

## Assessment of Performance and Challenges Related to SDG 11 in South African Context

Shikha Vyas-Doorgapersad<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

A collaborative strategy created in 2002, sustainable development aims to ensure that poverty is reduced, the environment is safeguarded and most importantly prefers that people live in peace and have prosperity in daily lives. The public believed that sustainable development was a task best left to corporations or the government. The wheels of sustainability turn slowly, if at all, because of the utter absence of accountability on the part of the people in a community. Getting involved in the policy-making process is essential for public engagement (Emas, 2015, 2).

As observed by the United National Development Plan (UNDP) (2020), as their shared emphasis complements one another in achieving the goals, which include environmental sustainability and socioeconomic development, the 17 SDGs are interconnected. It was further stated that countries who are UN members saw the chance to create wealth and improve world peace within a larger framework of liberty by supporting the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2020; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022, 266). The agenda seeks to lead development in all member nations, with a worldwide commitment to end poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030. The agenda creates a global vision for sustainable development for all, marking a turning point (European Foreign Institute [EFI], 2019; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022, 266-267).

A comprehensive awareness of the accountability needed for the preservation of the environment's natural resources, their management, and responsible advancement depends on sustainable development. Considering laws, policies, and management standards, the enormity of the challenge facing the public sector worldwide presents difficult and complicated issues, as highlighted by Emas (2015, 2).

During the United Nations (UN) conference on Sustainable Development (SD), also known as Rio+20, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012, a political result paper outlining specific and workable steps to implement SD was established. To accomplish the post-2015 development agenda, the participating UN Member States decided to begin the process of creating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an extension of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Osborn, Cutter and Ullah, 2015, 3). Taking into consideration the various realities that nations face, their capacities for development, and their national policy priorities, the seventeen adopted SDGs were designed to be action-oriented, succinct, and simple to communicate. They were also limited in number, aspirational, global, and universally applicable to all countries (Osborn, et. al., 2015, 3).

A United Nations Millennium Summit was held in September 2000 prior to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals being adopted. As governments and leaders pledged to support a goal-oriented program known as the MDGs, this would grow into one of the biggest gatherings the world would ever witness. The MDGs were created with the intention of achieving gender equality, improving maternity and child health, preventing fatal diseases, expanding primary education, and halving extreme global poverty, among other development priorities, just like any other universal goals (Nhema and Zinyama, 2016, 61). The Millennium Declaration is still regarded as a daring UN initiative that went beyond earlier plans that had outlined nebulous and developmental goals and instead found a way for the wealthiest and poorest countries to cooperate to meet a set of measurable goals by 2015 (Nhema and Zinyama, 2016,61).

---

<sup>1</sup> School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy; College of Business and Economics; University of Johannesburg; South Africa. Telephone: 011 559 5115/ 072 463 8685. Email: [svyas-doorgapersad@uj.ac.za](mailto:svyas-doorgapersad@uj.ac.za). Orcid Number: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8146-344X>

In contrast to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, which resulted in four significant environmental agreements and Agenda 21, the global framework for sustainable development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) had no intention of developing to renegotiate Agenda 21 (La Vina, Hoff, & De Rose, 2003, 1). Instead, La Vina, Hoff, & De Rose (2003, 1) stressed that the WSSD was tasked with carrying out pre-existing pledges and obligations, including those outlined in the Millennium Development Goals and Rio.

The SDGs, which are intended to build on the accomplishment of the MDGs while especially exploring a more sustainable path considering the global climate crisis, took over the MDGs' lifespan once they were outlived. The SDGs were presented to the world as a daring pledge to complete the work begun by the MDGs and to address the world's most pressing issues in a way that is environmentally sustainable (Nhema and Zinyama, 2016, 62). Additionally, Osborn et. al. (2015, 3) In order to provide a complete vision and framework that would be utilized for the future development of all nations, the SDGs were designed to go beyond the MDGs. An international agreement that would create a new set of global SDGs for implementing sustainable development after 2015 was the goal of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

At the regional level, the development goals form part of continent-based initiatives. One such intervention is Agenda 2063 that “is a 50-year strategic framework with the main objective being to guide Africa’s development for the next half-century and to achieve the vision of The Africa We Want. Agenda 2063 is aimed at being Africa’s blueprint and master plan for transforming the continent into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent’s strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance” (African Governance Report, 2020,8). At the national level, South Africa has introduced a National Development Plan (NDP)-2030. It is important to note that “the National Development Plan aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society” (National Planning Commission, 2014:24).

The article discusses the status of SDG 11 in South African context, aligning with the NDP goals, and offers policy recommendations for improvement.

The article uses qualitative research approach to compile information. Denzin and Lincoln (2005 cited in Greyling, 2014,18; and Nhlapo, 2020, 28) explain that discipline of qualitative research is multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and occasionally counter-disciplinary; it encompasses the social sciences, physical sciences, and humanities.

It is thought to be appropriate to use qualitative research for data collection because SDG 11 transcends all disciplines. Document review was used to compile the data, and document analysis was used to evaluate it. Often referred to as documentary analysis, documentary review is a technique used in the field of social research technique that assist researchers to gather information and facts to validate study findings, particularly in the literature review section of theses and dissertations. Reading critically and reviewing a lot of written content are part of this activity (Creswell 2013,62). Project needs can be gathered through documentary analysis. It gathers accessible records of associated processes or systems and tries to extract pertinent information. Stakeholder requirements can also be gathered through focus groups, interviews, and surveys (cited in Nhlapo, 2020,38).

