



## The Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 13 in “BRICS” Countries” a Scoping Review

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v7i6.2088>

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### **Abstract**

The essence of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ratified by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, is encapsulated in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The present study examines the progress made in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 within the context of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), employing a business and economic perspective. The research methodology employed encompassing a comprehensive review of pertinent literature as well as a meticulous analysis of relevant documentary content. Findings from the study revealed that though businesses in BRICS countries are trying to adopt the United Nations sustainable development goal 13, But there is limited effort in Brazil in the implementation of sustainable development goal 13. In Russia most companies are committed to the implementation of united nations sustainable development goal 13, but this has been constrained by sanction and the war in Ukraine. In addition, Indian companies are fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities viewed through the United Nations sustainable development goal 13. The effort on the part of Chinese companies and the government of China in implementing the United Nations sustainable development goal 13 is commendable as various corporate social responsibility programs and public education have been implemented. In the same vein South African companies have also been seen as very active in the implementation the United Nations sustainable development goal (SDG) 13 by having very important policies built around the goal. Recommendation state that it is imperative that climate change be duly addressed within the overarching vision and objectives of the BRICS businesses as well and there should be a multi-tiered collaboration among BRICS countries to expedite the realisation of the sustainable development goals 13. Equally important harmonisation between governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, and conscientious corporate entities can be instrumental in attaining superior outcomes regarding the sustainable development goal (SDG) 13. Future studies should include and examine more companies and additional countries in terms of overall plans for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Development Goals; BRICS; Global Cooperation*

## ***Introduction***

Adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a plan for peace and prosperity for people and the world, now and in the future. At its core are the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call to action by all developed and developing countries in global cooperation. They recognize that as we tackle climate change and work to protect our oceans and forests, eradicating poverty and other injustices must be coordinated with strategies to improve health and education, reduce inequality and foster economic growth. In this study, the researchers tried to understand the true potential and implementation of the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) through studies on various entities and government of BRICS countries. Although governments play an important role in enforcing international declarations, organisations and companies also play an important role.

Out of the 17 SDGs defined by the United Nations, the study is premised on the 13th sustainable goal, which is concerned with climate action and defined as "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy."

## ***Background of Sustainable Development Goals***

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. The aim is to create global projects that affect the environment, politics and economy we face. Thus, the United Nations voted in 2015 to select 17 internationally applicable goals to change the world and align them with the 2015-2030 global development goals. The Sustainable Development Goals are a commitment to solving the world's most pressing problems, and they are all interconnected. They are a global call to action to address the threat of climate change, influence the way we manage our fragile resources, promote peace and inclusiveness, reduce inequality and contribute to economic prosperity. Since the inception of the Sustainable Development Goals, they have focused on the so-called 2030 Agenda, which offers a model for joint progress in a sustainable world where everyone can do it.

## ***Research Problem***

The Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, as outlined by the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is of paramount importance in ensuring human development prospects. This goal necessitates a multifaceted approach encompassing global ethics, justice, safety, and the preservation of a healthy environment daily. Recent occurrences, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Ukraine-Russia stalemate, have posed significant obstacles in the path of BRIC countries in attaining SDG Goal 13. Nevertheless, numerous recommendations, such as the SDG Compass, have been devised to aid organizations in their pursuit of success. Despite these resources, enterprises and initiatives aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) continue to grapple with the integration of these goals into their operations. Research conducted by Rosati & Faria (2018) underscores one of the primary challenges faced in attaining sustainable development, namely the necessity to adapt business practices, technologies, and strategies accordingly. As a result, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of SDG 13 within the context of the BRICS countries.

## ***Review of Literature***

Premised on this study as stated in the introduction phase of the study. An emphasis is placed on Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The world is on the brink of

climate change and current actions and plans are not enough to solve the problem. The 1.5°C target is dangerous if changes are not made now and within this decade to reduce and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all areas. increasing heat waves, droughts, floods, fires, sea level rise and famine. Exports are expected to decline so far, and just seven years from now, it is expected to nearly halve by 2030. Addressing climate change and its effects by 2030 will require urgent and resilient action to meet the Paris Agreement's commitments to mitigation and adaptation. <https://sdgs.un.org/>. Taking into consideration the ongoing assertion it is important to know that climate change is a real and irrefutable threat to our entire civilisation. If we do not act now, the consequences will be imminent and disastrous. By learning, innovating, and meeting our climate commitments, we can make the changes needed to protect the planet. These changes also present great opportunities to advance our innovation that will create new jobs and support global progress. <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/13-climate-action/>

### The Targets

Everyone can help to make sure that we meet the Global Goals. Use these five targets to create action to combat climate change.

