global effort: the role of partnerships between governments and businesses in achieving the SDGs.

We cannot overstate the relevance of this topic. In an increasingly interconnected world, the challenges addressed by the SDGs – from climate change to poverty eradication – require collaborative

solutions that transcend traditional boundaries between public and private sectors. Understanding how these partnerships function and how they can be optimised is crucial for accelerating progress towards the 2030 targets.

Our study subject was the dynamics of government-business partnerships in the context of sustainable development, with a particular focus on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). This region faces unique challenges and abides in unique opportunities in pursuing sustainable development, making it a rich ground for exploring innovative partnership models.

The primary aim of this research is to identify and analyse effective strategies for multi-stakeholder collaboration in achieving the SDGs. Specifically, we sought to:

1. Examine the role of national drivers in sustainable socioeconomic growth and climate change resilience.
2. Explore how business strategies can align with global sustainability objectives.
3. Investigate the potential of scenario-based research in planning for sustainable futures.

To achieve these aims, we employed a mixed-method approach, combining literature review, focus groups with diverse stakeholders, and scenario analysis. By doing so, we addressed a significant gap in the current literature: the practical application of scenario-based research in scholarly work on sustainable development.

We aimed to highlight the pivotal role of partnerships between governments and businesses in achieving the SDGs established by the United Nations (n.d.). The topic is compelling and significant in both theory and practice, because it addresses how collaborative efforts can drive sustainable development. Understanding the dynamics of these partnerships can inform better policies and strategies, ensuring progress towards essential targets by 2030. Our focus on circumventing negative future scenarios and meeting these targets underscored the critical intersection of business strategies and global sustainability objectives.

The article is structured into several key sections. Following the Introduction, the *Literature Review* delves into the theoretical background, including the concept of future scenarios and the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The *Research Methodology* details the qualitative futures study approach, including participant profiles, data collection, and analysis methods. The *Results and Discussion* section presents critical insights and strategic recommendations for sustainable development in various countries. Finally, the *Conclusions* summarize the findings, highlighting the role of public-private partnerships in supporting the SDGs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction to Future Scenarios

The concept of future scenarios has evolved from military applications to business strategies (Ryan, 2019; Schmitz & Cordova, 2023). Wilkinson and Kupers (2014) traced this evolution back to Shell's early adoption in the 1960s. More recently, Monje-Cueto and Ruiz Ayala (2023) proposed a collaborative model for businesses to work towards sustainability.

The quest for a sustainable future requires collective action that transcends traditional economic models (Gonzalez-Perez, 2022; Mohieldin *et al*., 2023). Neuvonen and Ache (2017) and Vargas *et al*. (2022) advocate for a proactive approach, utilising backcasting to create actionable paths towards these sustainable futures.

In our current context, a polycrisis is defined as multiple concurrent crises, creating compounded challenges (Gonzalez-Perez, 2023). This context underscores the necessity of a multi-stakeholder approach, as emphasised by Ferretti (2016), for adequate policy support and crisis management.

### Understanding and Managing Externalities

The concept of externalities highlights the unintended impacts businesses have on third parties (Ayres & Baumol, 1972; Stern *et al*., 1973). This understanding has evolved to include both negative

and positive externalities (Helbling, 2010), leading to Montiel *et al.'s* (2021) framework for aligning multinational corporations' activities with SDGs.

While the existing literature provides valuable insights, several important gaps remain. There is limited research on how these concepts can be practically applied in the specific context of Latin America and the Caribbean to address the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, while scholars acknowledge the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration, there is a lack of empirical studies examining how diverse sectors can effectively work together to create sustainable futures, particularly in the face of polycrises.

Based on these gaps, our research question emerged: How can public and private partnerships contribute to support the 2030 Agenda while avoiding undesirable future scenarios through collaborative efforts? This question encapsulates the essence of our study, seeking to explore and define effective strategies for multi-stakeholder collaboration in the pursuit of sustainable development.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design and Approach

This study, funded by Centro de los Objetivos del Desarrollo Sostenible para Latinoamérica (CODS), employs an exploratory approach through focus groups to understand mechanisms for rebuilding businesses and societies post-COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### Participant Profile and Data Collection

We engaged 269 individuals across government, business, academia, and civil society in 28 country-based focus groups. Each group, lasting approximately 120 minutes, convened between November 2020 and March 2021 via virtual platforms. We selected participants based on specific profiles to contribute diverse perspectives on recovery and resilience-building, particularly in areas related to climate change and sustainable development.

**Table 1. Participants demographics**

| Classification of actors | Participants by actor's classification | Acting experience (in years) | Participants count | Gender distribution | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Male | Female |
| Academia | 58 | < 10 | 9 | 2 | 7 |
| | | >10 | 49 | 32 | 17 |
| Private sector (Business) | 114 | < 10 | 30 | 12 | 18 |
| | | > 10 | 84 | 53 | 31 |
| Public sector | 50 | < 10 | 14 | 7 | 7 |
| | | > 10 | 36 | 18 | 18 |
| Civil society/Community groups/ NGOs | 56 | Less than 10 | 20 | 7 | 13 |
| | | More than 10 | 36 | 16 | 20 |
| Total %, male/female: | | | | 52.88% | 47.12% |

Source: own study.

Participant demographics:

- 114 business professionals (50-75% C-Suite, up to 25% board members);
- 58 academics with doctorates;
- 50 government representatives;
- 56 NGO and civil society representatives;
- Gender distribution: 52.88% male, 47.12% female;
- Experience: Majority had over 10 years in their respective sectors.

### Methodological Approach: Backcasting and Scenario Building

We utilised backcasting, a retrospective method defined by Robinson (1982) and refined by Phdungsilp (2011), to construct an ideal long-term scenario. This method focuses on contextual, rather than individual, scenarios, distinguishing it from traditional forecasts.

### Focus Group Activities and Analysis

Focus groups analysed country-specific drivers using Pestel's analysis and developed four main future scenarios considering socio-economic recovery and climate change resilience. We used five structured activities to explore various elements of the scenarios, identify risks and opportunities, and propose public policies.

