

## LEGAL GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN LATIN AMERICA

**Cruz García Lirios**

*Universidad de la Salud. Ciudad de México. México*

**M. Rosario Molina González**

*Universidad de Sonora. Navojoa. México*

**Celia Yaneth Quiroz Campas**

*Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora. Navojoa. México*

### ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of legal governance in promoting social inclusion in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within Latin American democracies. Building on a rights-based perspective, the study addresses the persistent gap between the formal incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into national legal frameworks and its effective translation into inclusive development practices. Using a qualitative comparative design, the analysis focuses on regulatory mechanisms, institutional arrangements, and participatory processes that structure SDG implementation across selected countries in the region. The findings indicate that although constitutional reforms and policy instruments have increasingly integrated sustainability and participation principles, their impact on social inclusion remains uneven. Descriptive and comparative results show that governance conditions have been relatively stable over time, yet they are dominated by patterns associated with normative fragmentation, limited participation, and weak enforcement. Only a smaller proportion of cases reflects coherent legal frameworks combined with institutionalized participation, effective access to justice, and robust transparency and accountability mechanisms. The study concludes that legal governance contributes to inclusive SDG implementation only when it moves beyond formal alignment and ensures legal certainty, procedural justice, and meaningful citizen participation. In contexts where these conditions are absent, SDG integration tends to reproduce existing social inequalities and constrain the effective exercise of rights by marginalized populations. The paper underscores the need to strengthen the rule of law through coherent, enforceable, and rights-based legal governance frameworks to advance socially inclusive and sustainable development in Latin America. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires robust legal frameworks that ensure inclusive participation and accountability. This paper explores how legal governance contributes to social inclusion in the context of Latin American democracies. By analyzing the regulatory mechanisms, institutional frameworks, and participatory processes employed in SDG implementation, the paper identifies patterns of progress and barriers to inclusive legal governance. The findings suggest that although constitutional reforms and policy adaptations have incorporated sustainability objectives, significant challenges remain in ensuring legal certainty, procedural justice, and equity for marginalized populations. Recommendations are offered to strengthen the rule of law in sustainable development strategies, with an emphasis on rights-based approaches.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has reaffirmed the role of law in shaping equitable, peaceful, and inclusive societies. Legal governance—defined as the interplay of laws, institutions, and participatory mechanisms—plays a central role in translating the SDGs into national commitments. In Latin America, the legal adaptation of sustainability principles has occurred amid social unrest, institutional fragility, and growing demands for justice and inclusion.

This paper examines how national legal systems in Latin America incorporate the SDGs, focusing on mechanisms that enable or restrict the participation of vulnerable groups. The analysis addresses legal pluralism, constitutional mandates, public policy instruments, and jurisprudential developments to assess their contribution to inclusive governance.

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals has positioned legal governance at the center of contemporary debates on sustainable development and democratic consolidation, particularly in Latin America. As the 2030 Agenda emphasizes principles of universality, inclusion, and accountability, legal frameworks are expected not only to articulate sustainability objectives but also to guarantee mechanisms through which diverse social actors can participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. In this sense, law functions as both an enabling structure for public action and a normative safeguard for social inclusion, especially in contexts marked by historical inequality, institutional fragility, and uneven access to justice.

Latin American democracies offer a particularly relevant setting for examining the relationship between legal governance and social inclusion in SDG implementation. Over recent decades, constitutional reforms and policy innovations across the region have incorporated rights-based approaches, environmental protections, and participatory governance principles aligned with sustainable development. However, the translation of these formal commitments into effective legal practices remains uneven. Regulatory complexity, weak institutional coordination, limited enforcement capacity, and persistent socio-economic asymmetries often constrain the ability of legal systems to ensure procedural justice and equitable outcomes for marginalized populations.

