Commonwealth Workshop on "Toolkits for Effective Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals"

Africa Region

Final Report

The Commonwealth

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

Toolkits for Effective Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Workshop

Emperors Palace Resort, Johannesburg, South Africa
14-16 May 2018

The Commonwealth

Contents

Project Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat has embarked on an ambitious project aimed at helping member countries to implement the SDGs, starting with a pilot sample of fourteen (14)[1] African small and vulnerable states. The project's first consultative workshop was held in October 2017and resulted in the identification of common SDG data challenges -- including: weak ministerial coordination; slow execution of national development plans; outdated legal frameworks and weak statistical systems across countries.

To address countries' implementation challenges, the Commonwealth Secretariat has developed an SDG Implementation Toolkit (SIT), which will enhance their SDG execution, monitoring, and evaluation. Countries are working with other partners to mainstream and prioritise SDGs in their planning process, but their remains a gap in the implementation and execution of the national/SDGs plans, and this is the Commonwealth's main focus.

To introduce this toolkit to members, the Secretariat convened the workshop, "Toolkit for Effective SDG Implementation" in Johannesburg, South Africa 14-16 May, 2018. The workshop aimed to: (1) share the draft SDG Toolkit with members, (2) get feedback on the concept and usefulness of the toolkit; and (3) gauge demand.

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[1] Botswana, The Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Kingdom of eSwatini, a, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia

Workshop Participation and Overview

The workshop was attended by 15 participants, spanning 9 countries[2] and 3 intergovernmental development partners[3]. The country representatives included Directors, Development Planners, Economists, and a Permanent Secretary, all of which were charged in some form for the planning and implementation of the SDGs.

The three-day workshop provided an overview of the Commonwealth's SIT, as well as the tools and frameworks offered by UN ECA and the AU Commission. Countries were given the opportunity to provide feedback on these tools and to share their experiences with mainstreaming the SDGs into their national plans, implementing the SDGs, and monitoring progress. Much attention was also given to how ministries and institutions interface with each other and work together on implementing cross-cutting goals. The workshop concluded with discussions about the next steps for working with the Commonwealth Secretariat and other partners to utilise the various SDG toolkits. (See the workshop's annotated Agenda in Annex 1).

Participants at the Commonwealth Workshop "Toolkits for Effective Implementation of the SDGs"

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[2] Botswana, The Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Kingdom of eSwatini, and Zambia

[3] UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), AU Commission, and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Main Workshop Presentations

The workshop featured presentations from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the African Union Commission. These three main presentations are summarised below.

Commonwealth SDG Implementation Toolkit

The workshop began with an overview of the Commonwealth SDG Implementation Toolkit (SIT), which seeks to fill the gap on implementation of the SDGs by making the link between performance management and implementation. Noting that with regards to the effectiveness of implementation, "80% depends on the quality of performance management and 20% on the quality of people working within the system"[4], the toolkit offers a system by which performance management is used to successfully motivate SDG implementation. Using a multi-dimensional approach to implementation, the toolkit encompasses a (a) performance information system, (b) performance evaluation system, (c) performance incentive system, and (d) performance agreement.

Travis Mitchell, Head of Economic Policy and Small States at the Commonwealth Secretariat presented the concept behind the toolkit, and snapshots on how the tool would work and be utilised by ministries.

Outlining the benefits of SIT, Mr Mitchell explained that the toolkit can help countries manage and integrate their development agendas through the systems approach and prioritisation of goals and targets. The value-add of the SIT, he explained, is that it enhances accountability and motivation to implement through performance contracts. Finally, the online system enhances monitoring and evaluation by allowing for easy and real-time access to performance information.

Implementation is key. Most management experts agree that good ideas and good intentions do not self-implement. – Professor Prajapati Trivedi, Director of Economics, Youth, and Social Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

UNECA Toolkit

Professor Bartholomew Armah, Chief of Development Planning Macroeconomic Policy Division at UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) presented UNECA's Integrated Planning and Reporting tool. He noted that the tool seeks to help countries with (a) an integrated development plan design, (b) implementation policy-gap analysis, and (c) integrated results tracking. Given the

multiple development agendas countries have agreed to, there is a clear need to ensure both horizontal[5] and vertical[6] coherence in national development frameworks. UNECA's tool assists with mapping the priorities from a number of different development agendas.

