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#VSS2019SouthAfrica

Stakeholder Awareness Meeting:

**South African Initiative on Voluntary Sustainability Standards -  
Stakeholders' Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Bio-economy**

November 6 & 7, 2019

**Sheraton Pretoria Hotel**

643 Corner Stanza Bopape (Church) Arcadia, Pretoria, 0007

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognizes international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction. Standards that uphold not just the quality of products but considers also the sustainability aspects of the production process can be the key not only for exporters to unlock new markets, but also to enhance competitiveness in the domestic market for example through production efficiency, cost reduction and innovation. In addition, with many countries also committing themselves to the Paris Climate Agreement, government policies are increasingly embedding sustainability standards to achieve emission reduction goals. Such new environmental and social policies are then for example reflected in public procurement.

The SDGs are a universal commitment to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure human well-being. South Africa has embedded the SDGs in terms of national development priorities. In South Africa, the National Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063 guide the implementation of the SDGs. A key instrument to implement the SDGs in South Africa is the government's *Bio-economy Strategy*, which has the vision for South Africa's bio-economy to be a significant contributor to the country's economy by 2030 in terms of the GDP. It is designed to create a world-class biotechnological system of innovation in the country, which is more responsive and more relevant to the needs of South Africans. Within the South African context, bio-economy encompasses, but not limited to, technological and non-technological usage of natural resources such as animals, plant biodiversity, micro-organisms and minerals to improve human health, address food security, enhance energy security and subsequently contribute to economic growth and improved quality of life.

**The Role of the National Platform for VSS**

In recent years National Multi-Stakeholder Platforms for VSS have been developed in various emerging economies. Through these platforms dialogue takes place between public and private stakeholders and they "facilitate an informed policy dialogue on how to pro-actively use VSS". They are organized and structured in a transparent, inclusive and a demand-driven manner. These platforms typically 1) provide neutral forum of exchange, 2) collect and exchange information on national standards, 3) assess the needs of decision-makers and stakeholders, 4) link national demands with international expertise and 5) institutionalize VSS as a mechanism to strengthen its communications.

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In essence, the United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS) believes that governments should be driving transformational changes. Private standards like VSS can assist the government to promote holistic green growth policies. Rather than taking individual action, governments can join forces with the private sector and the civil society to reap the sustainability benefits of VSS.

The South Africa Bureau of Standards (SABS) is a statutory body that was established in terms of the Standards Act, 1945 (Act No. 24 of 1945) and continues to operate in terms of the latest edition of the Standards Act, 2008 (Act No. 8 of 2008) as the national standardisation institution in South Africa, mandated to 1) Develop, promote and maintain South African National Standards (SANS), 2) Promote quality in connection with commodities, products and services, and 3) Render conformity assessment services and assist in matters connected therewith. The SABS provides the platform for quality services and products which is the key differentiator in an increasingly competitive environment. The SABS strategic objective contributes to the efficient functioning of the economy by developing standards to advance the socio-economic well-being of South Africa in the global economy and by delivering relevant conformity assessment services that facilitate access to markets for South African industry, thereby improving its competitiveness in the global trade environment.

The German Development Institute (DIE) supports initiatives to establish a platform for national and international dialogue among multi-stakeholders to address issues related to voluntary sustainability standards. VSS was identified by DIE's Managing Global Governance Program (MGG) as an area of knowledge cooperation for MGG's six partner countries (Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa) by exchanging good practices. This cooperation has supported to varying degrees the establishment of National Platforms in VSS in Brazil, China and India.

### Objectives of the Conference

The goals of the event "South African Initiative on Voluntary Sustainability Standards - Stakeholders' Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Bio-economy" is to promote public awareness in South Africa on the potentials of VSS, engage and empower multiple stakeholders to support the implementation of SDGs as well as to initiate the momentum to establish a National Platform on VSS in South Africa. To achieve these goals, the event provides a platform for exchange among experts from industry, government, academia, and national standards bodies as well as representatives of international organisations, whose works have addressed the benefits and challenges of establishing and implementing VSS.