#### Target 13.1



#### Strengthen Resilience and Adaptive Capacity to Climate-Related Disasters

Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

#### Indicators

- Indicator 13.1.1: Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population.
- Indicator 13.1.2: The number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.
- Indicator 13.1.3: Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies.

#### Target 13.2



#### Integrate Climate Change Measures into Policies and Planning

Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

- Indicator 13.2.1: Number of countries with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Indicator 13.2.2: Total greenhouse gas emissions per year.

### Target 13.3



#### Build Knowledge and Capacity to Meet Climate Change

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

- Indicator 13.3.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment.

### Target 13.4



#### Implement the Un Framework Convention on Climate Change

Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalise the Green Climate Fund through its capitalisation as soon as possible.

- Indicator 13.a.1: Amounts provided and mobilised in United State dollars per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilisation goal of the USD 100 billion commitment through 2025.

### Target 13.5



### **Promote Mechanisms to Raise Capacity for Planning and Management**

Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in the least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalised communities.

- Indicator 13.b.1: Number of least developed countries and small island developing states with nationally determined contributions, long-term strategies, national adaptation plans and adaptation communications, as reported to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

### **Discussion on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 13 in BRICS Countries**

For this study, BRICS nation's sustainable development and responses to SDG 13 can be viewed through the lens of one of the key stakeholders such as businesses and their interaction.

#### **Brazil**

Conferring to Leal Filho, Azeiteiro, Alves, Pace, Mifsud, Brandli, Caeiro, and Disterheft (2018) in Brazil it is essential to implement sustainable development goals at all levels of society, both for individuals and businesses in the public sector. For this study and taking into consideration Brazil as a BRICS country some municipalities have been mandated to implement the sustainable development goals. However, there are still few studies dedicated to understanding how organisations are implementing sustainable development goals 13 in Brazil. Rendering Teixeira, Battistelle, Teixeira, Mariano, and Moraes, (2022) institutional pressures have led to the limited adoption of sustainable development goals 13 in the Brazilian context; This, in turn, has led to the use of institutional theory as a framework to identify stakeholders who may be causing stress leading to the implementation and advancement of the sustainable development goals. Notwithstanding the afore-mentioned there has been a limited effort on the part of Brazilian companies in trying to achieve the aims of sustainable development goals through the lens of goal 13. Ali, S Hussain, Zhang, Nurunnabi, & Li, (2018) state that in Brazil selected multinational companies have demonstrated the achievement of the United Nations' main goals for sustainable development. 14 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are included in the mission and vision statement. The most important targets were however goal 8 “good jobs and economic growth” (23%) and goal 16 “peace, justice and strong institutions” (22%) with no emphasis on goal 13 this is worrying when Brazil is seen as a host to the amazon forest. Ali, Hussain, Zhang, Nurunnabi, and Li, (2018) pointed out that Brazilian companies are more focused on economic activities, development of institutions, and securing respectable work opportunities for their people. However, most sustainable development goals especially sustainable development goal 13 are not highlighted in the vision and mission statements of the Brazilian companies.

#### **Russian**

Bestowing to Gracheva and Bobina (n.d.) sustainable development is important for the national competitiveness of the Russian Federation. While the government and large corporations have made progress on the 13th Sustainable Development Goal in recent years, the country still faces major challenges in implementing it. In Russia, most state-owned or state-controlled business leaders are committed to sustainable development (creating impact strategies, allocating resources, and improving the environment). Agreeing to Standard & Poor (2021) stress from global investors goes far beyond reflection on environmental, social, and governance policies. Therefore, companies need to set high standards in nature protection, disseminate knowledge and knowledge on how to solve environmental problems, and lay the foundation for a more prosperous society (Pakhomova,2021). In Russia though companies are

trying to contribute to the reduction of climate change several issues have limited their ability to achieve such aims some of these are but not limited to the conflict in Ukraine. Rendering to Gracheva and Bobina (n.d.) the consequences of military operations in the region pose risks to Russia's sustainable development and uncertainty over the implementation of sustainable development goal 13. War causes air pollution, water pollution, land degradation, waste, threats to biodiversity and forest fires, and unleashes technological disasters that harm the environment without damaging it. Western sanctions and the withdrawal of many international organisations have limited Russia's access to key technologies to monitor and promote sustainable development, as well as financial resources related to environmental, social, and governance policies initiatives and innovations. In addition, Russia's political and economic isolation may hinder the implementation of sustainable development by Russian companies, as Russia may withdraw from its past commitments and obligations and violate international security and environmental laws to prevent damage and destruction associated with sanctions and military conflicts.