With respect to policy implementation, the tool seeks to determine whether a country's

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[4] Trivedi, Prajapati. (2016) "Performance Management and Accountability for Effective Implementation of SDGs"; Discussion Paper #1. Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business.

[5] Do the multiple agendas speak to each other?
[6] Do the international frameworks speak to national priorities?

policies and strategies are consistent with the targets and goals set out in the national development plans. Finally, Professor Armah informed that the tool helps to track performance by producing reports which conform to the AU Commission's regional monitoring and reporting framework and consolidates national results frameworks in one database, thus facilitating integrated performance tracking of both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063, as well as national development plans.

Mr Travis Mitchell, Head of Economic Policy and Small States, Commonwealth Secretariat presenting the SDG Implementation Toolkit

AU Commission M&E Framework

Mr Shumba Tichawona, Senior Policy Officer in the Strategic Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the African Union Commission and Mr Martin Bwalya, Head of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at NEPAD both gave presentations on the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the African Union's Agenda 2063. They laid out the process from the political commitment to Agenda 2063 made in 2013, to the ten-year implementation plan which agreed measurable goals and targets, to the development of core indicators, and an upcoming implementation support roadmap. The monitoring and evaluation framework architecture consists of national, regional, and continental reporting levels which all feedback to the national action plans.

While the AU's M&E framework does not prescribe a particular tool to use or format to follow, it reviews and assesses countries' own M&E platforms and capacity for their ability to report on Agenda 2063.

Workshop Outcomes

While the workshop's main outcomes are listed below, detailed participant feedback on the next steps for the toolkit can be found in Annex 2 and the analysis of the workshop evaluations in Annex 3.

Expressions of Interest in the Toolkit

In their evaluation forms, all 9 countries expressed an interest in working more closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat with a view to using the SDG Implementation Toolkit. Many participants also expressed an interest in the tools presented at the workshop either being merged into one tool, or being able to interface with each other and being compatible with each other.

Call for further testing and training

Member states highlighted the need for training on the use of the Commonwealth SIT, and a clear programme for roll out, engagement, and operationalisation at the country level. They suggested that the Commonwealth Secretariat provide technical assistance on the toolkit as required and assist in resource mobilisation for programmes related to implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2063.

Mobilisation of Political Engagement

Participants noted that for the toolkits to be most effective, there needs to be political buy-in at the highest levels on their use. They agreed to support and encourage political engagement and commitment.

Development Partner Collaboration

Participants called for the development partners to work together to (1) allow the harmonisation of the different toolkits and to (2) support political buy-in at a higher level.

Participants engaged in discussions at the workshop

Next Steps

At the end of the workshop the member states and the development partners agreed to the following next steps:

- Countries and partners would work through AU Commission to formalise expressions of interest in the use of the toolkits presented
- The Commonwealth Secretariat and UNECA would work together to fine tune the toolkit and ensure a reasonable interface between the tools.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth Secretariat noted that they would undertake a similar mission to Caribbean and Pacific regions to get feedback on the use of the SIT toolkit.