### **SDG 11 in South African context**

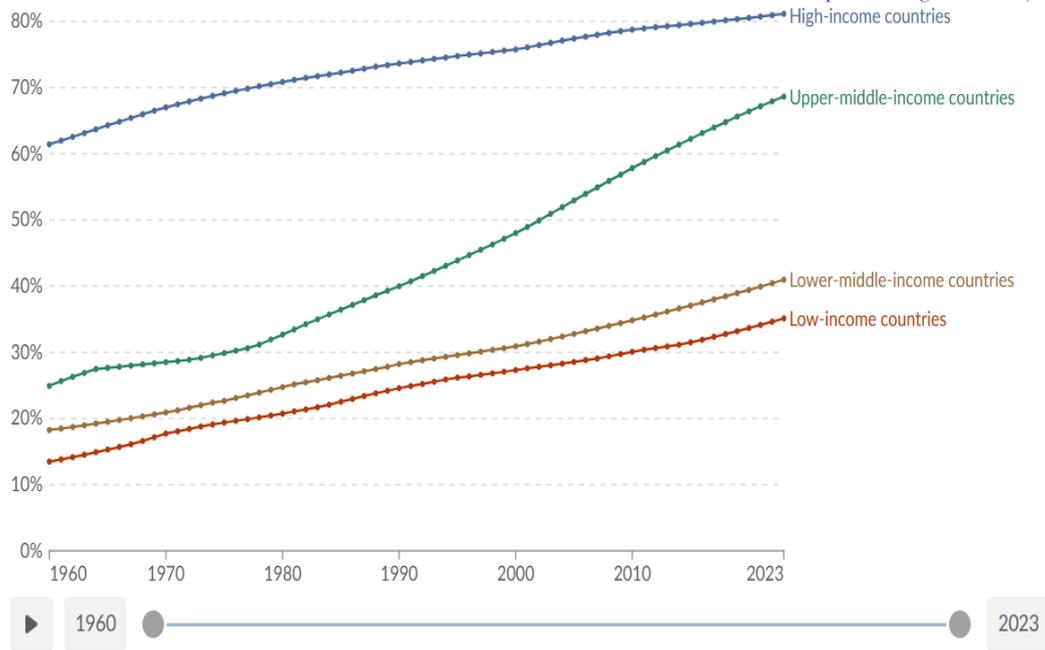
According to United Nations Development Programme (2025) SDG11 aims to make cities and human settlements welcoming, secure, and resilient. Cities serve as the hub of society, bringing together a varied spectrum of people to live, work, and play through intricate arrangements.

It was also emphasised by the UNDP (2025) that “most of the urban growth is taking place in small cities and intermediate towns, exacerbating inequalities and urban poverty. Up to 3 billion people worldwide struggle to afford a place to live, and 1.12 billion live in slums or informal settlements without basic services. Creating safe, resilient and sustainable cities requires coordinated investments in affordable housing, climate-resilient infrastructure and inclusive governance”.

Exploring the statistics globally, the UNDP (2025) reports that “by 2040, more than 2 billion urban residents could face an additional temperature rise of at least 0.5°C, and 36 per cent of the global urban population may endure annual mean temperatures of 29°C or higher. Flood risks are also escalating. In 2025, 1 billion people live in areas prone to severe riverine flooding, half of them in cities”. Additionally, “inequality and the levels of urban energy consumption and pollution are some of the challenges. Cities occupy just 3 per cent of the Earth’s land, but account for 60-80 per cent of energy consumption and 75 per cent of carbon emissions” (UNDP, 2025).

The world dynamics and peoples’ priorities are shifting, resulting in migration towards urban areas for better money, lifestyle and growth perspectives, see Figure 1.

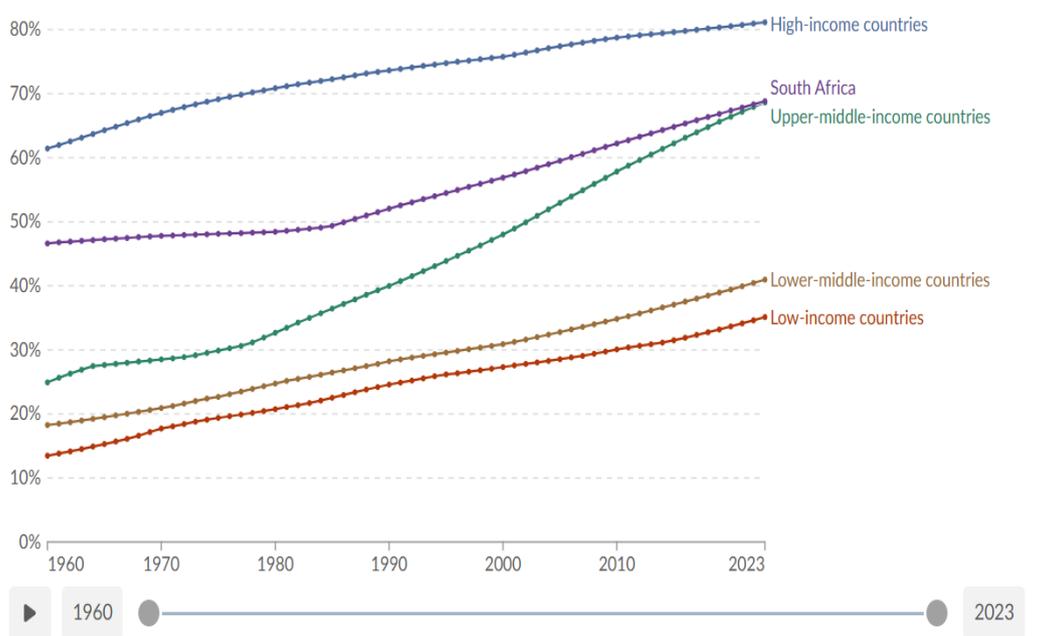
**Figure 1: Share of the population living in urban areas**



Source: United Nations Population Division, via World Bank (2025), in Our World in Data, 2025.

