

Access to Electricity: A Pathway between Doing Business and Doing Businesses

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Abstract

In this paper, we examine the implication of getting electricity from the side of simplifying Doing Business. We refer to Doing Business as a package used by international organizations, such as the World Bank, to track the ease of doing business, the regulatory reforms and frameworks, investments, competitiveness, and the business environment. Our view indicates a trend toward establishing an agreed-upon framework so that governments, policy-makers, stakeholders from public and private sectors, and civil society can reference for doing business easier. The outcome data collected depicts a clear improvement in the business environment and that the ease of doing business is regulated based on factors that statistically lead to rank countries, and sometimes tends toward formulate judgments. The findings provide insights into a complexity of establishing an agreed-upon framework, as several international organizations produce indicators to measure different dimensions of doing business. The lack of coordination, the difficulty of obtaining data from all countries, and the complexity of methods used to produce appropriate indicators in a global dynamic economy, present a challenge. Therefore, we propose to coordinate actions and to link the indicators with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. The objective is to consider social, environmental, and economic dimensions in a manner that aligns with the ease of doing business, and to help secure sustainable energy resources.

Key Words: *Doing Business, access to electricity, access to finance, complexity, sustainability, and economic growth.*

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I. Introduction

The modern society is the result of a long process of innovation, which had led to several paths of development. From an innovation perspective, societies changed the social model over time due to the process of innovation. Energy played, and is still playing, a vital role in this process.

The last two centuries have seen the innovation producing a radical change in energy, technology, transportation, communication, as well as the model of society as a whole, which is a result of the development of economic paradigms, and, thus a reconfiguration of the relationships between humans and the environment.

Without debating the lack of an agreed-upon definition of what is Business or a theory of business (Donaldson & P. Walshb, 2015), we can refer to business by any commercial, industrial, or professional activity of an organization or enterprising entity or firm, private or public, carried out on a for-profit or non-profit basis. The innovation and a specific form of competition guide, whatever the actors, or the markets, business and businesses dynamics. (Headd & Saade, 2008).

As response to growing concerns among their forms and locations, especially in a context of globalization and digitalization, business have led changes within communities. In many parts of the world, developments in business expanded on the global economic scale.

Several international organizations operate in the field by producing indicators to help establish a system of measurement so business environment can be evaluated and monitored. Followed by policy-makers, the World Bank produces the famous ease of Doing Business Index (DBI) that scores the best regulatory performance and competitiveness across all economies over time. The World Economic Forum, by its Global competitiveness Index (GCI), also captures data so that leaders from both public and private sectors could better understand the main driver of growth. The GCI aims to improve competitiveness based on 12 pillars that societal actors need to engage in to track progress on all factors of competitiveness (WEF, 2020). Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) also measures different dimensions of doing business. It operates by observing government policies and judge the level of corruption of a country across all sectors (TI, 2021). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, for its part, ranks also economies according to the FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index (FDI Index) that scores the ease of doing business based on measuring statutory restrictions

on foreign direct investment taking into consideration four main types of restrictions (OECD, 2021): foreign equity limitations, screening or approval mechanisms, restrictions on the employment of foreigners, and Operational restrictions.

Starting from October 2003, the World Bank has developed a country’s economic efficiency measurement called the “Doing Business Index.” It does not aim to indicate the level of business, but it helps to track and rank countries, based on several indicators and data.

The methods used to produce the Doing Business indicators can be questionable, as well as their understanding by actors. In addition, regardless the fact that the index formulates a classification or a judgment, the Doing Business Index helps establishing a framework as a quantitative and qualitative basis of measurement. The Index motivates reforms through country benchmarking; it informs the design of reforms; and it is recognized as a highly influential in business regulatory reform around the world (WBG, 2021). Doing business is also about to addressing the guidelines as emerging framework to do businesses, which leads policy makers and other actors to participate in business and to compete more effectively to advance business environment.

The world in which the ease of Doing Business is about to be regulated is also characterized by a major event, “The United Nations Sustainable Development Summit” held in 2015. The Summit constitutes a success since all member countries agreed, and for the first time, to accept sustainable development as a vision of the world but also as a common project for humanity. The concept takes form more as a new paradigm of society that presents representations in disciplines and understanding of the world (Hotyat, Amat, & Benest, 2009).

The summit which allowed the adoption of the agenda 2030 for sustainable development by member countries of the United Nations, includes 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) with targets, goals that chronologically completing the task of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also developed by the United Nations between 2006 and 2015. The Goal 7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (UN, 2015).