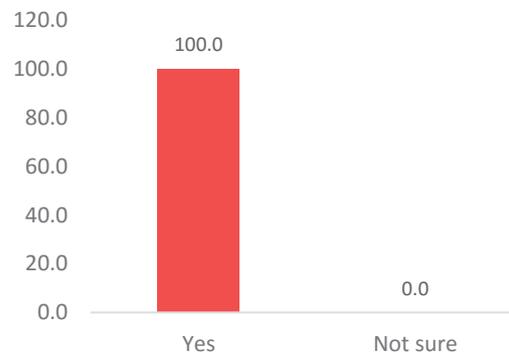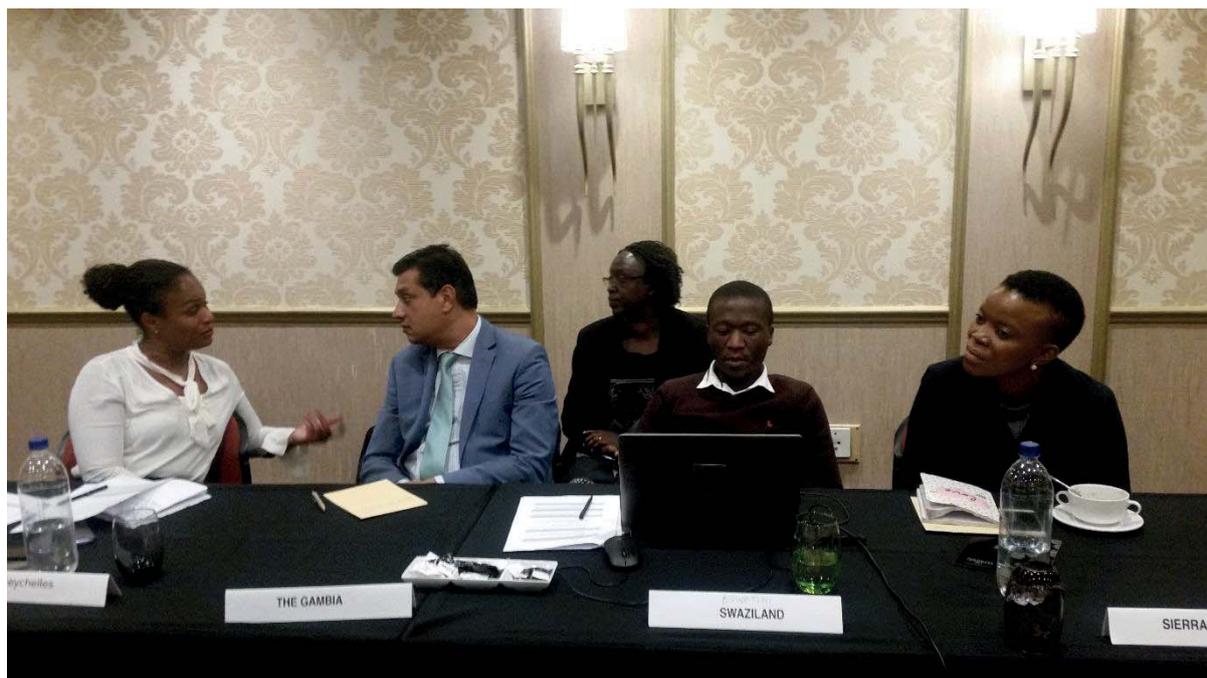**Is there Interest in using the SIT in your country?**

Figure 1: Feedback from the Participant Evaluation Forms

Participants Networking at the Commonwealth Workshop "Toolkits for Effective Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals"

Annex 1: Workshop Agenda

The Commonwealth

Toolkit for Effective Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Emperors Palace Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa, 14 – 16 May 2018

Agenda
DAY ONE, Monday 14th May 2018

09:00 - 09:30	**Registration**
09:30 - 10:00	**WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF THE WORKSHOP**
09:30 - 09:50	*Mr Travis Mitchell, Head of Economic Policy and Small States, Commonwealth Secretariat* will provide welcome remarks. He will also briefly outline the objective and expected outcome of the workshop and provide an update on the status of the Commonwealth Secretariat Work Programme on SDGs.
09:50 - 10:00	*Mr Oliver Dudfield, Head of Sport for Development and Peace, Commonwealth Secretariat* will provide an outline of the Secretariat's work to enhance the contributions of sector specific stakeholders in SDG implementation and interface with central planning mechanisms.
10:00 - 11:15	**SESSION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE SDG IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT**
	Presenter: *Mr Travis Mitchell, Head, Economic Policy and Small States, Commonwealth Secretariat*
	This first session will provide an overview of the draft SDG Implementation Toolkit (SIT) including:
	- the conceptual framework of the toolkit - the application of the Toolkit to the SDG/national development plan implementation - the importance of performance management, accountability and communication
	Q & A
11:15 - 11:30	**TEA BREAK**
11:30 - 12:45	**SESSION 2: DEVELOPMENT PARTNER TOOLS**
	In this session, the development partners will provide their perspectives on the implementation of SDGs. Participants will also share their experiences on national programs developed with technical assistance from development partners.
	- African Union Commission - UN Economic Commission for Africa

12:45 – 14:00	**LUNCH BREAK**

14:00 – 16:00	**SESSION 3: PRIORITISATION OF SDGs**

Facilitator: *Ms Motselisi Matsela, Economic Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat*