The statistics in the context of South Africa is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Share of the population living in urban areas (South Africa)**

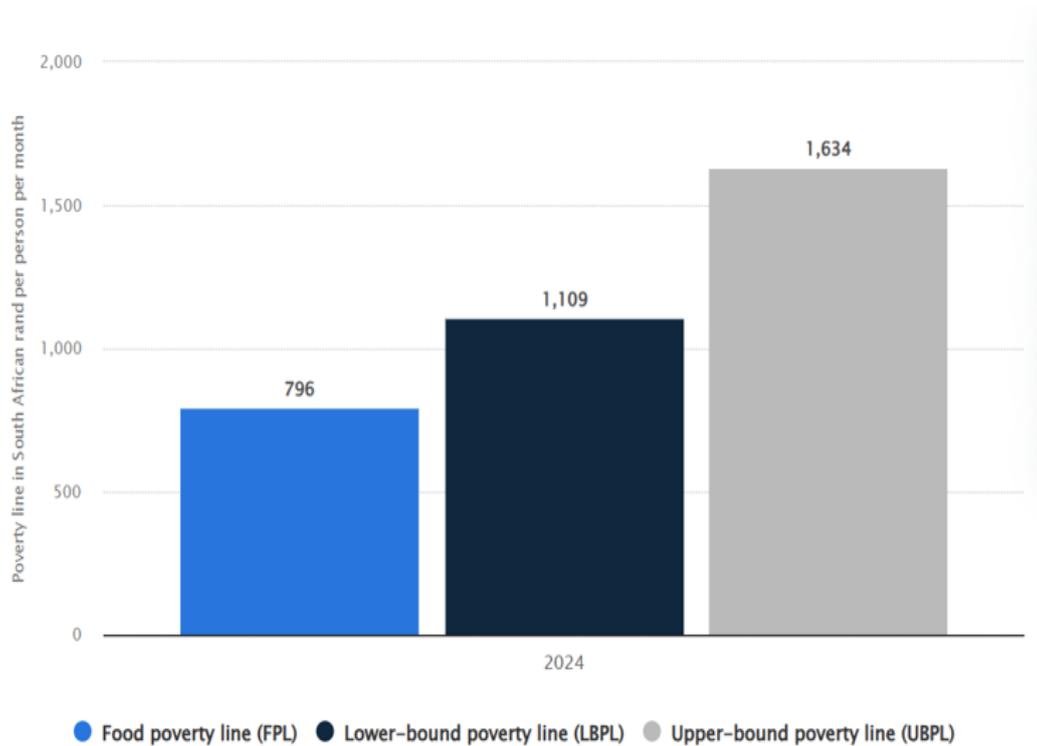


Source: United Nations Population Division, via World Bank (2025), in Our World in Data, 2025.

In addition to migration, it is equally important to note that poverty plays an important role in people's lives and when people from disadvantaged-driven financial background move to cities, they cause service

delivery challenges to municipal institutions. Not only are municipal offices bound to cater for people's everyday needs related to service delivery options, but in turn people also cannot pay taxes and rates on time that cause further challenges and affect the operations of the municipal institutions. The extent of poverty in South Africa is shown in Figure 3.

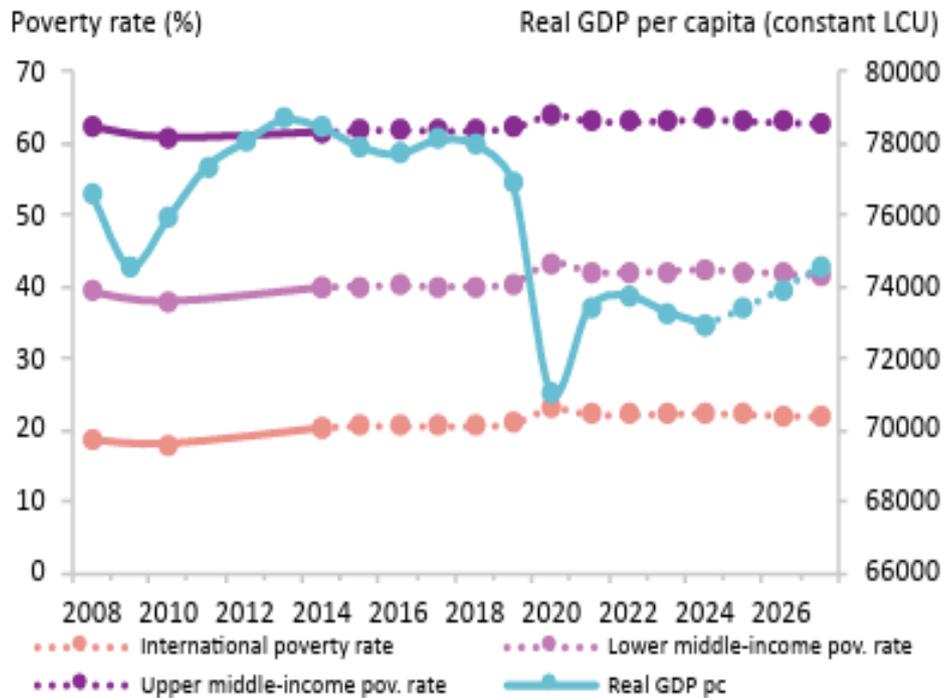
**Figure 3: National poverty line in South Africa in 2024 (in South African rand)**



Source: Statista, 2025.

A person in South Africa was deemed poor as of 2024 if their monthly income was less than 1,109 South African rand, or about 60 US dollars. Additionally, according to South African national criteria, people who have about 796 South African rand (about 43 US dollars) each month available for food are below the poverty line (Statista Research Department, 2025). Refer to figure 4 for actual and projected poverty rates in the country.