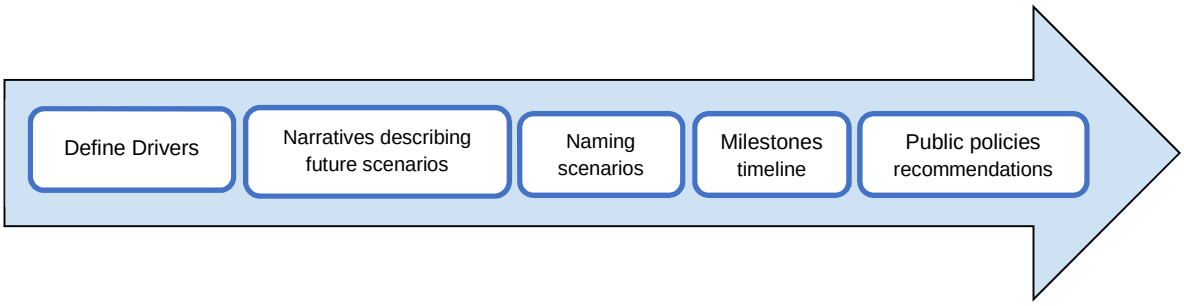


**Figure 1. Steps taken in each focus group for stakeholder analysis (2024)**
Source: own elaboration.

The focus groups had the following instructions to guide de-structured activities and discussions:

1. Indicate the drivers of change that will help identify trends that could significantly impact the configuration of a future scenario for each country.
2. Create narratives that describe future scenarios for each country by 2030. We created a 2x2 matrix in which socio-economic recovery was on one axis and resilience to climate change and massive biodiversity loss – on the other.
3. Name the scenarios using a name that best summarises the narrative described in the previous point.
4. Identify the key events that led to each scenario using a timeline that begins in 2020 and ends in 2030. On the one hand, participants had to think carefully about beneficial events to reach the best scenario. On the other hand, they had to come up with damaging events that led to the worst-case scenario.
5. Finally, the last activity aimed to put all the information from the previous activities to propose recommendations to reach the best scenario.

### Data Coding and Analysis

Each country's research team analysed the data using Atlas.ti for a comprehensive national assessment. The process involved transcription of focus group discussions, coding, and analysis, culminating in detailed reports with recommendations. These recommendations were visualised using Rawgraph, based on the framework of Montiel *et al.* (2021) in Figure 2.

This study's unique contribution lies in its multi-stakeholder approach, bringing together diverse voices to collaboratively envision and strategize for a sustainable future. It provides a nuanced understanding of the paths businesses and societies can take to align with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, setting a precedent for similar research in other regions.

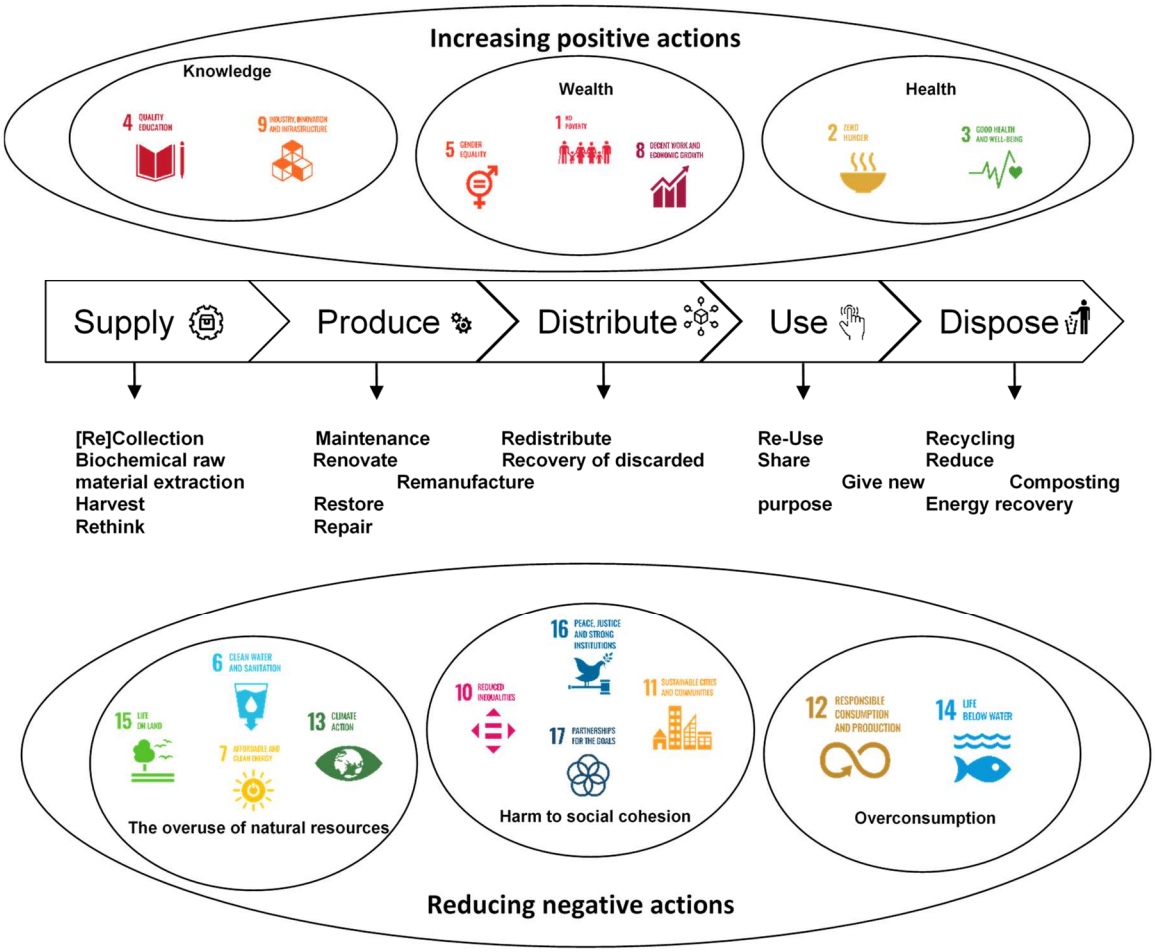


**Figure 2. Proposed improvements to Montiel *et al*. (2021) framework for driving the achievement of the SDGs**

Source: own elaboration based on the externality's framework from Montiel *et al.* (2021) and the butterfly model of the circular economy by the Ellen Macarthur Foundation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Building on the framework developed by Montiel *et al*. (2021), we present critical insights into how businesses (domestic, multinational, large and small and medium enterprises) contribute to the 2030 Development Agenda. We organised our findings into two main categories, as per Montiel *et al*. (2021) actions that increase positive externalities and those that reduce negative ones. This study uniquely adapts Montiel's model to encompass actions by businesses within the circular economy, offering a more inclusive understanding of business contributions across sectors.

Following Neuvonen and Ache (2017) and Vargas *et al.* (2022), to ensure a sustainable future, we had to make recommendations specific to each country's needs.

#### Bolivia

As Figure 3 shows, in Bolivia, focus group participants emphasised the importance of SDGs 8, 12, 9, and 13.