In this session, led by a panel discussion, participants will share their experiences with prioritising the SDGs into their national development plans. The panellists will include representatives from:

- Gambia
- Lesotho
- Seychelles

DAY TWO, Tuesday 15th May 2018

09:30 – 11:00	**SESSION 4: SDG IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Facilitator: *Ms Motselisi Matsela, Economic Adviser, Commonwealth Secretariat*

Following a brief recap of the previous day by the facilitator, this session will feature a panel discussion on countries' SDGs implementation strategies, including high-level activities and sectoral plans. The panellists will include representatives from:

- Botswana
- Malawi
- Sierra Leone

11:00 – 11:15	**TEA BREAK**

11:15 – 12:45	**SESSION 5: INTERFACE BETWEEN CENTRAL AND SECTORAL PROCESSES**

Facilitator: *Mr Oliver Dudfield, Head of Sport for Development and Peace, Commonwealth Secretariat*

Presenter: *Dr Sanders*

During this session, participants will identify and analyse opportunities and challenges in enhancing sectoral contributions and accountability in SDG implementation. The Secretariat will present its work aimed at maximising the contributions of physical activity, physical education and sport to the SDGs as a case study to engender applied discussion on this issue. Participants will agree on principles and approaches to position SDG Implementation Plans to promote coherence and accountability across sectors.

12:45 – 14:00	**LUNCH BREAK**

14:00 – 15:30	**SESSION 6: AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION'S M&E FRAMEWORK**

Presenter: *Mr Martin Bwalya, NEPAD Agency*

In this session, Mr Bwalya will present the African Union Commission's monitoring and evaluation framework for Agenda 2063 and will discuss how the various tools can be used to support the framework.

| 15:30 - 15:45 | **TEA BREAK** |

| 15:45 - 17:00 | **SESSION 7: MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS** |

Facilitator: *Ms Heather Cover-Kus, Research Officer, Commonwealth Secretariat*

In this session, participants will discuss their current monitoring and evaluation strategies and tools. The discussions will be led by presentations from the following countries:

- eSwatini
- Zambia
- Mauritius

| **DAY THREE, Wednesday 16th May 2018** |

| 9:30 - 11:00 | **SESSION 8: BRAINSTORMING ON THE WAY FORWARD** |

In this session, participants will be split into 3 small groups to discuss the following questions:

1) What are the next steps from the countries' perspectives regarding the tools presented by the Commonwealth and development partners on SDG implementation?
2) What are the challenges that could arise in the execution of the steps above?
3) How can the Commonwealth and development partners work with countries to overcome these challenges?

| 11:00 - 11:15 | **TEA BREAK** |

| 11:15 - 12:15 | **SESSION 9: PLENARY DISCUSSION** |

The answers to the questions in the above session will be considered by the larger plenary group.

| 12:15 - 13:00 | **SESSION 10: WAY FORWARD** |

In this closing session countries will be given the opportunity to express interest in adapting the toolkit in their respective national context. They will also discuss the way forward with regard to using the toolkits in their countries.

| 13:00 - 14:00 | **LUNCH** |

Annex 2: Small Group Responses in Session 8: Brainstorming on the Way Forward

In Session 8, participants were split into 3 small groups to discuss 3 questions on the way forward to the toolkits. The responses have been combined by question and synthesised in the table below.

Question 1: What are the next steps from the countries' perspectives regarding the tools presented by the Commonwealth and development partners on SDG implementation?	
Group	**Responses**
Group 1	*• Development Partners should work together so that they can combine their Toolkits so that the member states can be able to use just one tool, which could be easier for countries to use.* *• Capacity building for member states on how to use the Toolkits.* *• Conduct an internal assessment on the data availability relevant to the Toolkit.* *• Follow up from last year's Workshop on data challenges.*
Group 2	**For all tools, what is needed is a clear program for roll out, engagement and operationalisation at country level.** **Performance tool.** The inputs made in this workshop should contribute towards the development of the Commonwealth tool, with the aim of sending this to all countries following this for validation and testing. The current version of the tool should be sent to all countries for familiarisation, run simulations and will help countries to identify gaps, or areas of improvement to better cater for needs. This would then be communicated to Commonwealth. The workshop report and next steps, from the perspective of the Commonwealth, should be circulated to all countries. **UNECA tool** is for alignment with agendas. Need UNECA to outline how countries would start using this tool – training needs, roll out program to all countries. Countries need to understand how to use this tool on a practical level through further TA. Countries need to prepare themselves to use, engage and work with these tools and sync in line with other planning activities.