II. Tracking Businesses While Tracking Electricity Access:

The World Economic Forum (WEF) defines competitiveness as a set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of a country (WEF, 2014). It regards institutions and infrastructure, such as transportation, energy, water, and telecommunications, as well as economic policies, as the most important pillars of a country’s competitiveness and productivity. It also confirms the necessity to upgrade infrastructure to help accelerate energy transition and broaden access to electricity, and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (WEF, 2020).

Figure 1 : Pillars of competitiveness and productivity

Institutions	Infrastructure	Macroeconomic environment	Health & primary education	Higher education & training
Innovation	COMPETITIVENESS			Goods market efficiency
Business sophistication	Market Size	Technological readiness	Financial market development	Labor market efficiency

Source: (WEF, Methodology: The 12 pillars of competitiveness, 2014)

Doing Business is also a total factor productivity tracker which is a highly influential model and a business regulatory reform worldwide. It measures business activity for opening a business, getting a location, accessing finance, dealing with day-to-day operations, and operating in a secure business environment (WBG, 2020). Acquiring and continuously updating the process is a normality regarding the obligation to integrate the developments affecting global economy and reforms, at both national and international levels so that can assist decision makers to formulate coherent policies.

Tackling complex policy challenges in a changing world of businesses and business environment calls for a methodology expansions of Doing Business over time. Three phases are retained in order to tackle the complexity that requires innovative thinking, data, and integrated policies. The table below describes the phases in further detail.

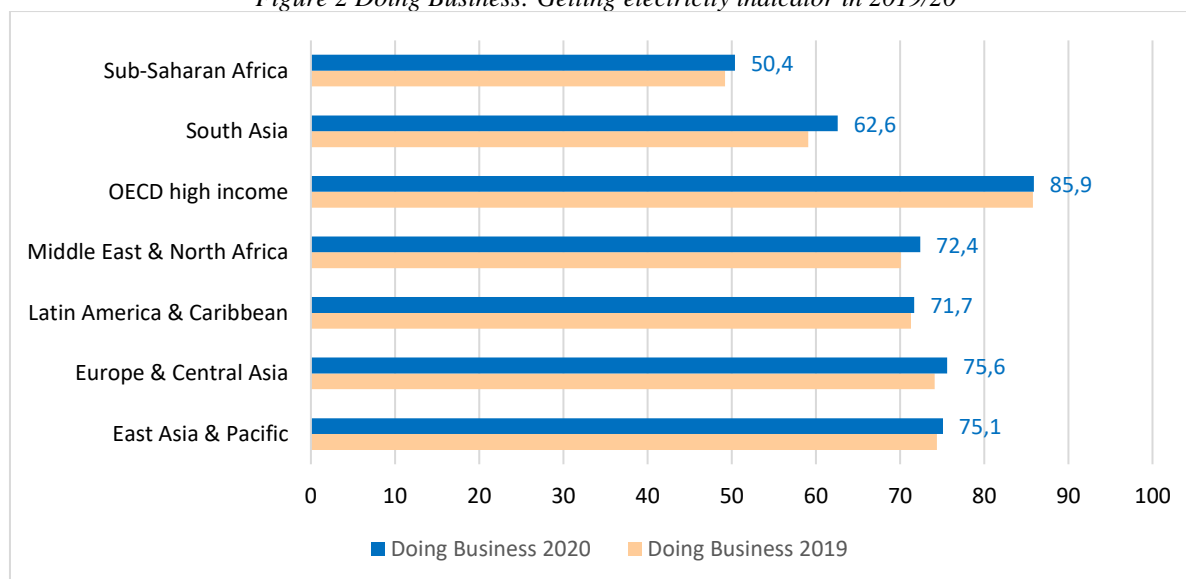
Table 1 Methodology expansions of Doing Business starting from 2004 to 2020