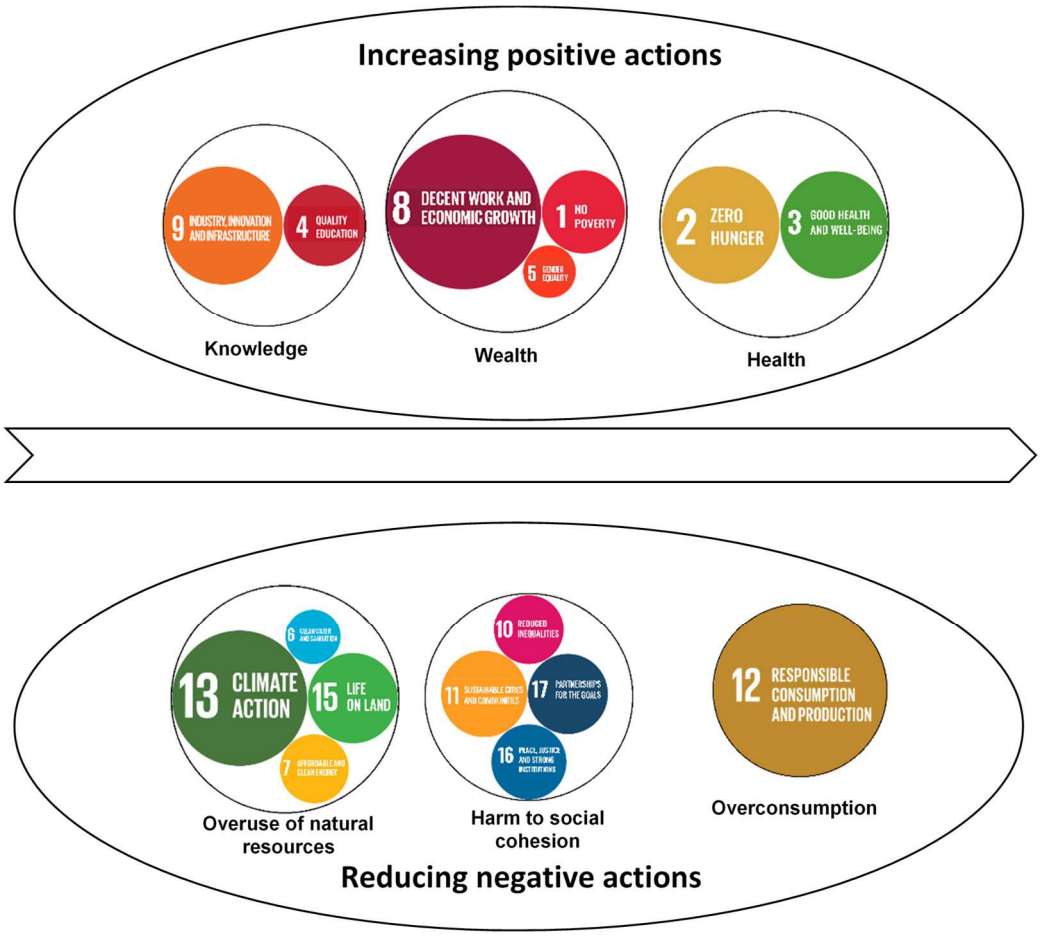


**Figure 3. Proposed actions in Bolivia's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

The following tables present the ten most relevant strategic recommendations for each country to advance the 2030 Agenda, indicating which sectors should be involved and which specific SDGs of the agenda they would promote.

**Table 2. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Bolivia by 2030**

| Recommendations | Aca-demia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government promotion of cleaner technologies and alternative energies. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 7, 13 |
| Technology integration in agriculture to boost productivity. | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2, 9 |
| Diversification of the economy through innovation and circular economy principles. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 8, 9, 12 |
| Development of iron production in Mutun for export. | | ✓ | ✓ | | 9 |
| Establishment of Bolivia as a lithium and renewable energy re-search hub. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 9 |
| Internationalisation of high-value production chains. | | ✓ | ✓ | | 8, 9 |
| Reforms in judicial and electoral systems. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 16 |
| Market flexibilisation for equitable tax contributions. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 10, 8 |
| Establishing Bolivia as a hub for technological and clean energy services. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 9 |
| Regulations for informal mining. | | | ✓ | ✓ | 12, 13, 16 |

Source: own study.

Achieving the recommendation of 'government promotion of cleaner technologies and alternative energies' requires collaboration between stakeholders. Academia leads research and development, the private sector invests and adopts technologies, and the public sector creates supportive policies. Civil society raises awareness and advocates for sustainability.

**Brazil**

Focus groups in Brazil highlighted SDG 12, followed by SDGs 8 and 2 (see Figure 4).