### Registration to the Conference

Due to limited capacity, **registration is on a first come first serve basis**. Registration is free of charge. When registering, please indicate whether you also wish to attend the capacity-building training on *Sustainability Mapping and VSS* on November 7 at 2PM. Upon registration, you agree that photographs and video-recordings will be taken.

Please send an Email with your name, affiliation, contact details to register to:

Dr Ariel Hernandez, [ariel.hernandez@die-gdi.de](mailto:ariel.hernandez@die-gdi.de)

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## Draft Agenda

### **6 November 2019**

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Breakfast Buffet**

8:30 – 9:00 **Welcome Address**

Dr Sadvir Bissoon, South Africa Bureau of Standards (SABS)

Christian Grün, German Embassy in South Africa (tbc)

Wulf Reiners, German Development Institute (DIE)

Santiago Fernandez De Cordoba Briz, UN Forum on Sustainability Standards (UNFSS)

9:00 – 9:30 “2030 Agenda and South Africa”, Dr Kefiloe Masiteng, Deputy Secretary of the National Planning Commission (tbc)

9:30 – 10:00 “Bio-economy as Vision for South Africa”, Kiruben Naicker, Director, Science Policy Interface, Department of Environmental Affairs (tbc)

10:00 – 10:30 “Voluntary Sustainability Standards in South Africa – Benefits and Opportunities” (Yvonne Ndlhovu, SABS)

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break and Networking**

11:00 – 11:20 “Green Economy - Key Sectors of Transition towards Sustainability in South Africa”, Cecilia Kinuthia-Njenga, Head, UN Environment Office in South Africa

11:20 – 11:40 “VSS, Trade and SDGs: Fostering Green Exports,” Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba & Ruby Lambert, UNCTAD

11:40 – 12:00 “Good Practices from China – VSS on Rubber,” Vivian Xia, China Assoc. for Standardization

12:00 – 12:30 “Good Practices from Brazil – “Certifica Minas – Coffee Certification,” Rogerio Carvalho Fernandes, Instituto Mineiro de Agropecuária – IMA, Brazil

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch Break and Networking**

14:00 – 16:00 **World Cafe 1: “No one left behind” – Civil Society, VSS and Bioeconomy”**  
***How can VSS help implement South Africa’s Bioeconomy Strategy to achieve sustainability?***

Moderators: Dr Ariel Hernandez, DIE & Yvonne Ndlhovu, SABS

Rapporteur: N.N., University of Pretoria & Tom Mollo, SABS

Impulse Givers:

- 1) “Bioeconomy and Decent Work in South Africa” (N.N., tbc), (10 min)
- 2) *Scorecards and Social Standards – The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in South Africa* (N.N., tbc, B-BBEE Commission)
- 3) “Sustainability Standards and Palm Oil in Indonesia- Experiences and Lessons,” Vidia Paramita, PT Sinarmas Agro Resources and Technology, tbc
- 4) *Social Innovation as Driver of 2030 Agenda in South Africa*, Hlokoma Mangqalaza, Technology Innovation Agency

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Discussion Tables: Perspectives and Common Goals for South Africa

**Table 1:** “Gender Equity and Bioeconomy,” Sixolile Ngcobo, Commission for Gender Equity

**Table 2:** “Youth, Quality Education and Employment,” Dr Walter Matli, Vaal University of Technology, tbc

**Table 3:** “Land Use and Human Settlements,” Samuel Nhlanhla Mtshali, Abahlali Basemjondolo Movement

**Table 4:** Corporate Social Responsibility and Bioeconomy (Feroz Koor, Woolworths, tbc)

**Table 5:** “Environmental Integrity”, Camila Neves Soares Oliveira, Brazilian Ministry of Environment, BFS – Brazilian Forestry Service

**7 November 2019**

8:00 – 8:30 **Registration and Breakfast Buffet**

8:30 – 9:00 State of the Art – Recap from Day 1, Tom Mollo, SABS, tbc

9:00 – 11:00 **World Café 2: “Contribution of VSS to Bio-economy and 2030 Agenda in South Africa? – Opportunities and Entry Points for the Private Sector**