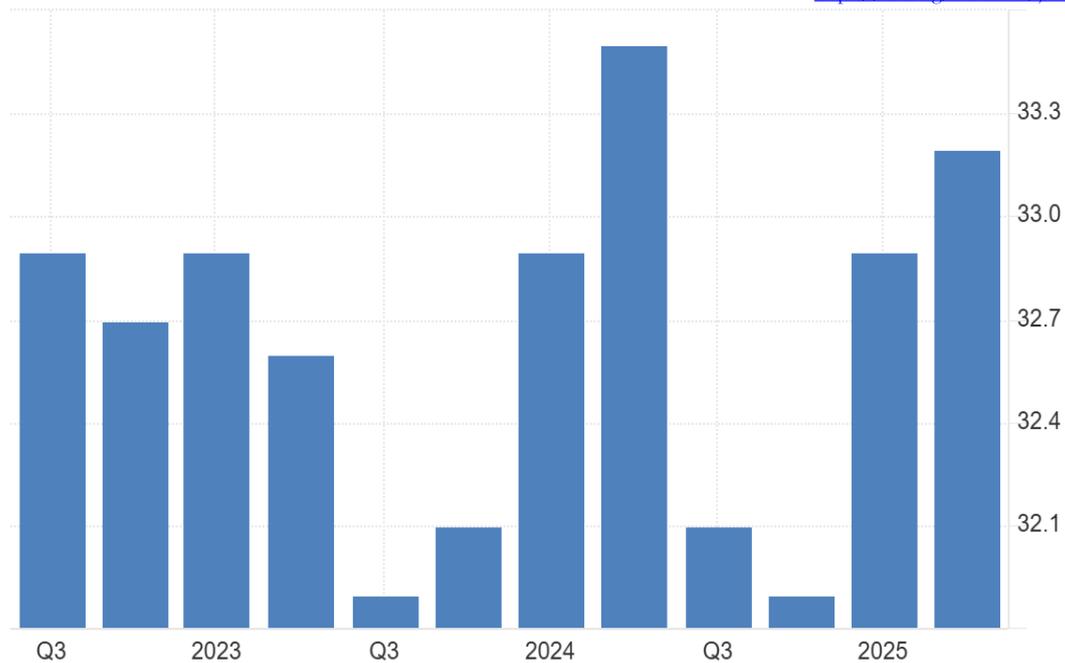
**Figure 4: Actual and projected poverty rates and real GDP per capita**



Source: World Bank, Poverty and Economic Policy Global Departments. Emissions data sourced from CAIT and OECD, in World Bank, 2025.

Additionally, people already living in cities can have challenges of not having employment and hence add to the service delivery challenges by not being able to pay municipal rates and taxes. The unemployment rate in South Africa is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: South Africa unemployment rate-percent



Source: Trading Economics, 2025.

Poverty and unemployment affect the investment in housing sector. Households cannot afford to buy or rent houses in safe and established areas that are expensive.

Building inclusive, secure, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements is emphasized in Goal 11. Since more people are living in urban areas, it is logistically necessary to offer basic and sophisticated goods and services in a central business center to reduce the carbon footprint of the public. Access to modern, urbanized living, as well as transportation, electricity, water, and the internet, are essential (Bhodi, 2016, 7). This statement is supported by the fact that a strong economy and the well-being of society are based on the quality of life in cities and towns, which also helps to lessen the risks associated with global warming. Well-thought-out policy framework in new human settlements where the best practices were channeled by more variables and consideration (Bhodi, 2016, 25). It was also highlighted by Bhodi (2016, 9) that “though the housing problem in South Africa can be regarded as a crisis, it can be argued that it is more of a challenge than a crisis. Over the past 20 years, the progress of housing delivery by governments cannot be ignored or disregarded, as there has been a steady supply of housing. However, demand for housing is ever increasing at a pace which outweighs such housing supply. Over and above housing supply and demand, one of the biggest issues South Africa faces in regard to settlement development is that of sustainable resource use”.

South Africa started the necessary transition to a sustainable growth path in accordance with global trends. The rainbow nation's transformation into an environmentally sustainable, resilient to climate change, low-carbon, and equitable society is the goal of the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) (National Planning Commission, 2011). Nevertheless, this might provide difficulties as the country remains firmly established on a road that is utterly unsustainable. The country is an energy-intensive country that is largely reliant on fossil resources, particularly coal (Ebrahim, 2018, 17). The country needs to find alternative solutions to replace carbon use with more sustainable and environmentally friendly options.

Thus, the inclusion of sustainability issues in South Africa's public policies points to a significant and unpleasant departure from traditional approaches, particularly in terms of policymaking and political agreements. A new assessment system was demanded, and institutional activities were shaken by the duty of sustainability in every area of administration. Indeed, the South African public policymaking process is absent from a sustainable development paradigm (Kabisch et al. 2019:9).

## SDG 11 in South Africa: Challenges and Strategies

Prior to 1994, South Africa's government failed to promote sustainable development, ignored sustainability issues, and had inconsistent, discriminatory environmental laws. Among the nations having a long history spanning a century is South Africa. The key components of sustainability are linked to the physical and ecological settings (Van-Schalkwyk, 2018,13; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023,46). It was also added by Van-Schalkwyk (2018,73; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023,46) that there are many challenges in creating sustainable rural communities. Some of these challenges are unique to South Africa's rural communities, even though the majority are widely acknowledged. If development strategies and policies are not explicitly created to address these unique challenges, sustainable community development in rural South Africa would not be possible.

The implementation of South Africa's own National Development Plan is obviously difficult, and it would be unexpected if the nation adhered to the universal aims while ignoring its own strategic and tactical objectives.

According to Haywood, Funke, Audouin, Musvoto and Nahman (2018,7) by virtue of governance and implementation, government agencies are required to be vital to the nation's SDG implementation. However, the authors clarify that there has been a significant issue with the SDGs. It is further stated that There was uncertainty over which department would oversee implementing the SDGs in South Africa because the National Working Group, of which all line departments are a part, had not yet been formally created two years after the SDG framework was introduced (Haywood et al.,2018,7).