Against this backdrop, this paper examines how legal governance contributes to, and in some cases limits, social inclusion within SDG implementation processes in Latin America. By analyzing regulatory mechanisms, institutional arrangements, and participatory procedures, the study seeks to identify patterns of progress as well as structural and procedural barriers that hinder inclusive legal governance. Particular attention is given to issues of legal certainty, accountability, and access to participatory channels, as these dimensions are critical for fostering social ownership of sustainable development agendas. The paper argues that strengthening the rule of law through coherent, transparent, and rights-based legal frameworks is essential for advancing inclusive and sustainable development in the region.

The scholarly literature on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals converges on the recognition that legal and institutional frameworks are decisive for translating global sustainability commitments into locally inclusive practices. Early analyses of the 2030 Agenda emphasize that its effectiveness depends on domestic legal incorporation, regulatory coherence, and the capacity of states to align international norms with national development strategies. From this perspective, law is not merely an instrument of compliance but a governance mechanism that structures participation, accountability, and the distribution of responsibilities among public institutions and social actors (United Nations, 2015; Biermann et al., 2017).

Within governance studies, a growing body of work highlights the shift from hierarchical state-centered regulation toward more networked and participatory models of public action. Collaborative and co-creative governance approaches argue that sustainable development outcomes are more likely when legal frameworks enable interaction among governments, civil society, and the private sector under

conditions of transparency and shared responsibility (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). However, this literature also notes that participatory arrangements often remain symbolic when not supported by enforceable legal guarantees, clear procedural rules, and effective accountability mechanisms (Fung, 2015).

In the field of legal governance, scholars have examined how constitutionalization of sustainability and rights-based approaches can expand opportunities for social inclusion. Comparative analyses indicate that the incorporation of environmental rights, social rights, and participatory principles into constitutional and statutory law has increased the normative visibility of marginalized groups within development agendas (Boyd, 2018; Daly & May, 2020). Nonetheless, empirical studies reveal persistent gaps between formal legal recognition and substantive inclusion, particularly where access to justice is limited and administrative procedures remain opaque or exclusionary.

Latin American research contributes significantly to this debate by documenting the region's extensive legal reforms oriented toward social rights, environmental protection, and participatory democracy. Studies on new constitutionalism and legal pluralism underscore the potential of these reforms to support inclusive SDG implementation, especially through mechanisms such as prior consultation, social oversight, and community participation in public decision-making (Yrigoyen Fajardo, 2016; Gargarella, 2019). At the same time, critical legal scholarship points to structural constraints, including weak rule of law, fragmented institutions, and entrenched socio-economic inequalities, which undermine legal certainty and procedural justice for marginalized populations (O'Donnell, 2010; Rodríguez-Garavito, 2020).

Recent evaluations of SDG governance in Latin America stress that inclusive outcomes depend less on the proliferation of norms and more on their enforceability and coherence across policy sectors. Legal fragmentation, overlapping mandates, and inconsistent implementation practices often dilute accountability and limit citizen participation in sustainable development initiatives (Kanie & Biermann, 2017; Sánchez & Martínez, 2021). Consequently, the literature increasingly calls for integrated, rights-based legal governance frameworks that prioritize equity, access to justice, and meaningful participation as core conditions for advancing the SDGs.

Overall, the state of the art suggests that while legal reforms aligned with the 2030 Agenda have expanded the formal architecture of inclusion, substantial challenges remain in ensuring that these frameworks operate effectively in practice. The prevailing consensus underscores the need to strengthen the rule of law through clear procedural guarantees, institutional coordination, and accountability mechanisms capable of translating sustainability commitments into socially inclusive development outcomes.

The present study is grounded in the observation of a persistent gap between the formal incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals into the legal and public policy frameworks of Latin American countries and their effective translation into inclusive practices oriented toward social equity. Although constitutional reforms, statutory legislation, and planning instruments have integrated principles of sustainability, participation, and human rights, significant limitations remain in practice. These limitations are associated with normative fragmentation, institutional weakness, and unequal access to legal mechanisms of participation and rights enforcement. Such tensions call into question the capacity of legal governance to ensure legal certainty, procedural justice, and accountability in SDG implementation processes, particularly for historically marginalized groups.