DB Year for Methodology	Doing Business topics									
	Starting a Business	Dealing with Construction Permits	Getting Electricity	Registering Property	Getting Credit	Protecting Minority Investors	Paying Taxes	Trading across Borders	Enforcing Contracts	Resolving Insolvency
Doing Business 2004-2014	- For men and women: - Procedures - Time - Cost - Paid-in minimum capital	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Strength of legal rights index - Depth of credit information index	- Extent of disclosure index (0-10) - Extent of director liability index (0-10) - Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10)	- Payments - Time - Total tax rate	- Documents to export - Time to export - Cost to export - Documents to import - Time to import - Cost to import	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Recovery rate - Strength of insolvency framework index
Doing Business 2015	- For men and women: - Procedures - Time - Cost - Paid-in minimum capital	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Procedures - Time - Cost	EXTENSION: Strength of legal rights index expanded from 10 to 12 points EXTENSION: Depth of credit information index expanded from 6 to 8 points	- Extent of disclosure index (0-10) - Extent of director liability index (0-10) - Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10) NEW: - Extent of shareholder rights index (0-6) - Extent of ownership and control index (0-7) - Extent of corporate transparency index (0-7)	- Payments - Time - Total tax rate	- Documents to export - Time to export - Cost to export - Documents to import - Time to import - Cost to import	- Procedures - Time - Cost	- Recovery rate - Strength of insolvency framework index
Doing Business 2016-2020	- For men and women: - Procedures - Time - Cost - Paid-in minimum capital	- Procedures - Time - Cost NEW: Building quality control index	- Procedures - Time - Cost NEW: Reliability of supply and transparency of tariff index	- Procedures - Time - Cost NEW: Quality of the land administration index	- Strength of legal rights index expanded from 10 points to 12 - Depth of credit information index expanded from 6 points to 8	- Extent of disclosure index (0-10) - Extent of director liability index (0-10) - Ease of shareholder suits index (0-10) - Extent of shareholder rights index (0-6) - Extent of ownership and control index (0-7) - Extent of corporate transparency index (0-7)	- Payments - Time - Total tax rate NEW: Postfiling index	NEW CASE SCENARIO: - Time to export - Documentary compliance - Border compliance - Cost to export - Documentary compliance - Border compliance - Time to import - Documentary compliance - Border compliance - Cost to import - Documentary compliance - Border compliance	- Time - Cost NEW: Quality of judicial processes index	- Recovery rate - Strength of insolvency framework index

Source: World Bank data set, 2020.

From the view of firms, and according to the edition 2020 of the World Bank Enterprise Survey¹, electricity indicators track the procedures, time and cost that are related to access to regular and stable electricity for any new construction. Since 2015, the indicators also measure the access to a reliable electricity supply, and transparency of tariffs index, and safety of connection (WB, 2019). Moreover, the data collected from the 190 member economies of the World Bank indicate that access to electricity indicators helps track the performance of the electricity sector (Geginat & Ramalho, 2018) by considering that the electricity sector is one of the most regulated economic activities. Thus, the quality of regulatory institutions is highly considered in the process (WB, 2019).

Figure 2 Doing Business: Getting electricity indicator in 2019/20



Source: World Bank Data, (WB, 2020) - (www.doingbusiness.org)

¹ Link to the World Bank Enterprise Survey – Getting Electricity Questionnaire: <https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/pdf/db2020/DB20-Getting-Electricity-Questionnaire.pdf>

The Doing Business – Getting electricity indicator reveals a regional disparity in terms of access to electricity. OECD high income ranks first with a score of 85.9, which make it 14.1 away percentage points away from the best regulatory performance. Europe and Central Asia are second with a score of 75.6. East Asia and Pacific ranks third at 75.1, followed by the Middle East and North Africa region with a score of 72.4. Latin America & Caribbean ranks fifth at 71.7, followed by South Asia (62.6) and then Sub-Saharan Africa at the bottom with a score of 50.4.

However, South Asia region recorded an increase in getting electricity indicator by 5.6 percent in 2020 compared to 2019; Middle East and North Africa 3.2 percent; Sub-Saharan Africa 2.4 percent; Europe and Central Asia 2 percent; East Asia and Pacific 0.9 percent; Latin America and Caribbean 0.6 percent; and OECD high income region gaining 0.1 percent in 2020 compared to 2019.