According to Nel et al. (2020:5) when operational synchronization is lacking, a policy has a detrimental effect. To name a few, this includes factors like uneven area-based planning strategies, incompetence, inadequate monitoring and assessment, a lack of governmental and political support, and a lack of cooperation amongst the different stakeholders. The policy related to this article pertains to human settlement and must address institutional, environmental, and infrastructure issues in order to guarantee a steady availability of housing benefits.

The political alignment is lacking. This assertion is supported by the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, which established a parliamentary representative democratic republic system (RSA, 1996; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023,48). Since 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) has ruled the country, but some of its members have defected to start their own political parties because of internal issues. Internal controls may have become ineffective because of the splits this has produced inside the group. These divides have led to the formation of coalition governments in certain communities, but they have also resulted in confrontations. There are various interventional available for community participation related to SDGs/SDG 11, however, the politically fragmented approaches, disputes, disharmony in and between various political parties could affect these interventions and may have a negative consequence for the achievement of SDGs, particularly SDG 11 in this study (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023,48).

As mentioned above, urbanization appears to be a global issue, and this is also the case in Africa. The African Continent faces the following issues in relation to SDG 11. In many African nations, demographic imbalances pertaining to access to basic infrastructure, such as roads, sanitation, water, and lights, as well as information and communication technologies, persist as a result of internal and international migration, which makes it more difficult to fulfill the African Union's (AU) commitment to leave no one behind (The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2020; SDG Transformation Center, 2025).

It appears that South Africa has the same urbanization dilemma as the rest of Africa. But despite South Africa's well-established implementation frameworks, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) states that to meet urban sustainability goals before the 2030 implementation deadline, greater focus must be placed on strategic interventions (National Planning Commission, 2019, 98).

The nation has adopted the first localization strategy of the 2030 Agenda, which is alignment with the continental and global frameworks (NDP/AU frameworks). Establishing platforms for networking and sharing through cooperation with various stakeholders, finding synergies, and encouraging alignment. 3. Advocacy by starting several public awareness initiatives and creating resources and manuals that might be utilized to better comprehend and implement the SDGs, a collaborative virtual cloud that serves as a venue for frequent communication (Voluntary National Review, 2019,9).

According to Fourie (2018:765) because it calls for enhancing the means of implementation and ensuring coherence among the seventeen goals, the SDGs are a hard endeavor to achieve. From a global, continental, and national viewpoint, the implementation of SDGs depends critically on the coherence and alignment of current development priorities. But Fourie (2018) also emphasized that it is challenging to achieve coherence. Fourie (2018) made the case that South Africa might benefit from five guidelines based on an analysis of policy documents and peer-reviewed research on the Policy Coherence for Development movement. These guidelines include “(i) prioritizing political buy-in, (ii) safeguarding country ownership of development priorities, (iii) using and improving existing institutional structures and processes, (iv) stimulating cooperation across government departments by using an issue-based approach and (v) including a long-term and transnational perspective when considering policy impacts”.

It is difficult to accomplish SDG 11 in isolation from the other SDGs, according to several academics. This is due to SDG 11's global issues, which include a lack of basic and resilient infrastructure, inadequate infrastructure that hinders successful enterprises, and industrialization that has an impact on the environment through infrastructure (refer to Jaiyesimi, 2020). Nonetheless, the African Continent's diverse nations, each with its own unique viewpoints and characteristics, might be attributed to the difficulties in implementing the SDGs. However, sustaining peace, assessing development, accountability, and finances are the fundamental issues that plague the African Continent (Jaiyesimi, 2020,13).

## Results and Discussions

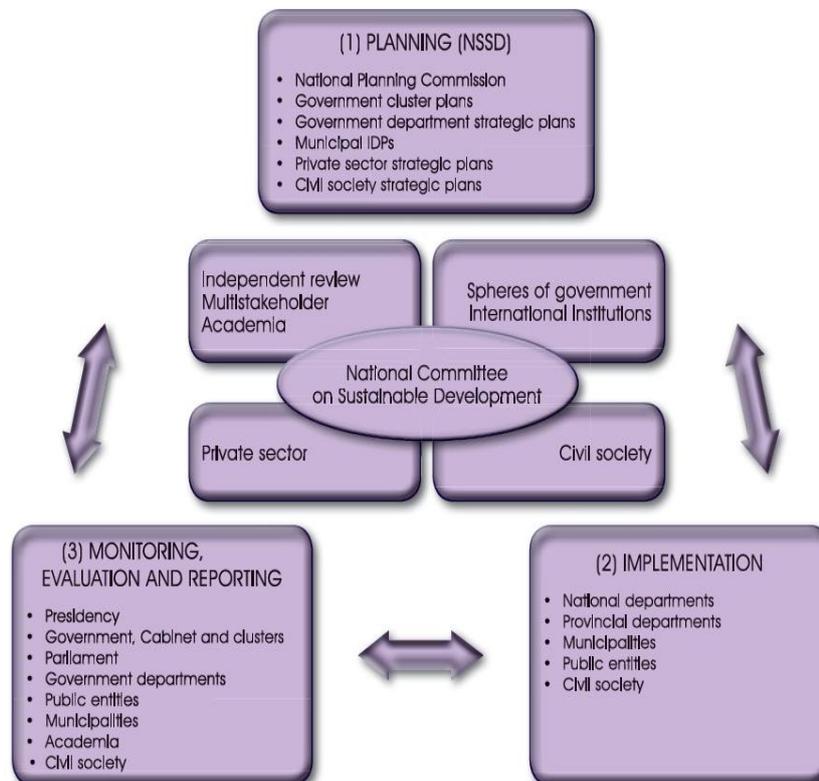
"Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable" is the UN's definition of SDG 11. More than 70% more people are now living in cities because of urbanization. The overcrowding and inadequacy of infrastructure and services for residents is the worldwide challenge of urbanization. These include roads, transportation, garbage collection, water and sanitation systems, and unplanned urban sprawl, all of which have a detrimental impact on the environment by causing pollution (United Nations, 2016,4). LaVina, Hoff and DeRose (2003,2) stated that the purpose of the Plan of Implementation, therefore, was to provide a set of goals, deadlines, and specific action plans that would enable sustainable development. As per the documents of the National Planning Commission (2011), in 2012, South Africa approved the National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030, which focuses on "Our future, make it work," as its development roadmap and compass. The South African government is planning out the process of collaboration and coordination to achieve the SDGs. Such arrangement is also required to be implemented at the local government level. Therefore, the facilitation and execution of SDG 11 in South Africa are supported by several policies, strategies, programmes, and initiatives. Particular attention has been paid to the importance of the locality, which includes social consequences on civil society, administrative placement at the local level of government, and policy decision-making and accountability. Every effort to implement new urban changes in the direction of urban sustainability by continuing at the local level (Kabisch et al, 2019, 7).