Based on this problem statement, the study seeks to analyze how legal governance shapes levels of social inclusion in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin American democracies, taking into account both normative design and the institutional and participatory arrangements that structure public action.

Accordingly, the guiding research question is: To what extent, and under what conditions, do legal governance frameworks contribute to promoting social inclusion in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin American democracies?

The central hypothesis posits that Latin American countries with coherent legal governance frameworks, institutionalized mechanisms for citizen participation, effective guarantees of access to justice, and robust transparency and accountability arrangements exhibit higher levels of social inclusion in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Conversely, where normative fragmentation, weak law enforcement, and procedural exclusion prevail, SDG integration tends to reproduce social inequalities and constrain the effective exercise of rights by marginalized populations.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) was employed to review and interpret legal and institutional frameworks in five Latin American countries: Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. The study involved three components:

1. Documentary review of national development plans, constitutional texts, and sustainability laws.
2. Content analysis of participatory legal instruments (e.g., public hearings, ombudspersons, citizen observatories).
3. Key informant interviews with legal scholars, policy makers, and civil society actors (n = 12).

Data were coded according to themes of legal accessibility, procedural inclusion, and enforcement mechanisms.

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design aimed at examining the role of legal governance in promoting social inclusion within the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin American democracies. A qualitative approach is appropriate given the study's interest in understanding institutional arrangements, legal frameworks, and participatory processes as socially constructed and context-dependent phenomena. Comparative qualitative designs are widely used in governance and legal studies to identify patterns, similarities, and divergences across cases while preserving sensitivity to contextual variation (Ragin, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The unit of analysis consists of national SDG implementation frameworks in selected Latin American countries. Case selection follows a purposive sampling strategy based on three criteria: the degree of formal incorporation of the SDGs into national legal and policy instruments, the existence of constitutional or statutory provisions related to participation and social rights, and the availability of public documentation on SDG governance. This strategy enables analytical comparison across cases with differing levels of legal institutionalization and governance capacity, facilitating the identification of enabling and constraining conditions for inclusive legal governance (Gerring, 2017).

Data collection relies on document analysis of primary and secondary sources, including constitutions, framework laws, national development plans, SDG implementation strategies, judicial decisions, and official reports produced by governmental and international organizations. Document analysis is a well-established method in legal and policy research, allowing for systematic examination of normative content, institutional design, and procedural arrangements over time (Bowen, 2009). To complement this analysis, selected academic studies and policy evaluations are incorporated to contextualize legal provisions within broader governance dynamics.

Data analysis is conducted through qualitative content analysis, combining deductive and inductive coding strategies. Deductive codes are derived from the theoretical literature on legal governance, social inclusion, and rights-based approaches to sustainable development, focusing on

dimensions such as participation, accountability, legal certainty, and access to justice. Inductive coding allows for the identification of emergent themes and context-specific practices that may not be fully captured by existing frameworks (Schreier, 2012). Cross-case comparison is then employed to identify recurring patterns, contrasts, and explanatory mechanisms linking legal governance arrangements to inclusive SDG outcomes (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

To enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, triangulation across multiple data sources and case contexts is employed, reducing the risk of interpretive bias and increasing analytical validity. In addition, transparent documentation of coding procedures and analytical decisions supports reliability and replicability within the qualitative research paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical considerations are addressed by relying exclusively on publicly available documents and properly acknowledging all sources, thereby minimizing risks associated with confidentiality and informed consent.

### 3. RESULTS

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 indicate that the dataset comprises 24 valid observations with no missing values for either variable, which confirms the completeness and internal consistency of the data. The variable Year shows a mean value of 2009.25 with a standard deviation of 7.68, suggesting that the observations are distributed over a relatively wide temporal span, ranging from 2000 to 2023. This dispersion reflects adequate temporal variability, allowing for the examination of patterns or changes over time rather than concentration around a single period.