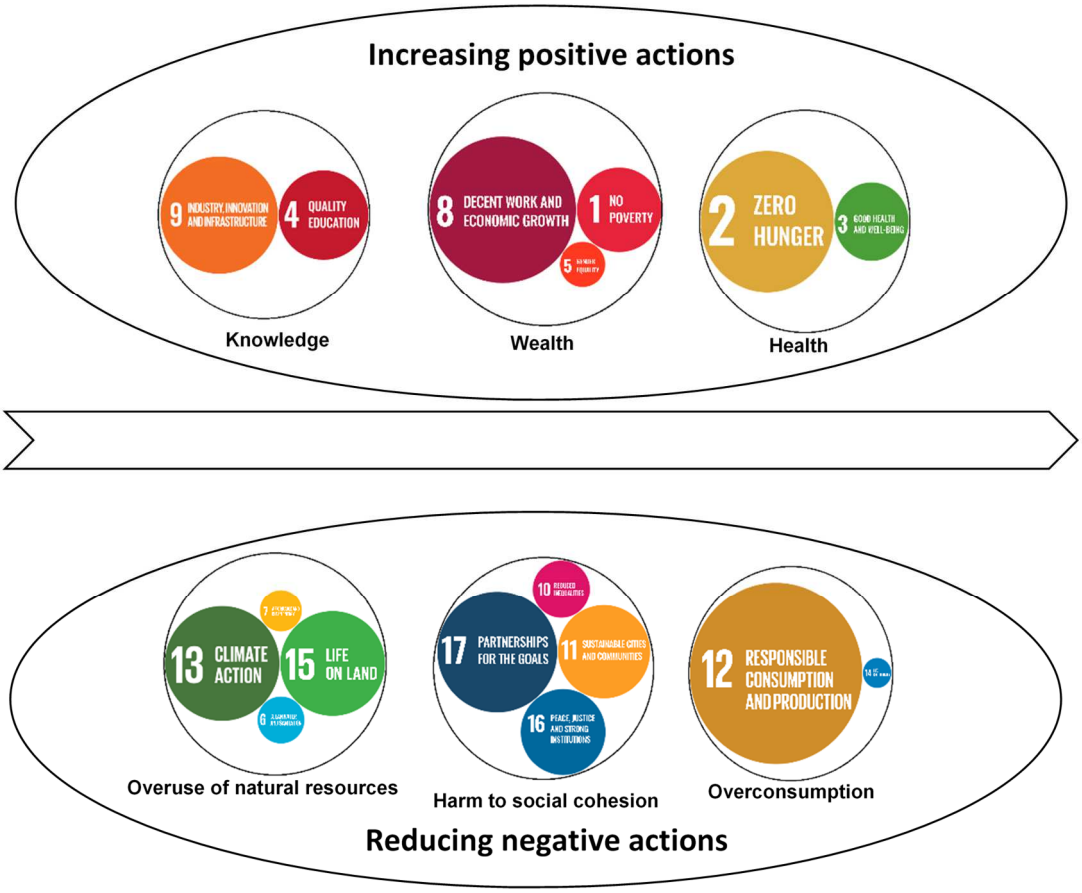


**Figure 4. Proposed actions in Brazil to drive SDGs achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

**Table 3. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Brazil by 2030**

| Recommendations | Aca-demia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Embedding sustainability in early childhood education. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 4, 12 |
| Growth in the creative economy to improve socio-economic conditions. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 8, 9, 12 |
| Technological advancements in the cane and protein industries. | ✓ | ✓ | | | 2, 9 |
| Implementing regulations for reverse logistics and carbon credits. | | ✓ | ✓ | | 12, 13 |
| Promotion of environmentally friendly practices in meat production. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 12, 15 |
| Sustainable advancements in agribusiness. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2, 8, 12 |
| Conversion of traditional livestock farms to *silvopastoral* systems. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 15 |
| Entrepreneurial education initiatives. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 4, 8 |
| Support for the collaborative economy. | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | 8, 12, 17 |
| Strengthening Brazil's global economic and diplomatic roles. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 8, 10, 17 |

Source: own study.

Embedding sustainability in early childhood education in Brazil requires coordinated efforts. Academia can create curriculum materials and provide teacher training. The public sector can set policies, allocate funding, and support schools. Civil society can advocate, support schools, and engage the community. Together, they can create a cohesive approach to sustainability education, fostering environmentally conscious individuals committed to sustainable practices.

### Chile

Chilean participants focused on SDGs 12 and 8, 13, 9, and 2 (see Figure 5).

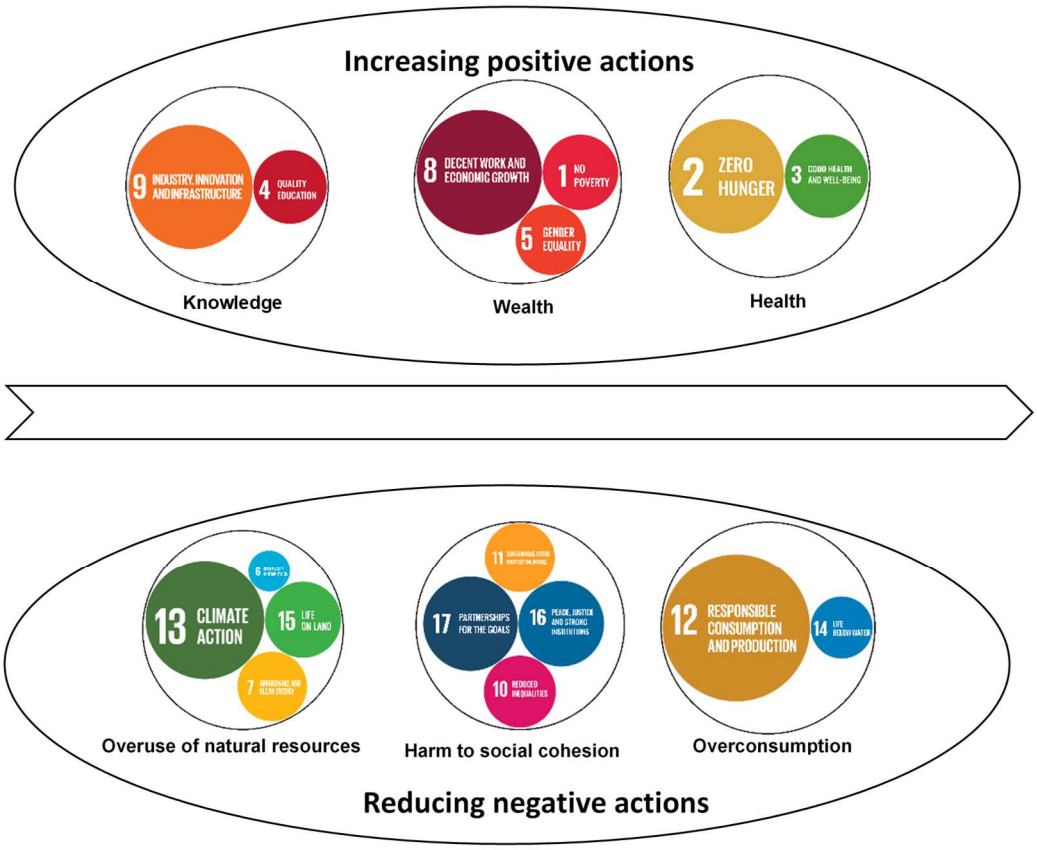


**Figure 5. Proposed actions in Chile's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

**Table 4. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Chile by 2030**

| Recommendations | Academia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shifting the discourse from natural resources to natural assets. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 12, 8 |
| Mandatory sustainability training for all professionals. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 4, 12 |
| Enhanced environmental education at higher education levels. | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | 4, 13 |
| Collaboration between academia and government for clean energy production. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 7, 9 |
| Tax system reforms to favour environmental contributions. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 13, 17 |
| Alignment of environmental standards with corporate performance and employee satisfaction. | ✔ | ✔ | | | 8, 12 |
| Requirement of 'B' certification for state support. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 8, 12 |
| Promotion of SMEs focused on sustainability. | | ✔ | | ✔ | 8, 9, 12 |
| Recognition of Latin America as a biodiversity powerhouse. | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | 15, 17 |
| Post-pandemic appreciation of rural spaces and sustainable business development. | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | 11, 12 |

Source: own study.

Shifting the discourse from natural resources to natural assets requires collaboration. Academia researches and promotes natural assets, informing policy and business strategies. The private sector incorporates this framework into sustainability practices. The public sector enacts protective policies and incentives. Civil society raises awareness and advocates for stronger protections. Together, they can shift the discourse, promoting sustainable management of the environment.

**Colombia**

In Colombia, there was a greater emphasis on achieving SDGs 12 and 8, followed by SDGs 9 and 3 (see Figure 6).

> I see a negative scenario; low governance in the face of this economic and fiscal crisis of the government undoubtedly increases, and this translates into illegal activities such as deforestation, illegal mining, and cultivation. The government's capacity is low because the regulation regarding climate change is just a declaration, and government tools are very scattered, lacking articulation and are very oriented towards the mining-energy sector. However, nothing concrete has been proposed for the agricultural and industrial sectors (Actor ID MRFT2, female, Director of Sustainability, Postobon, Medellín, 1 December, 2020).