Table 2 Top 20 countries on Doing Business (Getting Electricity)

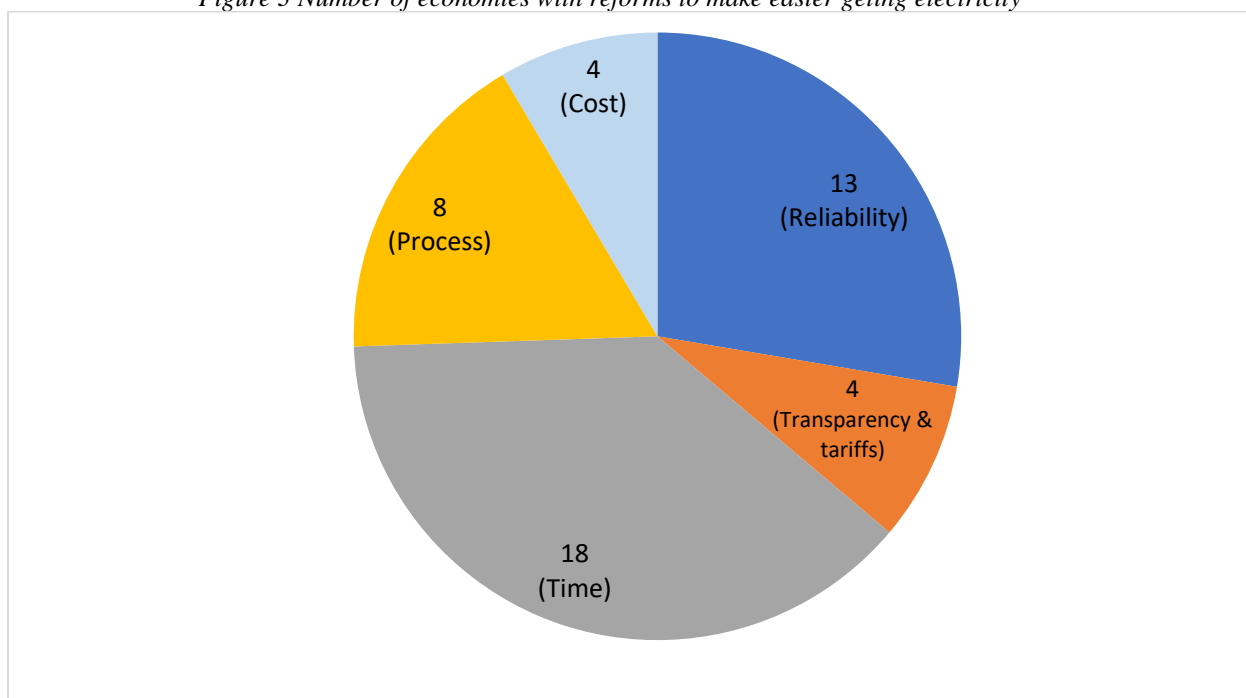
High performers	Score (0-100)	Procedures (number)	Time (days)	Cost (% of income per capita)	Reliability index (0-8)
United Arab Emirates	100	2	7	0.0	8
Korea, Rep.	99,9	3	13	34.3	8
China	99,3	2	32	0.0	7
Malaysia	99,3	3	24	25.6	8
Germany	98,8	3	28	37.0	8
Thailand	98,7	2	30	3.9	8
Japan - Osaka	97,8	2	104	0.0	8
Russian Federation	97,5	2	38	4.7	8
United Kingdom	96,9	3	46	23.1	8
Liechtenstein*	96,3	3	52	7.9	8
Taiwan, China	96,3	3	22	37.0	7
Sweden	96,2	3	52	29.3	8
Czech Republic	95,6	3	58	23.1	8
Switzerland	94,4	3	39	57.2	7
Japan	93,2	2	104	0.0	8
Lithuania	92,9	3	82	33.6	8
Iceland	92,2	4	22	10.3	7
France	92	4	53	5.0	8
Saudi Arabia	91,8	2	35	27.9	6
Singapore	91,8	4	26	22.0	7

Source: World Bank Data, 2020. (www.doingbusiness.org)

The top five performers in getting electricity Doing Business index are United Arab Emirates with a score of 100, and then Republic of Korea, China, Malaysia, and Germany. The 20 economies shown in the table are the top performers in the index. Overall, they share the same fast process linking the four main pillars about connection to electricity.

Doing Business motivates countries to reduce regulatory complexity and cost. In 2018/19, about 34 economies implemented business regulatory reforms in order to make easier getting electricity. Across the five main areas of getting electricity (transparency of tariffs included here), 18 economies implemented reforms in reducing time to obtain a new connection to electricity, 13 economies in improving reliability of supply, eight economies in streamlining approval process, four economies in cost reduction, and four economies in transparency and tariffs.

