**Q&A about SDSN-Amazonia and the regional consultation process**

1. ***What is SDSN?***

Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August 2012, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) mobilizes scientific and technical expertise from academia, civil society, and the private sector in support of sustainable development problem solving at local, national, and global scales. SDSN aims to accelerate joint learning and help to overcome the compartmentalization of technical and policy work by promoting integrated approaches to the interconnected economic, social, and environmental challenges confronting the world. The SDSN works closely with United Nations agencies, multilateral financing institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

1. ***What is SDSN-Amazonia?***

The SDSN-Amazonia is a Regional Network from SDSN. The purpose of a Regional SDSNs is to mobilize universities, research centers, civil society organizations, business, and other knowledge centers around practical problem solving for sustainable development. Each Regional SDSN has its own priorities focusing on all or a subset of the following objectives:

1. Engaging in the global discussion on shaping the next generation of post-2015 development goals, including help to national governments to participate and lead in the global negotiations;
2. Promoting [Solution Initiatives](http://unsdsn.org/what-we-do/solutions-initiatives/) for sustainable development in the region or beyond that can have a transformative impact on sustainable development;
3. Promoting [education for sustainable development](http://unsdsn.org/what-we-do/education-initiatives/);
4. Assisting governments in diagnosing local, national, and regional sustainable development challenges and in devising long-term strategies.

The Regional SDSN for the Amazon region is hosted by the [Amazonas Sustainable Foundation](http://fas-amazonas.org/) (FAS) in Manaus, Brazil. FAS ´s mission is to promote sustainability, environmental conservation, and improvement in the quality of life of communities living in the State of Amazonas.

The SDSN-Amazon aspires to build a robust and dynamic solutions network of research, academic and policy making institutions involved in the design and implementation of sustainable development solutions. To reach this objective SDSN-Amazon will identify practical initiatives involving novel technologies, business models, institutional mechanisms, and/or policies that are either proven or promising projects yet to be developed. These initiatives should have a potential transformative impact on sustainable development.

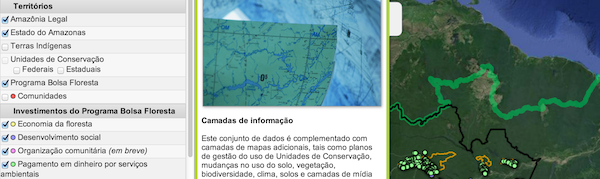
One of the main goals of SDSN-Amazonia is to foster the dialogue on sustainable solutions. The SDSN-A is working on the engagement of researchers, private sector, community and indigenous groups and multilateral, bilateral institutions and NGOs. The objective is to identify and devise strategies to support implementation of solution initiatives and cooperative actions to advance sustainable development in the region.

The strategy is to benefit from information technologies to disseminate solutions at low cost and large scale. The SDSN-Amazon will also take advantage of meetings and events of other institutions to help disseminate sustainable development solutions and the SDGs discussions.

The main goal is to address issues and priorities identified by policy- makers and strategic groups and to bring verified solutions and project proposals to their attention. This approach will facilitate dissemination of solutions at a larger scale, enabled by public policies and civil society engagement.

1. ***What are the SDSN-Amazon projects proposal in development phase?***
2. **Web-based platform to share knowledge & solutions for Amazon**:

The Solutions Plataform is a crucial tool for the SDSN network. This web-based platform – that will be built in collaboration with Google – will allow different actors to share knowledge about solutions for the Amazon and represents an open access tool that allows solutions, geo-located in a Google map of the Amazon region, to be exchanged, using a methodology developed by FAS. Input of solution cases will go through a set of criteria in accordance with SDSN guidelines. The print screen below is a representation of how the geo-localization reference will look like in the SDSN-Amazonia platform:



1. **SDSN-Amazonia Prize**

The SDSN-Amazonia Prize aims to disseminate and to promote the best practices initially in the following areas: effective management of protected areas, indigenous lands, sustainable mining and , infrastructure projects , and education initiatives addressing the unique needs of the Amazon region. Additionally, the Prize will promote innovative initiatives that benefit children and families affected or involved in the projects. SDSN-Amazonia Prize will involve all countries members of the Organization of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO): Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, French Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

1. **Education and Capacity Building**

The SDSN-Amazonia will promote educational initiatives that respond to the challenges of sustainable development in the region with specific focus on knowledge, practices and skills relevant for the region.