Additionally, there are various factors that need to be considered when planning housing facilities in any area. According to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) (2019, 187) the goal of the Green Transport Strategy (2016–2021) is to encourage people to take public transportation rather than private vehicles. Additionally, it aimed to encourage the use of non-motorized forms of transportation. To ensure that bulk commodities are transported on railroads rather than vehicles, a plan has been put in place to switch from road freight to rail. enhancing the transportation infrastructure and offering dependable and fulfilling public transportation options. As stated in the documents of the Stats SA (2019, 187) SDG 11 will be achieved in

South Africa, particularly for the benefit of the most vulnerable members of society, including as women, children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

Additionally, it is said that the South African government struggles to create systems for appreciation and to encourage the formation of partnerships. However, it is necessary to highlight the NDP's congruence with the SDGs throughout the government and society (Haywood et al., 2018,7). For this reason, the South African National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD) was approved by the Cabinet in 2008. The Cabinet later approved this National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan, generally known as NSSD 1 on November 23, 2011 (2011 to 2014) (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2025,1). From 2011 to 2014, the NSSD 1 will be put into effect. NSSD 2 (2015–2020) will be informed by the lessons learned and the assessment of success made in implementing NSSD 1 (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2025,1). To accomplish sustainable development in the nation, a responsibility matrix that illustrates the roles of various role-players in carrying out their assigned tasks is therefore recommended, see Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Responsibility Matrix**



Source: Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2025,37.

Throughout the nation, the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) (2018,16) is promoting and aiding in the development of integrated and sustainable human settlements. The 2015-2020 DST Strategic Plan is organized around the Department's activities throughout the five years to place DHS within the framework of the NDP.

Four programs are used to implement DHS's strategic objective:

- Administration Programme: encourages productive and successful administrative procedure.

- Human Settlements Policy, Strategy, and Planning: To form collaborations to help implement the sector's aims.
- Programme Monitoring and Delivery Support Programme: Offer assistance in putting sustainable human settlements into action.
- Support for Housing Development: Human Settlement Grants that are both successful and efficient (Department of Human Settlement. 2018,16).

There is an excellent chance for South Africa to move quickly through the implementation of SDGs [in this case SDG 11]; however, this implementation cannot rely only on the National Development Plan's (NDP) alignment; rather, governments, corporations, and individuals who will venture down this new path of sustainability and improving the planet for everyone must pledge their commitment (Statistics South Africa, 2019, i). In addition, Mkhize (2017:23) adds that since the government is not the only entity responsible for implementing the SDGs, involving the private and non-state sectors in the planning, execution, and reporting will help advance the national implementation of the goals.

South Africa's own plan, the National Democratic Party (NDP), provides a long-term outlook on how to address the nation's problems. Through 2030, the master plan outlines the intended outcome the nation hopes to attain. While frequently highlighted, the convergence of the SDGs and the NDP is mostly reflected in practice. Furthermore, the NDP directly addresses the SDG targets, according to a report from the Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME). Furthermore, by encouraging policy consistency and removing inefficiencies and duplications, the SDGs help expedite the NDP's vision for South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2019,5).

The NDP's Chapter 8 discusses the transformation of the national space economy and human settlement. The significance of location is explained in this chapter. It asserts that in a democracy like South Africa, the location of people's homes and places of employment should not be determined by the policies of Apartheid. People should be able to enter the economy without difficulty, and the government should provide ongoing services (refer to National Planning Commission, n.d.). Although it might take decades to completely reshape the colonial and apartheid landscape, South Africa should see noticeable and quantifiable progress by 2030 in regenerating rural areas and developing more lively, balanced, and functionally integrated metropolitan populations. For this to occur, the nation needs to: Clearly define and tenaciously pursue a national spatial development vision. Sharpen the tools needed to realize this goal. Develop the necessary capacities inside the state and among its inhabitants (National Planning Commission, n.d.,260).

There are several similarities between Chapter Eight of the NDP and SDG 11 Eleven. In all nations across the world, the SD Goal aims to improve inclusive and sustainable urbanization and provide the capacity to integrate sustainable human settlements. The NDP, on the other hand, aims to create robust and effective spatial planning that will support the integration of all branches of government. People will be able to reside closer to their places of employment and more jobs will be created as a result (Casazza & Chulu, 2016, in Republic of South Africa (RSA)- Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report, 2019).

The increasing urbanization demands the attention of all inter-linking departments of government, in terms of SDG 11, such as Health, Education, Transport, Information and Communication Technologies, etc. All governmental levels, the public and private sectors, and all stakeholders must work together to achieve the objectives set forth in the global SDG11.