Group 3	The tools that have been presented are very critical and useful towards the implementation process of SDGs and A2063.
	  I. SDG Implementation Toolkit (SIT) – Has comparative advantage in implementation and accountability (Not Finalized)
	  II. UNECA Planning and Reporting Toolkit – Mainstreaming of SDGs and A2063 (tried and tested – Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Cameroon, Congo, etc.)
	Next Steps
	• Inform the Governments about the tools that have been developed
	• There is need for the SIT toolkit to be finalized and tested before countries can consider using it
	• There is need for a clear mandate from highest levels (buy-in at the highest level – CHOGM)

Question 2: What are the challenges that could arise in the execution of the steps above?	
Group 1	*• The toolkits are not one size fits all, member states have different situations.*

	- *The toolkits should be prioritised in the mandate of each Ministry so that it is considered as a mandate of that Ministry.* - *Lack of data availability to feed the toolkit.* - *Governments might not be willing to adopt the toolkits.*
Group 2	Are countries ready to engage with these tools? - How easily can work be organised and staff mobilised to understand and incorporate these tools with current activities. - What are additional capacity needed? Skills and financial. - Do the countries have all the data needed to populate the tools? Will there be ownership and buy-in nationally? How can outputs of tools be synced with already existing frameworks, e.g. most countries already have performance management frameworks and measurements.
Group 3	- Governments might be unwilling to adopt the tools - Inadequate capacity and manpower - Systems are vulnerable to sustainability challenges - Lack of proper institutional arrangements - The tool is only a means towards implementation but may require policy for enforcement
Question 3: How can the Commonwealth and development partners work with countries to overcome these challenges?	
Group 1	- *Assist also with the Technical aspects on how data can be consolidated since in some cases the data is collected by different departments.* - *Continuous support from DPs in terms of evaluating if countries are using the toolkit correctly.*
Group 2	Development partners (including Commonwealth) should work with UN who is leading the SDG initiative. Partners should work closely (e.g. through a working group) with each other to address harmonisation issues with different tools. Partners should offer as much assistance as possible to countries to help address challenges regarding: - buy in (on a high level); - capacity building (technical assistance, aid); - data collection support; - operationalisation of tools (adapt tools to needs of countries, follow up TA or aftercare).
Group 3	- Sensitization of stakeholders in governments for buy-in - Provision of technical assistance where required - Assist in resource mobilization for programmes related to implementation of SDGs and A2063

Annex 3: Summary of Workshop Evaluation

Evaluation Analysis

Total Questionnaires Completed	11	Countries that completed the Questionnaire	
Total Responses to Question 1	11	Botswana	Zambia
Total Responses to Question 2	11	Kingdom of Eswatini	
Total Responses to Question 3	11	The Gambia	
Total Responses to Question 4	11	Lesotho	
Total Responses to Question 5	11	Malawi	
Total Responses to Question 6	11	Mauritius	
Total Responses to Question 7	9	Seychelles	
Total Responses to Question 8	11	Sierra Leone	

Gender of the Respondents		Designation of the Respondents	
Male	7	Economist	2
Female	4	Development Planner	2
No response	0	Permanent Secretary	1
		Director	4
		Minister Counsellor	1
		Sr Policy Analyst	1

Evaluation Responses

**1. Please indicate what encouraged you to attend this workshop. (Tick all that apply.)**

	Number of responses	Percent of responses
Relevant agenda items	11	100%
Convenient location and scheduling	3	27%
Opportunity to interact with colleagues from other Commonwealth member states	9	82%
Opportunity to interact with development partners	7	64%
Other (please specify*)	3	27%
*Continued interaction with SDGs discussions *Learning more on how the other countries are implementing the developmental agendas *Opportunity to learn an SDG toolkit. IMPORTANT!!!		