The distribution of the Year variable exhibits slight positive skewness (0.502), indicating a modest concentration of observations in earlier years, although the skewness value remains within acceptable limits for approximate normality. The negative kurtosis value (-1.226) suggests a platykurtic distribution, characterized by a flatter shape and lighter tails than a normal distribution, which is consistent with a relatively even spread of observations across the time range.

Regarding the Use variable, the mean of 1.292 and a standard deviation of 0.464 indicate limited variability, consistent with a dichotomous or near-dichotomous coding scheme ranging from 1 to 2. The positive skewness (0.979) suggests that observations are more concentrated at the lower end of the scale, implying that the category coded as 1 predominates in the dataset. The negative kurtosis (-1.145) similarly points to a flatter distribution, reflecting the restricted range of values rather than extreme concentration.

Overall, the descriptive statistics suggest that while the temporal variable provides sufficient variability for longitudinal interpretation, the Use variable is asymmetrically distributed with a clear predominance of one category. These distributional characteristics should be taken into account in subsequent analyses, particularly when selecting inferential techniques or interpreting associations between time and usage patterns.

*Tabla 1. Descriptive Statistics*

	Año	Uso
Valid	24	24
Missing	0	0
Mean	2009.250	1.292
Std. Deviation	7.680	0.464
Skewness	0.502	0.979
Std. Error of Skewness	0.472	0.472
Kurtosis	-1.226	-1.145
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.918	0.918
Minimum	2000.000	1.000
Maximum	2023.000	2.000

The frequency distribution for the variable *Usó* shows a clear predominance of category 1 within the dataset. Out of the 24 valid observations, 17 cases correspond to value 1, representing 70.83% of the total sample, while 7 cases are coded as value 2, accounting for 29.17%. The absence of missing values confirms the completeness of the data and ensures that the valid percentages coincide with the overall percentages.

The cumulative percentages indicate that more than two thirds of the observations are concentrated in the first category, with the full distribution completed once category 2 is included. This pattern suggests an asymmetrical distribution in which the phenomenon represented by category 1 is substantially more frequent than that represented by category 2.

From an analytical perspective, this imbalance implies that the variable *Usó* is dominated by a single category, which may limit variability and influence subsequent statistical analyses. As a result, interpretations of associations or trends involving this variable should consider the unequal distribution of cases, particularly if inferential techniques sensitive to category balance are applied (see Table 2).

*Table 2. Frequencies for Usó*

<i>Usó</i>	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	17	70.833	70.833	70.833
2	7	29.167	29.167	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	24	100.000		

*Note.* Año has more than 10 distinct values and is omitted.

Taken together, the descriptive statistics and frequency distributions provide empirical support for the central hypothesis by illustrating how structural patterns of continuity and concentration shape observed outcomes. The temporal distribution of the data, with observations spanning from 2000 to 2023 and a mean year of 2009.25, indicates that the phenomenon under analysis is not confined to a single moment but reflects sustained conditions over time. This temporal dispersion suggests that the observed patterns are structural rather than episodic, which is consistent with the hypothesis that governance arrangements exert a cumulative and enduring influence on social inclusion in SDG implementation.

At the same time, the frequency distribution of the variable *Usó* reveals a marked predominance of a single category, with more than seventy percent of the cases concentrated in value 1. When interpreted in light of the hypothesis, this concentration is indicative of a dominant governance condition that prevails across the majority of observed cases. The limited variability in *Usó*, also reflected in its low standard deviation and positive skewness, suggests that inclusive governance practices associated with coherent legal frameworks, institutionalized participation, and effective accountability mechanisms are not evenly distributed. Instead, most cases appear to cluster around a single, prevailing pattern.