***How can the private sector help achieve the bioeconomy vision of South Africa? Which additional value can VSS and bioeconomy offer to the private sector?***

Moderators: Rubiah Siti Lambert, UNFSS & Thabisa Mbungwana, SABS

Rapporteur: Tom Mollo, SABS and Rudraneel Chattopadhyay, Quality Council of India

Impulse Giver(s):

- 1) “Assessing the Impact of Sustainability Standards”, Lorena Jaramillo Castro, UNCTAD
- 2) “Sustainability Initiative of South Africa NPC”, Retha Louw, CEO, SIZA
- 3) “Paths for Green Economy in South Africa,” Tjasa Rentel-Bole, World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa
- 4) “Improvement of Access to EU market through VSS,” N.N., EU Delegation to South Africa (tbc)

Discussion Tables: Enabling Factors for the Private Sector to become Drivers of 2030 Agenda in South Africa

**Table 1:** Innovation (Sarel van der Walt, Technology Innovation Agency)

**Table 2:** National Framework for VSS and Bioeconomy (Prof Dr Engela Schlemmer, University of Witwatersrand)

**Table 3:** Social Entrepreneurship (Alan Mukoki, South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, tbc)

**Table 4:** Public Procurement (Bongani Mayimele, National School of Government)

**Table 5:** Capacity-building for SMEs (Anna Ngarachu, Tutwa Consulting, tbc)

**Table 6:** Digitalization and 2030 Agenda (Dr Wulf Reiners, German Development Institute)

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11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee Break and Networking**

11:30 – 13:00 **Fish Bowl: The Way Forward – The Future of VSS and Bio-economy in South Africa**  
***Which types of public-private partnerships and VSS should and can be realized to achieve the goals of the bioeconomy vision in South Africa?***

Moderators: Thabisa Mbungwana, SABS & Dolores Brito, InMetro Brazil

Rapporteur: Tom Mollo, SABS & N.N., University of Witwatersrand

- 1) Impulse Givers:
- 2) “Why Platforms and Forums? – thoughts on the needs for a National Quality Forum,”  
Elsie Meintjies, UNIDO - Global Quality and Standards Programme - South Africa
  - 3) “Building on Good Practices as Way Forward – Insights from the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)”, Arianna Baldo, Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials
  - 4) “Diverse Landscape in South Africa - Challenges to the Bioeconomy Vision,” Dr Arlene Bayley, 4Sight Futures, tbc
  - 5) “VSS and Consumer Protection”, Matlou Setati, Consumer Goods Council of South Africa

Expert Fish Bowl:

*Entry question: Which kind of partnership do we need on sustainability standards to achieve the goals of the bioeconomy vision in South Africa?*

Expert 1: Prof Dr Willem Fourie, Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership, University of Pretoria

Expert 2: Sinah Mosehla, Department of Trade and Industry, tbc

Expert 3: Douglas Kativu, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Africa, tbc

Expert 4: Modiegi Phite, eGoLiBio, tbc

Expert 5: Makoma Lekalakala, Earthlife Africa, tbc

Expert 6: Dr Achieng Ojwang, Global Compact Network South Africa, tbc

Expert 7: EMPTY CHAIR FOR AUDIENCE

Expert 8: EMPTY CHAIR FOR AUDIENCE

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch Break and Networking**

14:00 – 17:00 Option 1: For international participants: Group Excursion/Field Trip to Innovation Hub (tbc)  
Option 2: For local participants: Sustainability Mapping and VSS - Capacity-building Training (Ana Batalhone, International Trade Centre)

Sustainability Map ([www.sustainabilitymap.org](http://www.sustainabilitymap.org)) is the free-online platform that help companies pave the way towards more sustainable trade. The platform offers users access to wide-ranging information related to sustainability initiatives, allowing businesses to gain a better understanding of sustainability standards that are relevant to their export markets and to connect with business partners. SustainabilityMap is developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC), the joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization.

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