2. Did this workshop meet your expectations? If so, please explain how. If not please explain why not.

1. Broadly speaking, the workshop was excellently delivered, however I would have liked to have had even a work in progress toolkit to engage with

2. The workshop met my expectations. The topics covered were relevant and detailed. I learned a lot that will assist us with a programme moving forward

3. I was disappointed that we did not have an opportunity to interface with the SIT. It would have been nice to have a go and feel of it.

4. It helped me appreciate the different ways we can make our work easier -- through what other countries are doing and even through the tools presented. I think again that interactions at the early stages of implementation are useful in opening you up for more options.

5. Yes. Given that Seychelles is currently working on its National Development plan which the global commitments, such as Agenda 2063 come at an opportune moment, as it will help us address our own existing challenges as a country.

6. The workshop indeed met my expectations. I have now more insight on the SDGs issues and challenges being encountered by some countries in the process of implementation.

7. This workshop largely met my expectations -- informative, relevant and providing useful country experiences. There could have been more hands-on sessions and activities.

8. Yes. I got an insight of what implications are there waiting for me as the newly appointed Chair of the National Coordinating Committee.

9. Yes. It provided important insights on how the SDG agenda should be taken forward and provided tools for enhanced coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

10. Yes. Because I was able to understand the importance of the toolkits for enhancing the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 Agendas.

11. Expectations of the workshop were met. It has introduced me to the various tools for SDG implementation. Also, I've learned from best practices with regards to prioritisation, implementation arrangements and accountability frameworks.

3. How well do you think this workshop has achieved its objectives?
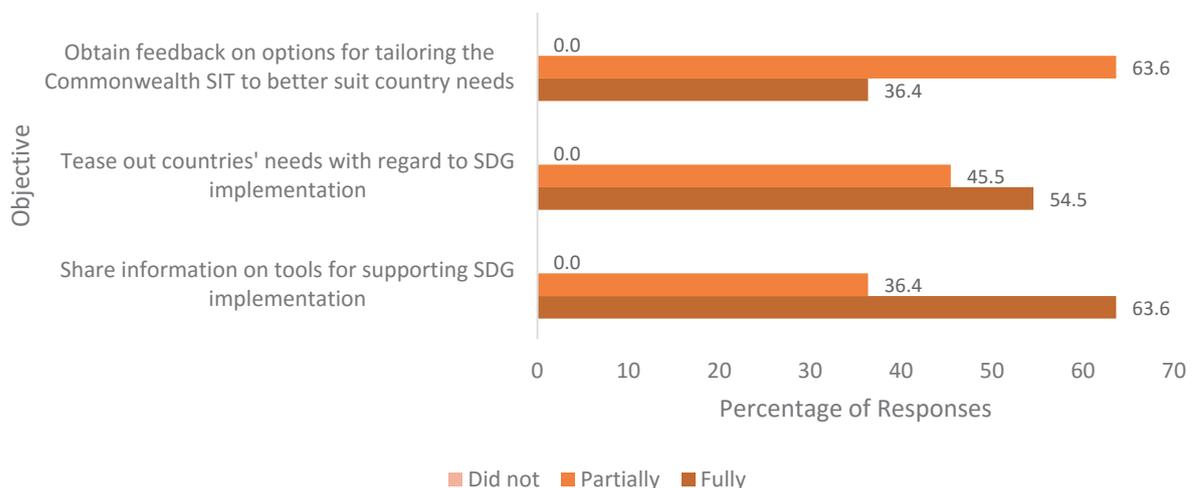
4. How relevant were the topics of this workshop for your country?

	Very relevant	Somewhat relevant	Not relevant
Presentation of C'wealth and other toolkits	10	1	0
Country presentations	7	4	0

| Session on interface between sectoral and central processes	7	4	0

5. Is there any other topic you would have liked to discuss at the meeting?

Yes	**8**
The VNR Process and Preparation	
Successful case studies	
Data Issues on developing the baselines	
Evaluation	
SWOT of the various toolkits presented (2x)	
How to interface the various toolkits	
How developed countries have implemented the SDGs and the status of their progress	
No	**3**
No Response	**0**