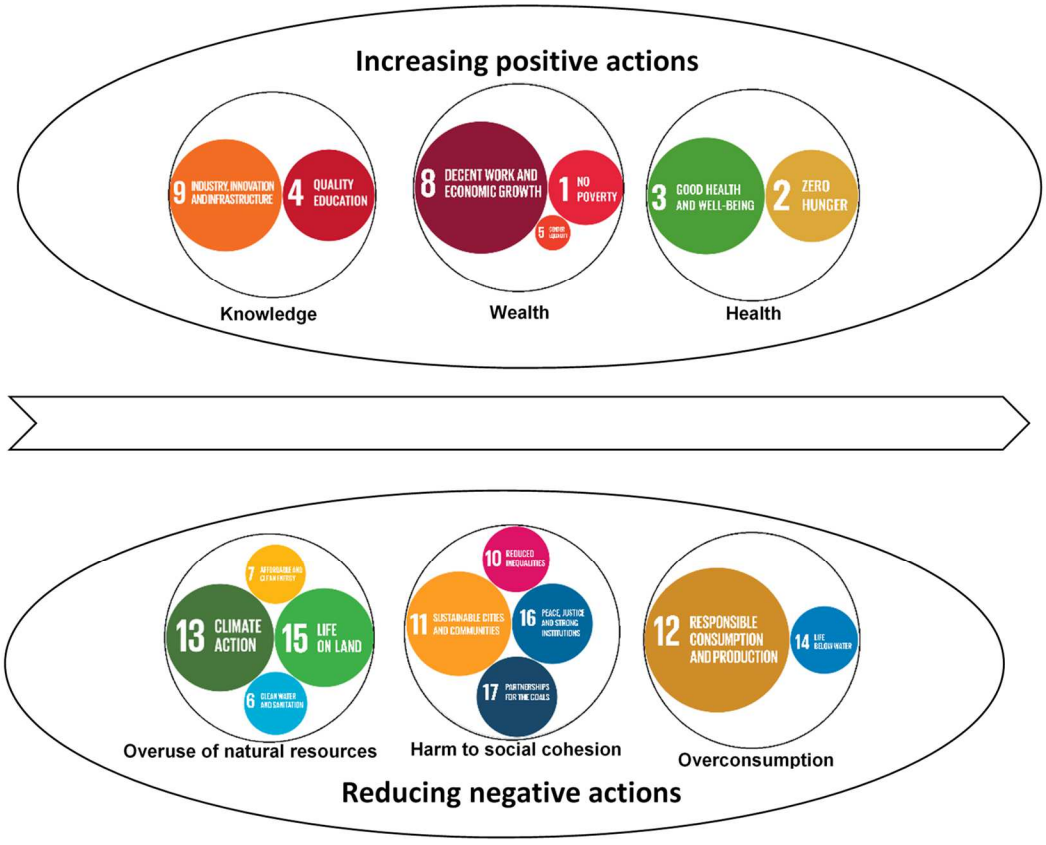


**Figure 6. Proposed actions in Colombia's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

According to what was mentioned in workshop 2, 'circular economy topics have been gaining more traction lately. I would say that in Colombia we should be focusing a lot on these topics, which are very environmental due to our geographical location' (Actor ID MXAT2, female, especialized professional, Ecopetrol, Medellín, 1 December, 2020).

Transitioning to a multidimensional growth model beyond GDP in Colombia requires coordinated efforts. Academia can develop alternative metrics that include environmental health, social equity, and quality of life, integrating these into curricula and research. The public sector can adopt these

metrics in policy-making and planning, creating regulatory frameworks for their use. Civil society can raise awareness, advocate for adoption, and hold entities accountable. Together, they can promote a more comprehensive and sustainable growth model.

**Table 5. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Colombia by 2030**

| Recommendations | Aca-demia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transitioning to a multidimensional growth model beyond GDP. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 8, 9 |
| Incentives for sustainable agriculture production. | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2, 12 |
| Promotion of environmental and economic research. | ✓ | | ✓ | | 12, 8 |
| Enhancing waste recovery and recycling. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 12, 11 |
| Development of an education for sustainable development policy. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 4, 12 |
| Policy-making on socioeconomic regeneration. | | | ✓ | | 1, 8 |
| Investment in research on climate change adaptation. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 13 |
| Fostering community-based tourism for territorial development. | | | ✓ | ✓ | 8, 11 |
| Investment expansion in science, technology, and innovation. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 9 |
| Energy matrix reconversion. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 12 |

Source: own study.

### Jamaica

Jamaican discussions highlighted SDGs 2 and 8, with additional focus on SDGs 13, 11, and 12.

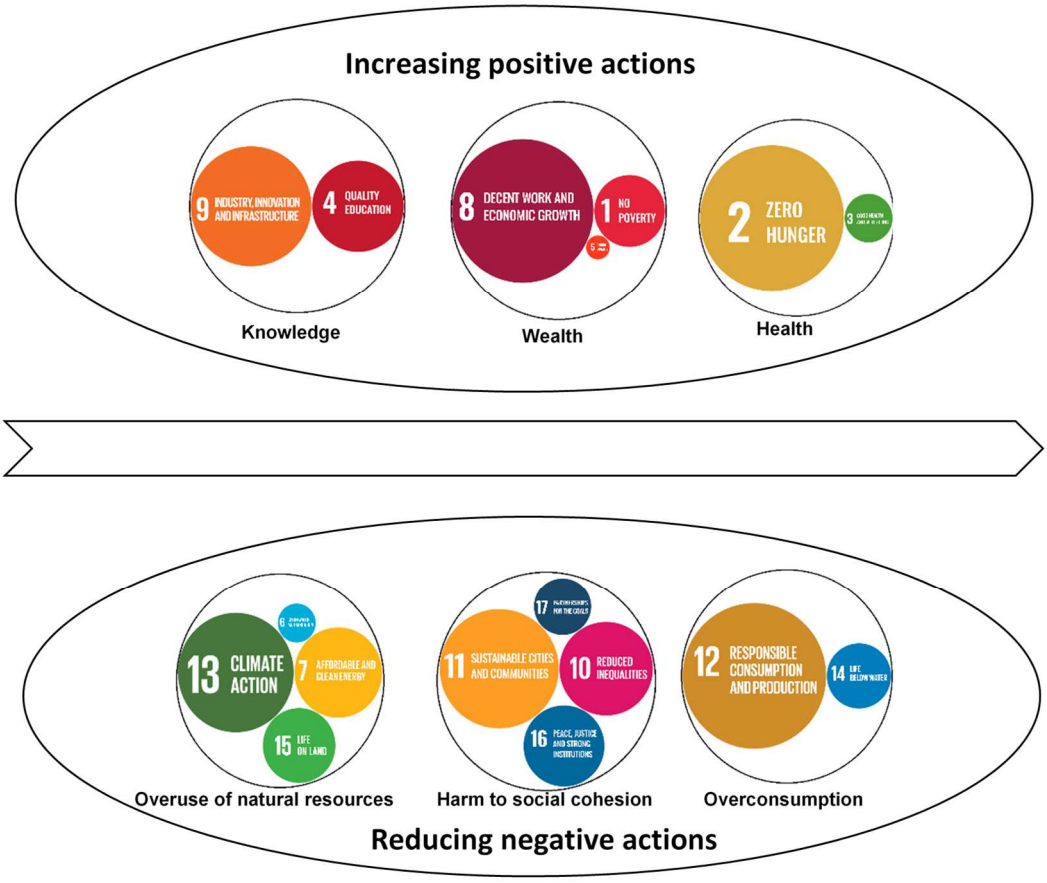


**Figure 7. Proposed actions in Jamaica's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

In Jamaica, promoting Social Impact Assessments (SIAs) requires collaboration from each sector. Academia can develop methodologies, provide research, training, and expertise, and offer courses on