1. **Vision of the Future: SDG´s**

The United Nations will adopt a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a Heads of State at a Summit in September 2015 to be implemented through 2030. Based on this framework, SDSN-Amazonia will coordinate with its network its contribution to the development of localized SDGs, aligned with Global SDGs, and potential comparable monitoring systems

1. **Scientific Research**

The centrality of science to advance sustainable development solutions to the Amazon is a key aspect of SDSN-Amazonia strategy. Fostering the interest and practical appliance of scientific knowledge to a new development models is a great challenge embraced by the network. Therefore, this program will advance on issues such as: (i) applying science for new products based on the forest natural resources; (ii) evidence-based arguments and proposals (with independent assessment); (iii) reinforce preservation as an essential scientific value; and (iv) strengthen and train local leaders to absorb and spread the knowledge, connecting it to a local-based know-how, on a multidisciplinary collaboration basis. In short, this program’s objective is to bridge science-based transformative solutions to concrete challenges in the Amazon, coordinated by the InterAmerican Network of Academies of Sciences (IANAS).

1. **State of the Amazon**

A thorough and reliable baseline data on the state of the f Amazon is an essential tool to advance on sustainable development solutions in the region. While there are interesting and useful data being produced by different groups and organizations, the information might not always accessible and comparable for the entire region. IMAZON is currently gathering socio, economic and environmental data of all municipalities in the Brazilian Amazon. SDSN-Amazonia will convene IMAZON and other institutions in gathering data at municipality level in all eight countries of the Amazon with a view to develop an annual report on the State of the Amazon aligned with the potential SDGs to be adopted by the UN in 2015.

1. **Communication Management**

The communication management program will document and learn from local voices and connect them with regional, national and global solutions and commitments. Hence, facilitating the dissemination of information across the Amazon countries through local media and disseminating information generated in the region with global media. A strategic priority will be to present the Amazon reality through the perception of local actors.

Initially, SDSD-Amazonia will gather all relevant daily news (print and audiovisual) broadcast about Amazon and will post it in its daily blog. This program will include local TVs, blogs, websites, local media, NGOs etc.

1. **Governance**

The SDSN-Amazon is a regional hub of the SDSN a global initiative for the United Nations, chaired by Prof. Jeff Sachs. The Amazonas Sustainable Foundation (FAS) will initially host and provide coordination support to the activities undertaken by SDSN - Amazonia.

As the network is developed and established the member institutions will develop a governance structure fit to its needs. The governance of the network will be representative and flexible, in order to adapt and better address the changing needs of the region. During the initial phase of this initiative, a high prioortiy will be to mobilize leading institutions from the Amazon countries and ensure their full engagement in the development of the network, agenda of work and in its governance structure.

At the launch of the SDSN Amazonia the following institutional arrangements have been adopted to support the development of a work programme and the ultimate SDSN Amazonia governance structure. .

Chair and host institution:

Prof. Virgilio Viana – Director General of FAS (Amazonas Sustainable Foundation) and former State Secretary for Environment and Sustainable Development of Amazonas, Brazil. FAS will serve as a technical secretariat for the design, constitution and establishment of the Amazon SDSN. FAS, as host of the SDSN Amazon will convene and support the work of two committees that will take the lead to propose the vision and mission of the network and contribute to advancing problem solving in the Amazon region.

Co-chair – Emma Torres Senior Sustainable Advisor of United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Member of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services Strategic Advisory Group of the Inter-American Development Bank, and of the SAGTAC advisory group to the Executive Director of International Atomic Energy Agency ( IAEA) . As UNDP coordinator for the Commission on Development and Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean she produced “Our Own Agenda”, “Amazonia without Myths” and“ Latin America and the Caribbean: A Biodiversity SuperPower”.

Scientific/technical committee:

Chair - Professor Adalberto Val, Director of INPA (National Institute of Amazonian Research),with the support of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences. Other co-chairs to be invited.

