

Client Case Studies



Facilitation and Reporting Services to the National Stakeholder Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



The Context

- Having played an important role in developing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Ireland is committed to their implementation under Agenda 2030. Each Government Department has a role in implementing the Goals, together with state agencies and Local Authorities, as part of a whole-of-government endeavour.
- The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) coordinates the SDG National Implementation Plans which set out arrangements for coordination, alignment, stakeholder engagement and progress reporting on all 169 targets.
- As part of this work, DECC coordinates the SDG National Stakeholder Forum. The Stakeholder Forum aims to act as a critical mechanism for discussing national implementation and for sharing learnings, examples of best practices and SDG-relevant events from both a national and international perspective.
- The Forum meets on three occasions during 2023 guided by the overarching theme of *Leave No One Behind*
- DECC appointed Antaris to facilitate and report on the 2023 Forum meetings encompassing:
 - **Forum design:** Working with the Forum Steering Committee to agree on the overall approach and format of each Forum event, including the in-person and online delegate experience, agenda development, and workshop management.
 - **Forum facilitation:** Chairing the Forum meetings, briefing speakers, and providing a facilitation team to support the online break-out groups and in-person delegate workshops.
 - **Forum reports:** Synthesising the proceedings and workshop outputs from each Forum into a report for publication and developing stakeholder summaries for inclusion with Ireland's Voluntary National Review presented to the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2023.

The Challenge

- In keeping with the overarching theme of Leave No One Behind, the 2023 Forum needed to demonstrate understanding and empathy for what the theme means in an Irish context and to ensure it resonated through the Forum, including in its design, facilitation and reporting.
- In particular, the theme required consideration of issues such as the accessibility of inputs and outputs, demanding an innovative approach towards leveraging diversity as a resource for creativity, listening, and communicating.
- The 2023 Forum sought broader representation and participation in support of a 'whole-of-society' approach towards SDG implementation, enabling opportunities for wider societal participation to inform a clear project plan and work programme co-prepared with the Forum stakeholders.
- In particular, there was a desire for action-driven meetings with clearly reflected outcomes.

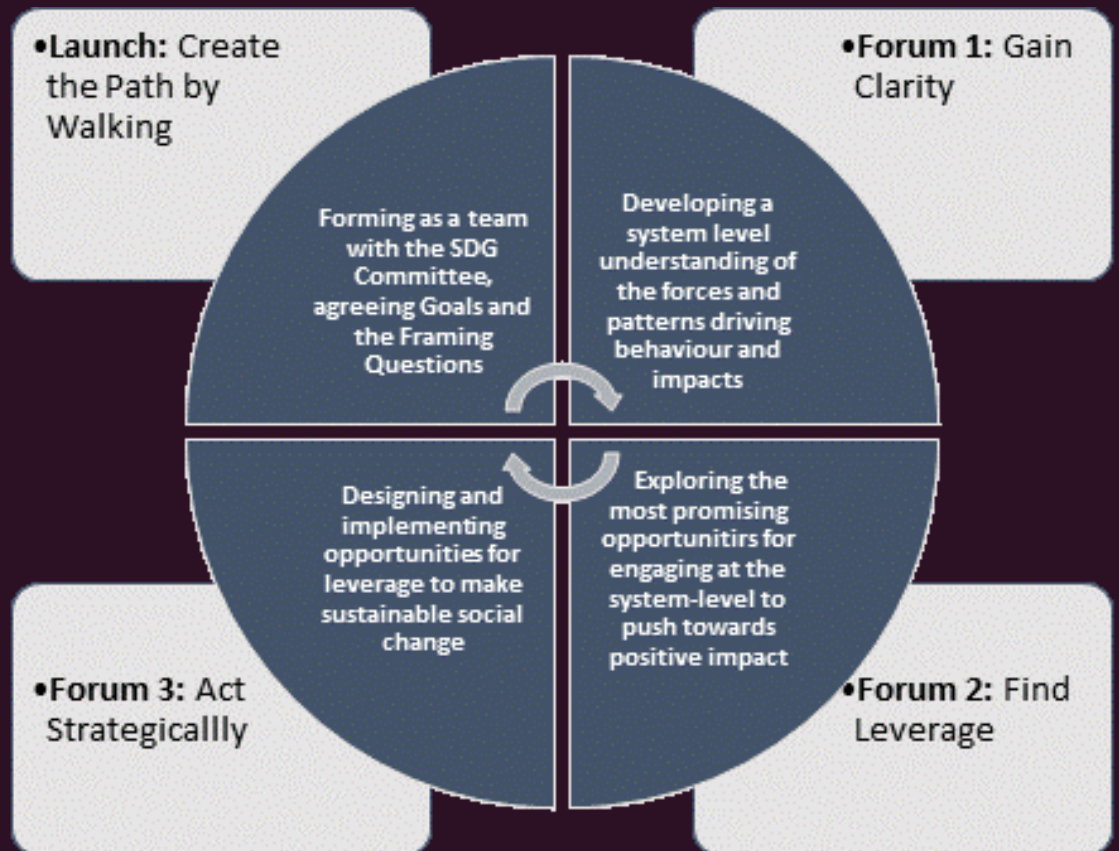
The Idea

Applying social learning theory to the SDG Stakeholder Forum, we proposed an approach based on the interplay between the stakeholder landscape and identity through three modes for inclusion and leaving no one behind, as follows:

1. **Engagement** by direct involvement in actions and interactions, both face-to-face and online to create moments that promote mutual curiosity, especially across social and political boundaries. Tools and methods include conversations, debates, and joint reflection.
2. **Imagination** to create ideas that go beyond direct experience. This includes locating oneself through images of others, other practices, other experiences, other projects, other contexts, and new images of possible futures. Tools of imagination include stories, role plays, pictures, maps, visuals, and games.
3. **Alignment** to coordinate across time and space as part of a dynamic exchange process between the stakeholders to inform a shared sense of identity, moral code and standards of practice (of which the SDGs are an example). Alignment tools include agreements, goals and expectation setting, division of labour, work plans, codes of conduct, checklists, standards, and reporting frameworks.

The Execution

The Forum events were treated as an interconnected programme to mirror a systems practice approach towards creating the conditions for social change, as summarised below:



The Results

- Several hundred people attended the Forum meetings as in-person delegates at the Aviva Stadium Conference Centre and online.
- Consensus emerged on a definition of Leave No One Behind in an Irish context as “*an inclusive and empathetic society that empowers everyone to engage with and be represented in decision-making, accelerating dignity and enabling equal opportunities and equitable outcomes*”.
- The Forum serves as an essential stakeholder engagement exercise and accountability mechanism for policy implementation. The [Report from the January Forum](#) includes detailed guidance for policymakers.
- Ireland’s [2023 Voluntary National Review](#) of the SDGs presented to the United Nations relied on the Forum to inform Civil Society Assessments of Ireland’s implementation progress across six themes: Education, Employment and Social Protection, Health, Community Engagement and Inclusion, Housing, and Climate Action & Circular Economy.

Thank you.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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