Even though ICTs are developing quickly and laws encouraging paperless offices have been implemented, many governments, corporations, and citizens still favor paper records, manuscript signatures, and traditional public services over their electronic peers. Conversely, certain states are referred to as 'digital societies' since practically all their public sector interactions are done online (Batty et al., 2012,482, cited in Zhang, 2017,25; Ncamphalala & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022, 321). Nevertheless, it can be stated that it is widely acknowledged that smart cities are characterized by increased use of ICT's. ICT aims to optimize the use of limited resources in various urban contexts. To increase the sustainability of a city's economy, society, and environment, ICT-based solutions are known to improve resource planning and efforts in urban

planning and development. To increase future opportunities, a city with a strong ICT infrastructure still needs to show its transformation to a smarter city (Zhang, 2017,25; Ncamphalala & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022, 321). There may be contentious responses in the respective societies when governments introduce various ICT solutions. It is always vital to describe society according to its nature, social differences, and cultural characteristics. Additionally, religious and political traditions are important in this context since, in traditional communities whose history is formed by these characteristics, innovation and globalization are always accepted as the norm (Kramers et al., 2014,50, cited in Zhang, 2017,26; Ncamphalala & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2022, 321).

Department of Environment and Tourism (DET) (2008,23) added that the rapidly expanding South African economy is likely to face a number of challenges, including: rising household consumption levels that persist in tandem with avoidable increases in resource use. The DET (2008,23) further added that therefore, it's critical that future studies on the achievement of this SDG concentrate mostly on real-world enhancements to housing delivery and living circumstances, as well as on putting beneficial public transportation initiatives into action for a greater number of individuals.

## Conclusion

Since the purpose of sustainable development is to meet the existing needs and demands ensuring that the needs of the future generations is not compromised, the SDG 11 was critically examined in this study based on its advancement, difficulties, and effects. Results show that even while the nation is making good progress toward reaching SDG11 goals, several aspects still need to be considered. These include managing the high rate of migration to cities, poverty, the infrastructure needed to handle the surge of people in the cities, unemployment, and the accessibility of essential services for everyone.

When limited resources are distributed among the limitless demands of society, some needs are reprioritized while others are left unmet, a situation known as the economic crisis. Water, electricity, and adequate infrastructure in rural areas are just a few of the municipal services that are still difficult to distribute to the public and relate to Goal 11. For formerly underprivileged groups in South Africa, technological advancements like 4IR (target to goal 9), which is necessary for SDG 11 as well, continue to be a difficulty.

To achieve the 2030 vision, the South African government has put policies and strategies in place to guarantee that target 11 is implemented. These are enforced through projects, programmes, and initiatives. South Africa needs to cooperate with the commercial sector, stakeholders, other governmental role-players to ensure effective collaboration for efficient and effective outcomes and targets. Although there are obstacles and challenges to find solutions so they may not impede the process, there is a need to continuously strategize and collaborate to ensure the realization of SDG 11.

The South African implementation of SDG 11 is highly important. Furthermore, the South African government uses the global development goals to monitor its progress in the country-context. The development goals assist countries to ensure the achievement of goals in their contexts.

A country must take good care of its environment if it wants future generations to live with the same standard of living as current generations. This is what the SDGs aim to achieve. Additionally, by adopting a sustainable lifestyle, the current generation can stop any negative consequences from lingering in the future. This necessitates prompt and efficient utilization of resources.

Legislative and institutional structures unique to each nation are essential to achieving the SDGs. To carry out the assigned activities in a coordinated and cooperative way, these frameworks serve as a guide for the pertinent government departments, businesses, and stakeholders. The mutual realization of SDGs—in this case, SDG 11—is the outcome

