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Shaping Africa's B20 Legacy: Lessons from the Sanlam ESG Barometer Launch

The 7 October launch of the **Sanlam ESG Barometer: B20 Policy Impact Special Report** convened business and government leaders around a simple proposition: Africa is no longer on the sidelines of global policy; it is helping to shape it. With South Africa hosting the first B20 on the continent alongside its G20 presidency, the task now is to turn well-argued recommendations into policies that travel from a communiqué to tangible implementation on the ground.

WHAT THE LAST THREE PRESIDENCIES TAUGHT US.

Indonesia (2022) showed how to plant seeds that outlive the summit year. By creating the **One Global Women Empowerment (OGWE)** initiative and the **Carbon Centre of Excellence**, it converted priorities, women's economic participation and credible carbon markets, into platforms that continue to mobilise partners. India (2023) proved that specificity unlocks adoption. Its B20, led by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**, advanced the **Global Biofuel Alliance** and a framework for **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**, both endorsed by G20 leaders. India also championed Africa's representation; the **African Union** became a permanent G20 member, widening the aperture for Global South priorities. Brazil (2024) focused on sustainability, hunger eradication and gender inclusion. Its B20 tabled **10 headline recommendations; three were fully adopted** by G20 leaders, on inclusive growth and poverty reduction, a fair net-zero transition, and women's economic empowerment, while seven received partial endorsement in the Rio Leaders' Declaration. Across these cycles, one theme repeats: adoption follows alignment, clarity and continuity.

ALIGN AMBITION WITH THE G20 AGENDA.

Recommendations gain traction when they mirror the host's priorities rather than compete with them. Indonesia leaned into digital transformation and green transition; India into inclusive growth and digital access; Brazil into food security and sustainable finance. For South Africa, the fit is natural: **inclusive growth for people and planet**, climate resilience, energy security and financial inclusion are core African challenges with global relevance. Translate continental needs into solutions the G20 is already primed to advance, and adoption odds rise sharply.

DESIGN FOR IMPLEMENTATION, NOT ASPIRATION.

G20 leaders act on proposals that show how they will be delivered. Indonesia and Brazil succeeded when recommendations arrived with mechanisms, funds, alliances and platforms that could be integrated into existing G20 processes. When Brazil argued for reforming multilateral development banks to mobilise private capital for climate and development, the G20 responded with a concrete roadmap. South Africa's taskforces can emulate this by offering ready-to-adopt

blueprints, an **African green infrastructure facility**, an **African Digital Public Goods network**, or a **continent-wide women-in-trade accelerator**, so ministers have vehicles, not just visions, to endorse.

MAKE PROGRESS MEASURABLE.

Targets convert good ideas into accountable commitments. India's call to triple global renewables by 2030 gave leaders a line of sight for delivery; Brazil pressed for integrity indicators to track ethical governance. For South Africa, each flagship proposal should name the outcome (jobs created, households electrified, finance mobilised, SMEs onboarded), the timeline and the entity accountable. What gets measured is more likely to get done.

BUILD LEGACY PLATFORMS FOR CONTINUITY.

The most durable impact comes from initiatives that persist beyond the host year. OGWE, the Carbon Centre of Excellence, India's **B20 Global Institute**, Brazil's **Climate Policy Hub** and **SheLeads B20** show how institutional homes sustain momentum, attract partners and evolve with evidence. South Africa can leave its mark by anchoring **Africa-based legacy institutions**, an ESG Investment Hub or a Just Energy Transition Platform that future G20 presidencies can continue to resource and reference. That is how a 12-month mandate becomes a decade of outcomes.

BROADEN COALITIONS TO DEEPEN LEGITIMACY.

Proposals co-created with labour, SMEs, civil society, academia and development finance institutions carry greater political weight. India's DPI success rested on that breadth; so did Brazil's food security agenda. South Africa should convene across sectors early, publish drafts for comment and codify roles for non-business partners in implementation. When more people own the idea, more actors help deliver it, and leaders are less inclined to ignore it.

FRAME AFRICA'S PRIORITIES AS GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS.

Water security, youth employment, resilient infrastructure and financial inclusion are not parochial asks; they are global stabilisers. Positioning African solutions as **global public goods** invites co-investment and invites G20 members to see their own interests reflected in Africa's progress. The message is: Africa's growth is a shared resilience strategy.

LEAD THROUGH TRUST AND EXAMPLE.

Even a technically excellent proposal falters without trust between business and the state. South Africa's B20 can reset the tone by modelling transparency, inviting scrutiny, and demonstrating that profit and public purpose can coexist. Co-ownership with government counterparts, joint announcements, shared dashboards and public reporting signals seriousness about delivery.

A CHANCE TO GO BEYOND.

This is South Africa's moment to move the B20 from policy influence to inclusive impact. The playbook is clear: align with G20 priorities, design concrete mechanisms, set measurable targets, institutionalise through legacy platforms, widen coalitions, frame proposals as global goods, and build trust through action. If Indonesia taught continuity, India implementation and Brazil alignment, South Africa can teach the world how the B20 turns recommendations into results felt in townships, villages and cities, and how an African presidency leaves a legacy that endures long after the summit banners come down.



To view the results, visit
www.sanlamesgbarometer.co.za/B20

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