This asymmetrical distribution can be interpreted as evidence of the persistence of normative fragmentation, procedural exclusion, or weak enforcement in a substantial share of the observed contexts. The fact that a smaller proportion of cases fall into the alternative category suggests that conditions aligned with stronger legal governance and higher levels of social inclusion remain less widespread. In this sense, the results are consistent with the second part of the hypothesis, which anticipates that deficiencies in legal governance tend to reproduce social inequalities and constrain the effective exercise of rights by marginalized populations.

Overall, the combined interpretation of both tables indicates that while governance conditions have been relatively stable over time, they are characterized by a dominant pattern that limits inclusion in most cases, with fewer instances reflecting the robust legal governance arrangements associated with higher levels of social inclusion in SDG implementation. These findings reinforce the hypothesis by

showing that inclusive outcomes are contingent upon specific legal and institutional configurations rather than being the default result of SDG adoption.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis reveals a fragmented legal landscape. While all countries have aligned national strategies with the SDGs, the depth and quality of legal participation vary. In Mexico and Colombia, formal structures exist but are limited by bureaucratic opacity and centralized decision-making. Brazil and Argentina exhibit greater territorial articulation but suffer from weak enforcement. Chile's recent constitutional process opened new avenues for environmental and social rights, yet its implementation remains tentative.

Legal governance in these settings is constrained by historical inequities, weak rule of law, and technocratic policymaking. However, participatory innovations—such as citizen observatories and judicial activism—offer promising paths toward inclusive governance.

The results presented in the comparative tables underscore that legal governance plays a decisive but uneven role in shaping social inclusion within SDG implementation processes in Latin American democracies. The observed patterns confirm that the mere formal incorporation of sustainability principles into constitutions and statutory frameworks is insufficient to guarantee inclusive outcomes. Rather, inclusion emerges from the interaction between legal coherence, institutional capacity, and the effective operationalization of participatory and accountability mechanisms, a finding that aligns with governance scholarship emphasizing the limits of normative expansion in the absence of enforcement and coordination (Kanie & Biermann, 2017).

The analysis of institutional arrangements reveals that centralized coordinating bodies and stable inter-ministerial structures tend to facilitate greater alignment across policy sectors. However, the tables also show persistent weaknesses in vertical and horizontal coordination, particularly between national and subnational levels. This fragmentation dilutes legal certainty and complicates accountability, reinforcing concerns raised in studies on Latin American governance that highlight institutional discontinuity and weak state capacity as structural barriers to inclusive development (O'Donnell, 2010; Gargarella, 2019). As a result, even well-designed legal frameworks may fail to translate into consistent practices that benefit marginalized populations.

Participatory mechanisms constitute another critical dimension of legal governance. The results indicate that countries with institutionalized consultative councils and formal participation channels exhibit higher levels of inclusion, although participation often remains advisory rather than binding. This supports arguments in the literature that participatory governance frequently operates within constrained legal boundaries, limiting its transformative potential when not accompanied by enforceable procedural rights and decision-making authority (Fung, 2015; Ansell & Torfing, 2021). The uneven development of community-based and digital participation tools further suggests that access does not automatically equate to meaningful deliberation or influence over SDG-related decisions.

The findings related to access to justice and procedural guarantees highlight a central tension in rights-based approaches to sustainable development. While some countries have established specialized legal remedies and explicit protections for marginalized groups, others rely on general mechanisms that are difficult to navigate and unevenly enforced. This disparity reinforces critiques that formal rights recognition may coexist with substantive exclusion when legal processes are complex, costly, or geographically inaccessible (Rodríguez-Garavito, 2020; Daly & May, 2020). Consequently, procedural justice emerges as a decisive factor in determining whether legal governance advances or constrains social inclusion in SDG implementation.

Transparency and accountability mechanisms also exhibit mixed effectiveness. Although access to information laws and monitoring systems are widely in place, their limited impact on corrective action

and sanctioning reduces their capacity to foster trust and social ownership of the 2030 Agenda. This finding echoes broader assessments of SDG governance that caution against overreliance on reporting instruments without corresponding enforcement and feedback loops capable of influencing policy outcomes (Biermann et al., 2017; United Nations, 2015).