SIAs. The public sector can mandate SIAs in regulations, create guidelines, offer incentives, and provide resources. Civil society can advocate for SIAs, contribute local knowledge, and monitor implementation. Together, these stakeholders can make SIAs standard practice, leading to socially responsible and sustainable development projects.

**Table 6. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Jamaica by 2030**

| Recommendations | Academia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Promotion of Social Impact Assessments. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 2, 8, 11 |
| Linking environmental protection with holistic economic development. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 2, 8, 12 |
| Supportive policies for sustainable farming practices. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2, 12 |
| Enhancement of financial literacy in sustainable development. | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | 4, 8 |
| Adoption of renewable energy sources to reduce costs. | | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 12, 13 |
| Development of indigenous renewable energy resources. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 12 |
| Integrated urban industrial symbiosis for resource efficiency. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 9, 11, 12 |
| Cross-sectoral policy coherence for societal benefit. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | 16, 17 |
| National programs promoting renewable resources. | | ✓ | ✓ | | 7, 11, 12 |
| Implementation of circular economy principles. | | | ✓ | | 12 |

Source: own study.

### Mexico

In Mexico, respondents emphasised SDGs 12, 9, 8, and 13 (see Figure 8).

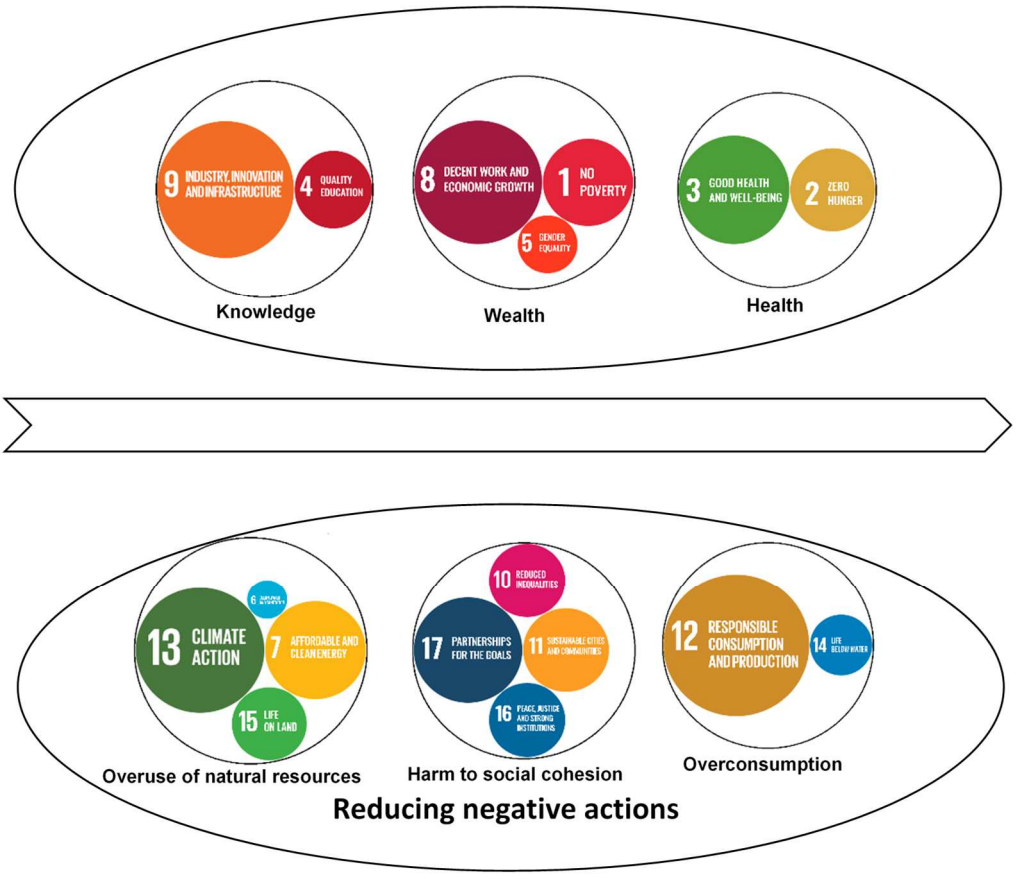


**Figure 8. Proposed actions in Mexico's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

In Mexico, leveraging health-focused learnings from COVID-19 requires attention from sectors. Academia can conduct research and develop strategies for future health crises, integrating these into curricula and training. The public sector can improve policies, infrastructure, and emergency plans based on these insights. Civil society can spread knowledge, advocate for better policies, and build community resilience. Together, these efforts can enhance public health and preparedness.

**Table 7. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Mexico by 2030**

| Recommendations | Academia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health-focused learnings from the COVID pandemic. | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | 3, 12 |
| Fair and eco-friendly renewable energy production. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 7, 12, 13 |
| Promotion of electric vehicles. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 7, 9 |
| Cooperation with international organisations for clean energy transition. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 7, 13, 17 |
| Implementation of carbon taxes. | | | ✔ | | 13, 12 |
| Consistency in environmental and economic policies. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 8, 12 |
| Advances in automation and manufacturing. | ✔ | ✔ | | | 9, 12 |
| Ecotourism and local economy-focused economic programs. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 8, 12 |
| Continuity in key projects beyond political changes. | | | ✔ | | 16, 12 |
| Specialised education for children and youth. | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | 4, 8 |

Source: own study.

### Peru

In the Peruvian focus groups, participants emphasised the importance of achieving sustainable development goals 4, 8, and 12 (see Figure 9).