## References

- African Governance Report. (2020). Agendas 2063 & 2030: Is Africa on Track? Available at: [https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-02/African\\_Governance\\_Report\\_2019.pdf](https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-02/African_Governance_Report_2019.pdf) (accessed on 30 August 2025).
- Batty, M., Axhausen, K.W., Giannotti, F., Pozdnoukhov, A., Bazzani, M., Wachowicz, M., Ouzounis, G. & Portugli, Y. (2012). Smart Cities of The Future. The European Physical Journal Special Topics, 214(1),481-518. <https://doi.org/10.1140/epjst/e2012-01703-3>
- Bhodi, K. (2016). Investigating the sustainability of the Housing. Available at: <https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/d48c167a-3cc6-47fa-8110-525fe35bc81c/content> (Accessed 28 August 2025).
- Casazza, A., & Chulu, O. (2016). Aligning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the National Development Plan (NDP): Towards domestication of the SDGs in South Africa. Wits School of Governance: South Africa.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). Steps in Conducting a Scholarly Mixed Methods Study. DBER Speaker Series, Paper 48. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dberspeakers/48>. (Accessed on 11 May 2015).
- Department of Environment and Tourism. (2008). A National Framework for Sustainable Development in South Africa. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. (2025). National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan. Pretoria: Government Printer. <https://www.dffe.gov.za/national-strategy-sustainable-development-and-action-plan>
- Department of Human Settlement. (2018). Strategic Plan 2015- 2020. Pretoria: Government printer.
- Ebrahim, F. (2018). Change and Continuity: The Development of Florence Nigthingale Road In Westcliff Chatsworth, Durban: UKZN.
- Emas, R. (2015). The concept of sustainable development: Definition and defining principles. Available at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5839GSDR%202015\\_SD\\_concept\\_definiton\\_rev.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5839GSDR%202015_SD_concept_definiton_rev.pdf) (Accessed 20 August 2021).
- European Foreign Institute (EFI). (2019). SDGs' impacts on forests and people. EFI. Available at: <https://efi.int/articles/sdgsimpacts-forest-and-people> (Accessed on 12 July 2025).
- Fourie, W. (2018). Aligning South Africa's National Development Plan with the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals: Guidelines from the Policy Coherence for Development movement. Sustainable Development. 26: 765–771. DOI:10.1002/sd.1745
- Greßling, S.J. (2014). The South African Local Government National Capacity Building Framework of 2011: Critical Future Considerations for 2016. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.
- Haywood, L.K., Funke, N., Audouin, M., Musvoto, C., & Nahman, A. (2018). The Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa: investigating the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships. Development Southern Africa, 36(5), 555–569. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2018.1461611>
- Jaiyesimi, R. (2016). The challenge of implementing sustainable development goals in Africa. African journal of reproductive health, 20(3):13-18. <https://ajrh.info/index.php/ajrh/article/view/157>
- Kabisch, S., Finnveden, G., Kratochvil, P., Sendi, R., Smagacz-Poziemska, M., Matos, R., & Bylund, J. (2019). New Urban Transitions towards Sustainability: Addressing SDG Challenges (Research and Implementation Tasks and Topics from the Perspective of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe). Sustainability, 11(8), 2242; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11082242>
- Kramers, A., Wangel, J. & Höjer, M. (2014). Planning for smart sustainable cities: decisions in the planning process and actor networks. In Höjer M., Lago P & Wangel J. Eds. (Conference ICT for Sustainability (ICT4S-14). Paris: Atlantis Press.
- La Vina, A.G., Hoff, G., & DeRose, A. (2003). The Outcomes of Johannesburg: Assessing the World Summit on Sustainable Development. SAIS Review 23(1):53-70. DOI:10.1353/sais.2003.0022
- Mkhize, M.C. (2017). New interventions and sustainable solutions: Reappraising illegal artisanal mining in South Africa. SA Crime Quarterly, (61):67-75. <https://doi.org/10.17159/2413-3108/2017/vOn61a1726>
- National Planning Commission (NPC). (n.d.). Chapter Eight: Transforming human settlement and the national space economy. Available at: [https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/NDP\\_Chapters/NDP%202030-CH8-Transforming%20human%20settlements.pdf](https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/assets/Documents/NDP_Chapters/NDP%202030-CH8-Transforming%20human%20settlements.pdf) (Accessed on 28 August 2025).
- National Planning Commission. (2011). National Development Plan: vision 2030. Pretoria: Government.
- National Planning Commission (NPC). (2014). National Development Plan 2030 Our Future-make it work. Available at: [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf) (Accessed on 30 August 2025).
- Ncamphalala, M., & Vyas- Doorgapersad, S. (2022). The role of information and communication technology (ICT) on the transformation of municipalities into smart cities for improved service delivery. International Journal of Research in Business & Social Science, 11(2), 318-328. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v11i2.1593>
- Nel, L., Tefö, T.R., Mabuyakhulu, M.V., Munnisunker, & Kruger, P.J. (2020). Sustainable development of South Africa - An in-country perspective. Budapest: Hungary. Available at: <https://www.iisd.org/about-iisd/sustainable-development> (Accessed on 29 August 2025).
- Nhema, A.G., & Zinyama, T. (2016). Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals: A review. Developing Country Studies, 6 (2): 60-63.
- Nhlapo, TMS. (2020). Human resource development strategy for gender equality within the Department of Correctional Services. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

- Osborn, D. Cutter, A. and Ullah, F. (2015). Universal Sustainable Development Goals: Understanding the Transformational Challenge for Developed Countries. Available at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1684SF\\_-\\_SDG\\_Universality\\_Report\\_-\\_May\\_2015.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1684SF_-_SDG_Universality_Report_-_May_2015.pdf) (Accessed on 12 February 2025).
- Our World in Data. (2025). Share of the population living in urban areas. Data adapted from United Nations Population Division, via World Bank. Retrieved from <https://archive.ourworldindata.org/20250903-083611/grapher/share-of-population-urban.html> [online resource] (archived on 3 September, 2025).
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Republic of South Africa (RSA). (2019). Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report 2019. Available at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23402SOUTH\\_AFRICA\\_RSA\\_Voluntary\\_National\\_Review\\_Report\\_Final\\_14\\_June\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23402SOUTH_AFRICA_RSA_Voluntary_National_Review_Report_Final_14_June_2019.pdf) (Accessed on 31 August 2025).
- SDG Transformation Center. (2025). 2020 Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report. Available at: <https://sdgtransformationcenter.org/reports/africa-index-2020> (Accessed on 29 August 2025).
- Statista. (2025). National poverty line in South Africa in 2024 (in South African rand). <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1263737/national-poverty-line-in-south-africa/>
- Statista Research Department. (2025). National poverty line in South Africa 2024. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1263737/national-poverty-line-in-south-africa/> (Accessed on 23 July 2025).
- Statistics South Africa. (2019). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- The Sustainable Development Goals Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2020). Africa SDG Index and Dashboards Report 2020. Kigali and New York: SDG Center for Africa and Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- Trading Economics. (2025). South Africa unemployment rate. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/unemployment-rate> (Accessed on 28 July 2025).
- United Nations Development Programme. (2016). Global Sustainable Development report. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> (Accessed 6 August 2021).
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2025). The SDGs in action. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals> (Accessed on 24 July 2025).
- United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). (2020). Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda> (Accessed on 28 July 2025).
- Van Schalkwyk, E. (2018). Challenges in Realising Sustainable Community Development in Rural South Africa. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. 4(4-1):73-79. doi: 10.11648/j.aff.s.2015040401.19
- Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2022). The Use of Digitalization (ICTs) in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies. 14(2) 265–278. DOI: 10.1177/097491012111067295
- Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. (2023). Assessing Sustainable Development Goal 11 in South African Context. Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People, 12(4). <https://doi.org/10.26458/jedep.v12i4.817>
- World Bank. (2025). South Africa Macro Poverty Outlook (MPO). Available at: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2fefc5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-zaf.pdf> (Accessed on 21 March 2025).
- Zhang, S. (2017). The role of information and communication technology for smart city development in China. Unpublished PhD thesis. Tallinn.: Tallinn University of Technology.