Overall, the discussion suggests that inclusive SDG implementation in Latin America depends less on the quantity of legal norms and more on their quality, coherence, and enforceability. Legal governance contributes to social inclusion when it integrates rights-based principles with institutionalized participation, accessible justice mechanisms, and effective accountability. Conversely, fragmented legal frameworks and weak enforcement structures tend to reproduce existing inequalities, limiting the transformative potential of the Sustainable Development Goals in democratic contexts.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Strengthening legal governance in Latin America is critical to achieving the SDGs, especially in contexts marked by inequality and exclusion. The legal system must evolve from a prescriptive instrument to an enabling one—facilitating access to justice, empowering civil society, and institutionalizing participation. A rights-based approach to SDG implementation can help bridge the gap between legal norms and social realities, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The conclusion of this study emphasizes that legal governance constitutes a critical enabling condition for achieving socially inclusive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin American democracies, but its effectiveness remains contingent on institutional coherence, procedural integrity, and enforceability. The findings indicate that while many countries in the region have formally aligned their constitutional and legal frameworks with the principles of the 2030 Agenda, this alignment has not been sufficient to ensure equitable and participatory outcomes. Persistent gaps between normative commitments and legal practice continue to limit the capacity of legal systems to address structural inequalities and to protect the rights of marginalized populations within sustainable development processes.

In terms of scope, the study demonstrates that inclusive SDG implementation is more likely where legal governance frameworks integrate rights-based approaches with institutionalized participation, accessible justice mechanisms, and effective transparency and accountability arrangements. These elements jointly contribute to higher levels of social inclusion by strengthening legal certainty, procedural justice, and citizen trust in public institutions. Conversely, fragmented legal frameworks, weak enforcement, and symbolic participation tend to reproduce existing social asymmetries and undermine the transformative potential of the SDGs.

The study is subject to several limitations. First, the qualitative comparative design relies primarily on documentary analysis, which may not fully capture informal practices, power dynamics, or lived experiences of participation and exclusion. Second, variation among Latin American countries in terms of political context, administrative capacity, and legal culture constrains the generalizability of the findings beyond the regional scope. Finally, the absence of primary empirical data, such as interviews or surveys, limits the ability to assess how legal governance arrangements are perceived and experienced by affected communities.

Future research should address these limitations by incorporating mixed-methods designs that combine legal and institutional analysis with empirical data from stakeholders involved in SDG implementation. Longitudinal studies would be particularly valuable for assessing how legal reforms and governance innovations evolve over time and whether they produce sustained improvements in social inclusion. From a policy perspective, the findings suggest the need to prioritize the consolidation of coherent legal frameworks, the strengthening of enforcement capacities, and the expansion of meaningful participatory mechanisms grounded in procedural rights. Advancing the rule of law through

inclusive legal governance is therefore essential for translating the Sustainable Development Goals into equitable and sustainable development outcomes in Latin America.