## **India**

In recent times, there has been limited recognition of the impact of climate change on India's developmental requirements within the country's local policies and regulations (Dubash & Jogesh, 2014). Nevertheless, over the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift in the awareness of climate change among various non-governmental entities in India, including both national and state governments, as well as the private sector and civil society organisations (ibid.).

In Indian Goal 13 of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), which centers around addressing climate change, has the potential to influence the formulation of national and regional policies. This allows for the identification of key challenges and opportunities to effectively adapt to the impacts of climate change. Given the assertion, the significance of Indian organisations in the context of this study is duly acknowledged. The study focuses on the implementation of sustainable development goal 13 and examines this aspect through the perspective of how Indian corporations allocate funds towards corporate social responsibility activities.

Kaur and Singh (2020) surveyed 266 Indian companies that were below compliance with their corporate social responsibility expenditures during 2015-16. The results revealed that out of these companies, 34 did not allocate any funds towards corporate social responsibility initiatives, while 170 companies fell short of spending half of the designated amount. Furthermore, it was disheartening to discover that numerous prominent multinational corporations (MNCs) in India, including Apple India, Pfizer, BMW India, and Nestle India, have not fulfilled their corporate social responsibility obligations despite having a long history of corporate social responsibility.

In India, numerous organisations such as Oorjan, Log 9, OxyGarden, Skilancer Solar, AirOk, and others have spearheaded initiatives that have significantly contributed to the accomplishment of Sustainable Development Goal 13. <http://icrap.in>

It is commendable that only a handful of Indian companies have undertaken similar environmentally friendly initiatives. Companies such as Bharat Petroleum with its Boond rainwater harvesting project, Tata Power's contributions to energy conservation and Mahseer Fish preservation, L&T's efforts in establishing observation dams, and Mahindra's Hariyali project are highly regarded and occupy the top positions in this list. (Raimi, Akosile, and Adebawo, 2016).

## **China**

Premise on the ongoing deliberation one of the significant imprints of a Chinese organisation in implementing sustainable development goal (SDG)13 is viewed through the lens of integrating the principles of environment, society, and governance (ESG) into all facets of business and management,

while continuously enhancing health management standards and upholding the organisational mission. <https://pic.bankofchina.com/>

The Bank of China strive to execute our duties diligently, ensuring optimum security and warranty provisions, while enhancing the quality and performance of financial services for genuine commercial endeavours and leveraging technology, the bank endeavour to develop exceptional services and offer customers financially viable and superior solutions. Furthermore, The Bank of China actively pursues transformation and innovation initiatives, fostering value creation, and delivering enhanced benefits to business proprietors. The Bank of China ardently promotes green finance, emphasizes climate change mitigation efforts, and provides financial backing for sustainable growth. The bank encourages the generation of novel ideas from its workforce and prioritizes employee training, unequivocally committing ourselves to the growth and development of both the bank and its employees. <https://www.boc.cn/>

It is primarily fair to commend the effort of China in implementing sustainable development goal 13 therefore in reinforcing the preceding assertion, the effort of Chinese government in realising the sustainable development goal 13 can be viewed through the implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing education, training, and advocacy with regards to climate change mitigation, as well as promoting low-carbon development. The concerted efforts of the government, as well as extensive media coverage and support from both businesses and the public, have facilitated the creation of a robust low-carbon energy mix that the entire community is concerned about and engaged in. Notable activities, such as the organisation of carbon monoxide days, themed exhibitions, and community events centered around low-carbon countries, serve as catalysts for public engagement. It is imperative for mainstream and online media outlets to report on significant climate change events, while enterprises actively embrace the principles of green and low-carbon development by pursuing new technologies for achieving low-carbon transformations. Chinese citizens willingly opt for a cost-effective lifestyle when it comes to travel, food, housing, and shopping. (China's Progress Report,2017).

