

The Role of Trust in B20 Collaboration

Under South Africa's G20 presidency, the B20 has created a platform to find common ground and build trust between private sector and governments in Africa, said Gaffar Hassam, executive corporate affairs and strategy at SanlamAllianz.

Speaking at the recent launch of the B20 Policy Impact Report, a special edition of the Sanlam ESG Barometer he said, when discussing Africa and South Africa, people often highlight the great opportunities that exist, "from our rich mineral resources to our stunning landscapes and youthful, energetic population".

"These advantages put us in a privileged position compared to other parts of the world. However, despite having these opportunities, we struggle to capitalise on them, and that's where trust and accountability issues come in," said Hassam.

By bringing together private sector and government stakeholders the B20 discussions have shown, he said, that the public and private sector on the continent share a common goal: to improve African economies.

"What's been truly valuable is having these conversations around the table, without letting egos get in the way. On the business side, we're gaining insight into the complexities governments face, and they're recognising that we're not just driven by profit, but also by a desire to contribute to the greater good."

Research conducted by advisory firm Kruthum to produce the B20 Policy Impact Report showed that a solid foundation of trust between government, business, and broader stakeholder groups is essential for B20 proposal adoption and action.

Kruthum impact investing research head Nicole Martens said at the launch of the report that their conversations with B20 stakeholders revealed that the Brazil B20's success, with a record number of proposals adopted, was rooted in a close and trusting relationship between business and government.

"This finding emerged strongly in our research. The understanding of the motive behind a proposal determines its adoption and implementation. Proposals seen as self-serving or irrelevant to the global good are unlikely to be adopted."

It's crucial, she said, that business, government, and key actors trust the genuineness of business motives and their alignment with the public good. Without this trust, proposals risk being dismissed as opportunistic or lacking credibility. Trust is also vital in the implementation phase, as institutions and individuals are unlikely to commit to initiatives they don't trust.

"When trust is present, it fosters collaboration, joint problem-solving, and a willingness to take responsibility for delivery," said Martens.

Reflecting on the relationship between the B20 and G20 this year, Cas Coovadia, B20 South Africa Sherpa, said the trust and collaboration between business and government have been strong. "We made sure to keep government informed about policy discussions in the B20, so they were aware of any potential divergences. This allowed us to address any issues before handing over our recommendations in September. We've also had side events at most ministerials, which will continue until the end of October."

He said the handover of recommendations went well, and the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola noted that the B20 recommendations align with the government's thinking on the G20, with good possibilities for inclusion in the communiqué.

"Moving forward, we need to leverage this momentum to continue working together, particularly on public-private partnerships, which were a key theme in the B20 discussions."

[Full Page Image](#)