6. Please rate the agenda in terms of the following aspects by ticking the relevant box.

6a. Time Allocation for Different Segments
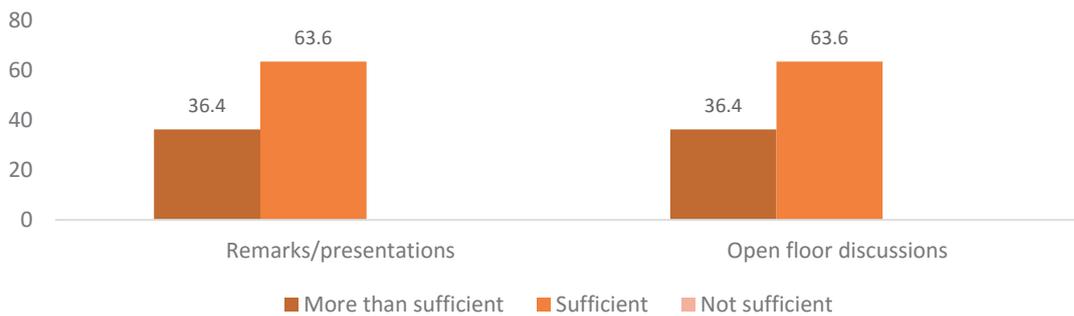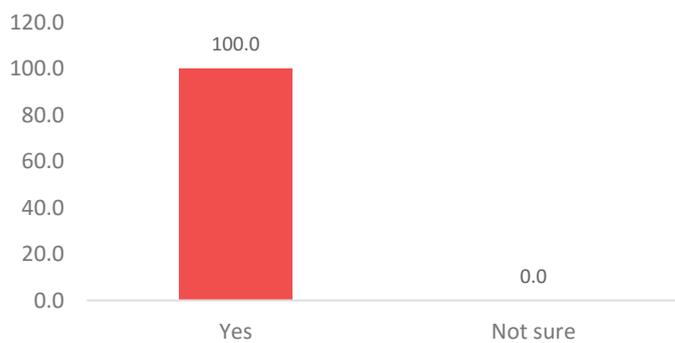

6b. Relevance and Quality of Proceedings
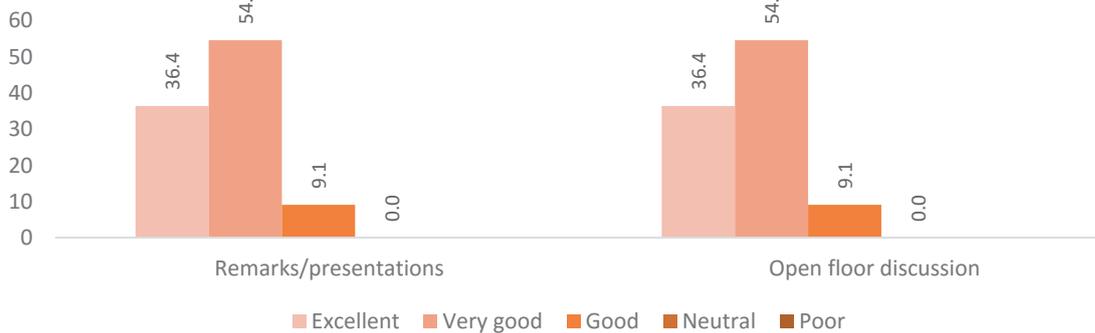
7. The Commonwealth Secretariat would like to hold a similar workshop in other regions. Please suggest any improvements that can be made to the workshop or provide other comments, if any.

1. Earlier starts time to allow more time for discussions and/or the coverage of more topics. (x2)
2. Maybe the perspectives of the UN should have been underscored during the workshop

3. Contents of papers presented need to be properly screened. Toolkits of ComSec and UNECA need to be harmonised to have a single tool.

4. More practical work sessions/activities and more tangible take home outputs

5. Need for more time to discuss the tools and its features. (x2)

6. Tackle evaluation aspect for successful implementation as it is a continuous process

7. Invite coutnries to send their country specific needs prior, so the workshops are as close as possible to addressing existing needs.

8. It would be good to use microphones as it promotes clarity of communication

9. The organisation, content and facilitation of the workshop is sufficient to meet its purpose.

10. The toolkit should be presented in advance for participants to run simulation exercises with their country info

No Response (x2)

8. Would you like to work more closely with the Commonwealth Secretariat with a view to using the SDG Implementation Toolkit in your country?

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