### **South Africa**

With only ten years left to reach the sustainable development goals, world leaders called for ten years of action and sustainable development at a summit in September 2019 (United Nations, 2020). In South Africa businesses believe they have the greatest impact on SDG 13 (Accelerate action to combat climate change and its impacts) and the private sector plays a crucial role in both organizing and executing the sustainable development goals (SDGs), particularly considering the significant impact that trade and commerce have on economic growth as well as social and economic outcomes. As such, the business communities in South Africa have a dual responsibility: firstly, to contribute to addressing worldwide development challenges, and secondly, to harness and capitalize on the potential benefits presented by the environmentally friendly economy. Furthermore, fostering economic cooperation is an essential prerequisite for South Africa's achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) especially goal 13. This collaboration enables the creation of stable, productive, and suitable employment opportunities, drives business success, promotes infrastructure development, and facilitates sustainable growth and innovative opportunities for all (IHRB, 2015; WBCSD, 2016).

The Johannesburg Stock Exchange is currently ranked as the 19th largest stock exchange globally in terms of market capitalization, and it is the largest stock exchange in the African continent, boasting a portfolio of nearly 400 listed companies (Johannesburg Stock Exchange, 2020). In South Africa, Nortje (1997) highlights that the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has taken a pioneering step by mandating listed companies to include sustainability disclosures in their annual reports. This requirement enables stakeholders to assess the company's performance in terms of sustainability. Furthermore, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (2020) fully supports this initiative, as it is the first stock exchange in both the emerging market category and globally to provide a sustainability index. The index is established

based on various indicators that focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of a company's performance. Premised on the ongoing assertion one of the companies that are at the forefront of implementing the sustainable development goal 13 in South Africa is Sibanye-Stillwater which became a member of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) in October 2020. As stakeholders, Sibanye-Stillwater shares their progress in implementing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 and UNGC through the Group's Annual Report (IAR). The fact that Sibanye-Stillwater commitment to the Ten Principles of UNGC has been recognised by the chief executive office, and Sibanye-Stillwater aims to fulfil the communication requirements of the Global Partnership in the 2021 IAR is a clear manifestation of a commitment to sustainable development goals 13.

Sibanye-Stillwater recognises that mining is inherently destructive. Therefore, the company's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategy includes the vision of improving people's lives and the environment that supports their lives. This is done through their commitment to natural resource management, education and inspiration, and the transition to carbon neutrality.

### ***Materials and Methods***

For this research, secondary data sources such as journal articles, government reports, biographies, and other relevant materials were gathered using various search engines. Keywords such as "sustainable development Goal 13 in BRICS Countries" were utilised to retrieve pertinent information. The search was conducted on platforms including Scopus, EBSCO, ABI Inform, as well as free web services such as Google, Google Scholar, and Bing. These databases proved valuable in accessing appropriate online resources.

### ***Results and Recommendations***

It is inferred from the study that while countries such as Russia, China, India, and South Africa exhibits unwavering dedication in their endeavours to implement United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13, Findings postulate government and businesses are committed in the implementation of united nation sustainable development goal (SDG) 13. However, Brazil's efforts in this regard are comparatively limited. Nonetheless, this observation does not negate the fact that the BRICS countries are not at the forefront of sustainable development goal (SDG) 13 implementation.

It is recommended that the businesses in BRICS countries should heighten their focus on sustainable development goal (SDG) 13 as defined by the United Nations. Furthermore, it is strongly advised that the BRICS countries accord a higher degree of significance to the sustainable development goals, as they hold vital importance for enhancing the quality of life. Among these goals, sustainable development goal (SDG) 13, pertaining to "Climate Action," assumes paramount significance for the United Nations, and it is imperative that this issue be duly addressed within the overarching vision and objectives of the BRICS businesses as well. In addition, multi-tiered collaboration among BRICS countries has the potential to expedite the realisation of the sustainable development goal (SDG) 13. The harmonious coordination between governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, conscientious corporate entities, and discerning consumers can be instrumental in attaining superior outcomes.

### ***Conclusion***

The study findings indicate that businesses in BRICS countries are making efforts to align with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13. However, there is a noted lack of focus on sustainable



development goal 13 implementation in Brazil. Russian companies show commitment to this goal, though they face challenges due to sanctions and conflicts in Ukraine. Indian companies are actively engaging in fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities reflected in sustainable development goal 13. Chinese companies and the Chinese government are commended for their noteworthy efforts in implementing sustainable development goal 13 through various CSR programs and public education initiatives. South African companies are also recognized for their proactive approach in aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 13 through the implementation of important policies.

### ***Contributions and Future Direction of Study***

This study holds distinctiveness in its offering of an analytical approach to assess the implementation of sustainable development goals especially goal (SDG) 13 within the BRICS countries. Subsequent research endeavours should encompass additional nations to enable a more extensive examination of the goals' implementation across different contexts.

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