This committee will be composed of recognized scientists from the region, as well as a number of representatives from civil society and the private sector. While, the Terms of Reference of this Committee will be finalized in consultation with member institutions it may include the following:

Identify and bring to the attention of the Amazon SDSN priority interventions and challenges from a scientific perspective and contribute to the development of a vision for the network

* Identify, assess and support and development of solution initiatives for sustainable development in the Amazon, ensuring a multidisciplinary approach.
* Prove scientific guidance for the solution initiatives and policy briefs,
* Mobilize and convene research expertise from the region to develop the knowledge exchange component network.

Strategic Policy Committee:

This committee will be composed of high level policy makers and leading opinion makers from all countries of the Amazon region. The committee will provide strategic guidance to the work Amazon SDSN and will enhance the dialogue among the different stakeholders and decision makers, and engage regional partnerships with institutions such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO).

1. **The Consultations Process**

National consultations in each Amazonian country will be undertaken with a central objective to develop a work programme for the network with key stakeholder , and explore the best modalities to ensure active participation and ownership of the members, to enrich and vet the initial areas of focus

Specific goals of the consultation include:

* To present and to discuss the SDSN-Amazon programs proposal,
* To identify a mechanisms to share and to promote sustainable development solutions for the Amazon as the web-based platform,
* To support the development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the Amazon region. This set of activities will be linked to the development of the global SDGs. It will focus on defining a vision for the Amazon and identifying targeted Amazon-specific SDGs to be realized by 2030.
* To agree on criteria for what will constitute a “sustainable solutions”
* To discuss different governance options and modalities of work that ensure effective participation and ownership of the members of the network

Since SDSN-A launch, in March 2014, regional consultations with scientists and a dialogue with indigenous people communities of the Amazon region were conducted.

***Consultation 1 – Scientists (Manaus)***

#### On 5th and 6th December, 2014, a consultation with scientists from Sciences Academies of all the Amazonian countries and also the Inter-American Network of Academies of Science (IANA) was carried out.

#### The report of this consultation is available at the link: <https://sdsndotfasamazonasdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/ataexecutiva_abc_mar15_gs_tm.pdf>

***Consultation 2 – Indigenous groups (Lima)***

On the 9th December, 2014, at the margins of COP 20 Lima a dialogue with indigenous peoples communities was convened jointly with COICA (Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin - ), which coordinates work with eight Amazonian indigenous national organizations in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador,Guyana, Peru, Venezuela and French Guyana, promoting and maintaining the culture of its members.

To read the complete material about this consultation, please, access the weblink: <https://sdsndotfasamazonasdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/ataexecutiva_coica_mar15_tm_gs-esp.pdf>

***Consultation 3 – Ecuador***

End of April

1. **Methodology of the consultation**

As outlined in the foregoing, above, the general objective of the national consultation is to enrich and to vet the proposals under discussion to conform the SDSN-A program. To reach this goal the methodology of the consultation will inter- alia:

* Explore stakeholders’ visions about the SDSN-Amazon program proposals
* Determine stakeholders’ views on the benefits that can be derived from and contributed to SDSN Amazonia
* Identify priority programmes and activities for the stakeholders in each country and identify opportunities,
* Identify key stakeholders in each country with potential regional role ,Elicit views and discussion on most relevant criteria to identity transformative sustainable solutions for the Amazon region

Some Considerations for the Facilitation Methodology:

In order to generate innovative results, it is proposed that the facilitation aims to promote open innovation embracing the following elements

* Open Innovation

Open Innovation was used to bring together participants with varying expertise, motivations, and experiences to collaboratively generate ideas and concepts without the overriding influence of a singular viewpoint.

* Innovation Capacity Building

Expose participants to a new way to convey and blend their individual insights with those of other group members and apply that collective knowledge to analysis and concept generation.

* Project Framing

Distilled the objectives of the project into goal-oriented activities that act as conversation points to broaden perceptions of the themes, problems, and solutions. Project framing provides parameters to focus the thinking process when working with large and complex concepts such as those discussed in the workshops.

* Design Strategies

Use to the extent possible design strategy to visually guide group members across the numerous activities within a tailored workflow.

* Knowledge Brokering

Facilitators should inspire deeper analysis and empathy for thematic stakeholders by prompting participants with thought provoking questions, providing examples, and acting as guides throughout the workshop process.

* Analysis

Results from the workshop should be studied framework-by-framework, across groups. Content should be analyzed for insights, principles, commonalities and gaps, as well as the overall goals of the consultations.