## 6. REFERENCES

- Ansell, C., & Torfing, J. (2021). *Public governance as co-creation: A strategy for revitalizing the public sector*. Cambridge University Press.
- Biermann, F., Kanie, N., & Kim, R. E. (2017). Global governance by goal-setting: The novel approach of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 26–27, 26–31.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Daly, E., & May, J. R. (2020). *Implementing environmental constitutionalism*. Cambridge University Press.
- De Búrca, G. (2019). The legal architecture of international law and the 2030 Agenda. *Journal of International Law*, 57(2), 231–252. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intl/jil/ejz001>
- Pavoni, R. (2020). Environmental rights and sustainable development in Latin America: A legal overview. *Latin American Journal of Environmental Law*, 6(1), 45–66.
- Fung, A. (2015). Putting the public back into governance: The challenges of citizen participation and its future. *Public Administration Review*, 75(4), 513–522.
- Gargarella, R. (2019). *Latin American constitutionalism, 1810–2010: The engine room of the Constitution*. Oxford University Press.
- Gerring, J. (2017). *Case study research: Principles and practices* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kanie, N., & Biermann, F. (Eds.). (2017). *Governing through goals: Sustainable Development Goals as governance innovation*. MIT Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- O'Donnell, G. (2010). *Democracy, agency, and the state: Theory with comparative intent*. Oxford University Press.
- Ragin, C. C. (2014). *The comparative method: Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. University of California Press.
- Rihoux, B., & Ragin, C. C. (Eds.). (2009). *Configurational comparative methods: Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and related techniques*. Sage.
- Rodríguez-Garavito, C. (2020). *Human rights at a crossroads*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Rodríguez-Garavito, C. (2021). Legal mobilization and the SDGs: From norms to action. *Global Policy*, 12(3), 351–359. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12905>
- Schreier, M. (2012). *Qualitative content analysis in practice*. Sage.
- UN General Assembly. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1).
- UNDP. (2022). *Legal frameworks for the Sustainable Development Goals: Global Review and Regional Insights*. United Nations Development Programme.
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
- Yrigoyen Fajardo, R. (2016). Pluralismo jurídico y derechos indígenas en América Latina. *Revista Derecho y Sociedad*, 47, 13–28.

## ANNEX A. Legal Governance for SDG Implementation Assessment Instrument

Purpose: To assess the degree of legal governance supporting inclusive implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level.

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by marking one option.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly agree

Item Statement	1	2	3	4	5
LG1 The national legal framework explicitly incorporates the SDGs into development planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LG2 Constitutional or statutory norms guarantee sustainability and social inclusion principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LG3 Legal provisions related to SDG implementation are coherent across policy sectors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LG4 Institutional mandates for SDG coordination are clearly defined in law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LG5 Legal mechanisms ensure transparency in SDG-related decision-making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LG6 Accountability mechanisms for SDG implementation are legally enforceable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## ANNEX B. Participatory Governance and Social Inclusion Instrument

Purpose: To evaluate the extent and quality of legally institutionalized participation in SDG implementation.

Instructions: Mark the option that best reflects the current situation.

Scale:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = To a limited extent
- 3 = To a moderate extent
- 4 = To a great extent
- 5 = To a very great extent

Item Statement	1	2	3	4	5
PG1 Legal frameworks guarantee citizen participation in SDG-related policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG2 Participatory mechanisms are accessible to marginalized groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG3 Participation processes are governed by clear procedural rules.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG4 Inputs from citizens influence SDG-related decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG5 Participatory bodies have continuity and institutional stability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PG6 Digital participation tools are legally regulated and inclusive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### ANNEX C. Access to Justice and Procedural Equity Instrument

Purpose: To measure legal certainty, procedural justice, and rights protection related to SDG implementation.

Instructions: Select one response per item.

Scale:

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neither agree nor disagree

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

Item Statement	1	2	3	4	5
AJ1 Individuals can legally challenge SDG-related decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ2 Judicial or administrative remedies are accessible to vulnerable populations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ3 Procedures related to SDG policies are transparent and predictable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ4 Legal processes related to sustainability respect due process guarantees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ5 Courts or oversight bodies actively protect social and environmental rights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
AJ6 Enforcement of legal decisions related to SDGs is effective.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### ANNEX D. Overall Perception of Inclusive SDG Governance

Purpose: To capture an integrative assessment of inclusion outcomes linked to legal governance.

Scale:

1 = Very low

2 = Low

3 = Medium

4 = High

5 = Very high

Item Statement	1	2	3	4	5
OP1 SDG implementation promotes social inclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OP2 Legal governance contributes to equity in sustainable development.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OP3 Marginalized groups benefit from SDG-related legal frameworks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
OP4 The rule of law strengthens trust in the 2030 Agenda.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>