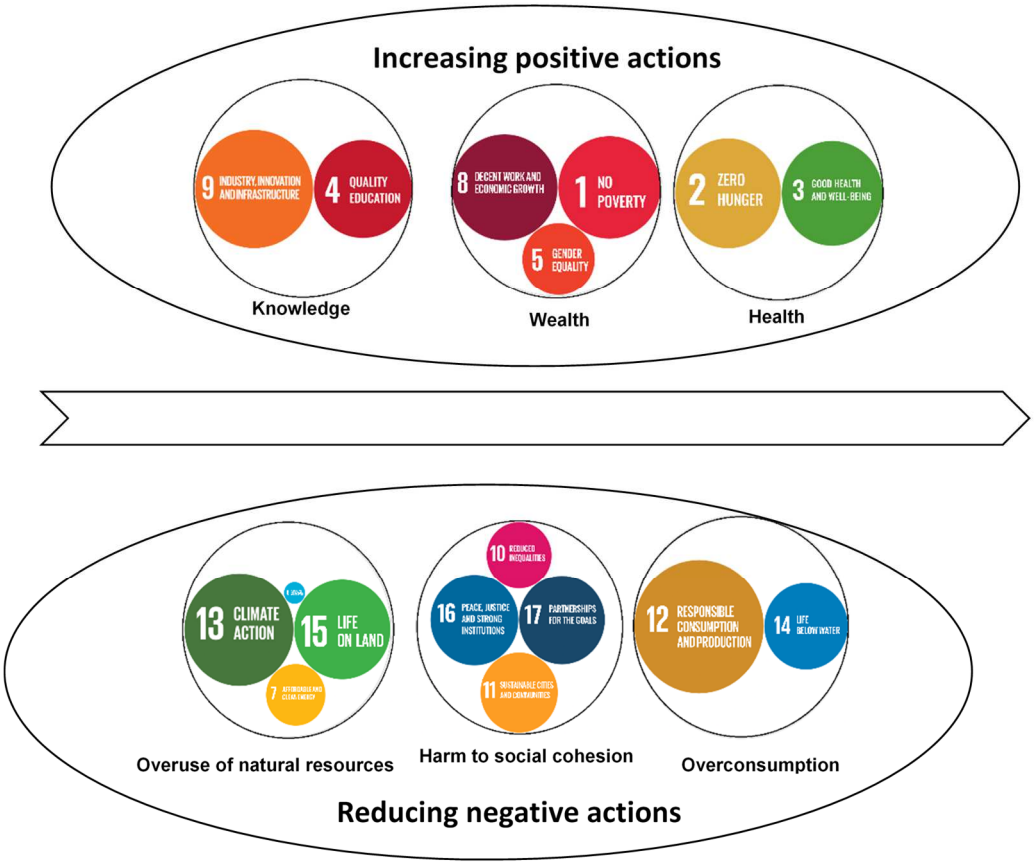


**Figure 9. Proposed actions in Peru's focus groups to drive SDG achievement (2023)**
Source: own elaboration.

Promoting gastronomy training for biodiversity protection is impulsed in different ways. Academia can develop programs integrating culinary arts with biodiversity principles and conduct research on its impact. The public sector can fund programs, create supportive policies, and partner internationally. Civil society can advocate for sustainable practices, support local producers, and raise awareness. Together, they can make gastronomy a key tool in global biodiversity protection and sustainable practices.

**Table 8. Strategic recommendations for sustainable development in Peru by 2030**

| Recommendations | Aca-demia | Private sector | Public sector | Civil society | SDGs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gastronomy training as an international model for biodiversity protection. | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | 4, 8, 12 |
| Education on circular economy for all. | ✔ | | ✔ | | 4, 12 |
| Advancements in telemedicine, fintech, and biotech. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 9, 3 |
| Democratisation of inclusive technologies. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | 10, 9 |
| Public policy coherence with local realities. | | | ✔ | ✔ | 16, 11 |
| Shift from extractive to service industries. | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | 8, 9 |
| Remote working to reduce carbon footprint. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 13, 8 |
| Tax benefits for sustainable Amazonian product trade. | | ✔ | ✔ | | 12, 15 |
| Public-private partnerships in managing food crises. | | | ✔ | ✔ | 2, 17 |
| Sustainable river basin management. | ✔ | | ✔ | | 6, 15 |

Source: own study.

This study presents an extension to the Montiel *et al*. (2021) model that shows its effectiveness in various types of businesses and economies. By including the perspectives of diverse stakeholders (Ferretti, 2016), the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how businesses can strategically contribute to the 2030 Development Agenda. This approach supports the statements on including global challenges into strategic foresight processes (Gonzalez-Perez, 2022; Wilkinson, 2017) and fills the gaps in the current literature by providing practical recommendations tailored to specific contexts, enabling businesses to promote sustainable development across different economies.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the preceding section, we synthesised our findings in a comprehensive table (see Table 9). This facilitated an insightful comparison of recommendations for the public and private sectors and their alignment with various SDGs. This section highlights the nuanced differences in priorities and strategies across nations, underlining the diversity of approaches to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

In Table 9, values are colour-coded to indicate the number of recommendations: ‘very low’ from 0 to 40 in red, indicating the smallest amounts; ‘low’ from 41 to 80 in orange, signifying a lower but not minimal quantity; ‘high’ from 81 to 120 in yellow, showing a significant but lesser quantity; and ‘very high’ from 120 and above in green, indicating a substantial number of recommendations. These colours reflect the recommendation ranges for each country in each group. We used the frequency column to represent the sum of recommendations for the seven countries in each group, divided into four ranges, 0-150 is ‘very low’, 151-300 aws ‘low,’ 301-450 was ‘high,’ above 451 was ‘very high.’

One pivotal finding of our study was the multifaceted nature of the recommendations. This multiplicity underscores the complexity and interconnectedness of the goals, necessitating a holistic approach to problem-solving.

To effectively synthesise recommendations that span multiple targets of various SDGs, we employed artificial intelligence to aid in clustering these complex associations. For instance, in Brazil, the proposal titled ‘entrepreneurial E\education’ intersects with several SDGs, including ‘quality education,’ ‘industry, innovation, and infrastructure,’ ‘decent work and economic growth,’ and ‘partnership for the goals.’ This approach of imparting entrepreneurial education equips students not only with the

capability to innovate and contribute to industry growth but also fosters strategic partnerships, essential for creating sustainable employment opportunities. This methodology highlights how integrated educational strategies can simultaneously advance multiple development objectives.

**Table 9. Summary of the number of recommendations received in 2020-2021 in each country**

| Actions | | SDG | Country | | | | | | | TOTAL | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Bolivia | Brazil | Chile | Colombia | Jamaica | Mexico | Peru | | |
| INCREASING | **Knowledge** | 4 | 15 | 10 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 17 | 17 | | |
| | | 9 | 41 | 14 | 51 | 19 | 19 | 53 | 25 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 56 | 24 | 69 | 28 | 28 | 70 | 42 | 317 | High |
| | Wealth | 1 | 16 | 7 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 32 | 11 | | |
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 11 | 4 | | |
| | | 8 | 47 | 20 | 41 | 28 | 36 | 64 | 20 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 67 | 30 | 69 | 39 | 49 | 107 | 35 | 396 | High |
| | Health | 2 | 12 | 13 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 10 | | |
| | | 3 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 16 | 8 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 22 | 17 | 17 | 13 | 10 | 26 | 18 | 123 | Very low |
| REDUCING | **Overuse of natural resources** | 6 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 11 | 3 | 6 | 1 | | |
| | | 7 | 14 | 4 | 26 | 10 | 16 | 35 | 7 | | |
| | | 13 | 50 | 30 | 73 | 32 | 27 | 60 | 26 | | |
| | | 15 | 22 | 23 | 30 | 27 | 10 | 21 | 20 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 95 | 62 | 138 | 80 | 56 | 122 | 54 | 607 | Very high |
| | Harm to social cohesion | 10 | 18 | 6 | 36 | 9 | 7 | 38 | 12 | | |
| | | 11 | 29 | 12 | 34 | 23 | 16 | 46 | 17 | | |
| | | 16 | 19 | 9 | 51 | 13 | 13 | 37 | 22 | | |
| | | 17 | 24 | 22 | 62 | 14 | 3 | 75 | 21 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 90 | 49 | 183 | 59 | 39 | 196 | 72 | 688 | Very high |
| | Overconsumption | 12 | 42 | 35 | 51 | 23 | 20 | 54 | 23 | | |
| | | 14 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 10 | | |
| | | TOTAL | 42 | 36 | 60 | 28 | 24 | 62 | 33 | 285 | Low |
| Number of recommendations | | | 372 | 218 | 536 | 247 | 206 | 583 | 254 | 2416 | 2 416 |

Source: own study.

'In the positive economic scenario, private companies and research institutes, especially universities, have developed relevant clusters and innovation initiatives that have achieved a positive economic recovery.' (Actor ID GZT1, male, PhD in Education, Consultant at Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba, 28 November, 2020).

Our frequency analysis revealed that Mexico and Chile are prominent in the frequency of recommendations across various SDGs. In the Increasing category, Mexico and Chile lead in recommendations for 'knowledge' (70 and 69 respectively) with 'low' frequency, and 'wealth' (107 and 69 respectively) with 'high' frequency. Health-related recommendations were notably low across all countries, resulting in a 'very low' frequency.

In the 'reducing' category, Chile and Mexico showed significant concern for the overuse of natural resources with 138 and 122 recommendations respectively, classified with a 'very high' frequency. The 'harm to social cohesion' was a major focus for Mexico and Chile, with 196 and 183 recommendations respectively, also classified as 'very high.' Overconsumption receives a 'low' frequency, with Chile and Mexico having the highest recommendations (60 and 62 respectively). The total number of recommendations highlights Mexico (583) and Chile (536) as leading countries, indicating key areas for sustainable development interventions across Latin America.

In one of the workshops, a member justified their recommendation, focusing on the most relevant point within socio-economic recovery and resilience to climate change and massive biodiversity loss.

'I wrote about green unicorns precisely due to a trend and new consumption patterns in this market scenario, to foster the growth of these billion-dollar unicorns with high environmental awareness and protection of various SDGs. This growth must come with societal demands and care, respecting and building a better society' (Actor ID KIACT1, female, Director, Entrepreneurship and Innovation HUB, University of Monterrey, Nuevo León, 28 November, 2020).

'Fortunately, we witness now a global trend based on the SDGs, each day more businesses and groups from civil society are changing their mindset to not only look for shareholders' benefit but get into action for the common good, without waiting for the State to solve everything or for the international agents to give fund to NGOs to begin doing something' (Actor ID B4T4, female, Corporate Compliance Director, National Port Management Agency, Peru, Lima, 3 December, 2020).

These recommendations reflect the diverse priorities and strategies across nations, underlining the variety of approaches to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Our analysis revealed that:

1. Mexico and Chile lead in recommendations across various SDGs, particularly in 'knowledge' and 'wealth' categories.
2. Health-related recommendations were notably low across all countries.
3. Chile and Mexico showed significant concern for the 'overuse of natural resources' and 'harm to social cohesion.'
4. Mexico prioritises SDGs 12 (responsible consumption), 13 (climate action), and 15 (life on land).
5. Chile emphasises SDGs 13 and 12, showing a strong commitment to environmental sustainability.
6. Bolivia, Brazil, Jamaica, and Colombia focus on managing natural resources, reflecting a common challenge.

These findings underscore the complexity and interconnectedness of the SDGs, necessitating a holistic approach to problem-solving. The study highlights the need for integrated strategies that can simultaneously advance multiple development objectives.

Finally, our statements build upon Ferretti (2016) towards a comprehensive stakeholder contribution to the integrative challenge of sustainable development. Furthermore, we identified a set of positive and negative externalities impacting those stakeholders on their collective achievement of the SDGs, supporting Helbling (2010).

## CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of public and private partnerships in achieving the 2030 Agenda across seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). By leveraging Montiel *et al.'s* (2021) framework, we identified actionable strategies to support SDGs, highlighting synergies between business development, economic growth, and climate action. Our findings emphasise the complexity and interconnectedness of the goals, necessitating a holistic approach to problem-solving.

Our key findings include:

1. Mexico and Chile emerged as prominent in the frequency of recommendations across various SDGs, particularly in areas of social cohesion, natural resource management, and economic growth.
2. There is a critical need for multi-stakeholder collaboration in fostering business development that supports regenerative economic recovery post-COVID-19 while mitigating climate change impacts.
3. The study extends the Montiel *et al*. (2021) model, demonstrating its effectiveness across various business types and economies.
4. Health-related proposals were limited, revealing a gap in addressing health despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
5. Countries like Mexico, Chile, Bolivia, and Peru focused strongly on SDG 12, underscoring the need for sustainable resource management amid climate concerns.

The study underscores the importance of integrating multi-stakeholder perspectives to devise effective strategies for sustainable development. For policymakers, the recommendations highlight the

need to focus on areas such as entrepreneurial education, social cohesion, and responsible consumption. For managers in the private sector, the findings suggest a shift towards proactive initiatives that contribute to SDGs, moving beyond mere compliance.

While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations, including its focus on qualitative data from a limited number of countries in the LAC region. Future research could explore the integration of AI technologies to enhance data analysis and scenario modelling, providing more nuanced policy recommendations. Furthermore, expanding the study to include a broader range of countries and stakeholders would improve the findings' robustness and applicability.

In conclusion, this research bridges historical and contemporary perspectives, focusing on how multi-stakeholder collaboration can transform future scenarios towards sustainable outcomes. It uniquely contributes by synthesising diverse strands of literature into a cohesive strategy for multi-stakeholder engagement in creating sustainable futures, setting a precedent for similar research in other regions.

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**Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.



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