Figure 3 Number of economies with reforms to make easier getting electricity



- Economies reduced time to obtain a new connection
- Economies streamlined approval process
- Economies reduced connection costs
- Economies improved reliability of supply
- Economies improved transparency of tariffs

Source: (WBG, Business Reforms, 2019)

Doing Business Data show an improvement in the process of getting electricity. The measurement of electricity connection process indicates numerous reforms aimed to make easier getting electricity. In 2018/19, reforms concerned regulatory frameworks related to the main components: obtaining electricity in terms of connection and delays in time, delivery process, tariffs and costs. Economies from different regions such as Albania, Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Kosovo, Rwanda, Serbia, Uganda, Ukraine, implemented reforms in 2018/19 to improve reliability of supply. In addition, Cabo Verde, China, El Salvador, Kuwait, Lithuania, Morocco, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, streamlined their approval process. Countries such Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Lithuania, Togo reduced their connection costs. Furthermore, the Bahamas, China, Egypt, Pakistan improved transparency of tariffs; and economies such as Bahrain, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ghana, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Russian, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, and others, reduced time to obtain a new connection.

The table below summarizes for each area of getting electricity, the economies implemented reforms in the field.

Table 3 Economies implanted reforms in getting electricity

Area of getting electricity	Initiators
Improved reliability of supply	Albania; Costa Rica; Egypt; Indonesia; Kenya; Kosovo; Kyrgyz Republic; Lao PDR; Malta; Rwanda; Serbia; Uganda; Ukraine
Improved transparency of tariffs	Bahamas; China; Egypt.; Pakistan
Reduced time to obtain a new connection	Bahrain; Bangladesh; Barbados; Belize; Costa Rica; Eswatini; Ghana; Indonesia; Kuwait; Lao PDR; Morocco; Oman; Pakistan; Poland; Qatar; Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Ukraine
Streamlined approval process	Cabo Verde; China; El Salvador; Kuwait; Lithuania; Morocco; Nigeria; Saudi Arabia
Reduced connection costs	Bangladesh; Cabo Verde; Lithuania; Togo

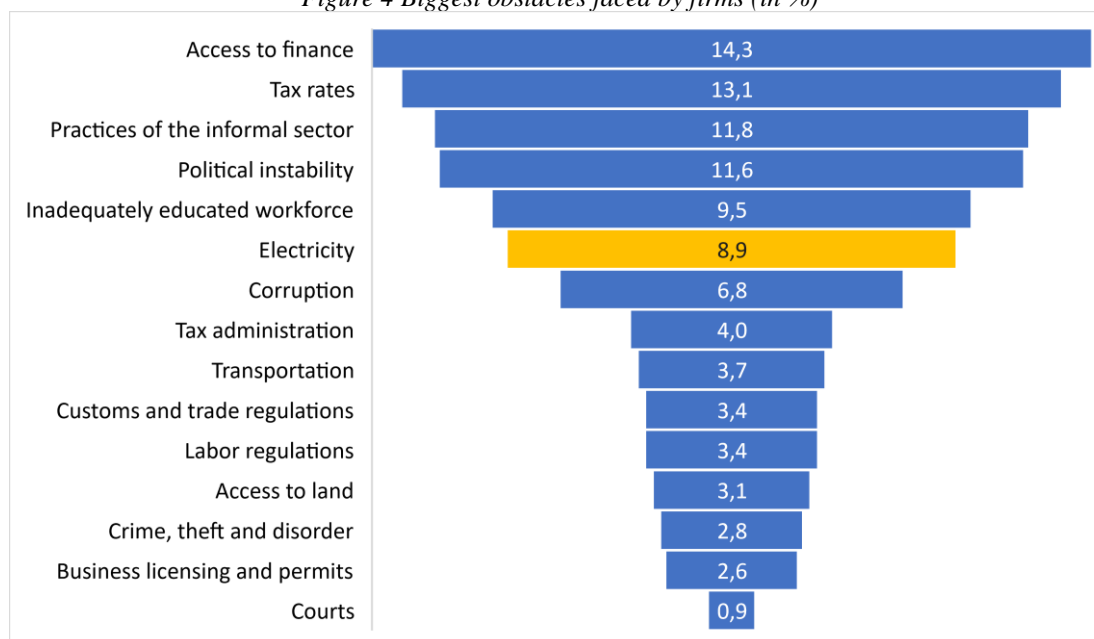
Source: (WBG, Business Reforms, 2019)

However, despite of the fact that Doing Business highlights economies where reforms are enhancing to comply with the requirements for a better and an efficient process for a business, the Word Bank Enterprise Survey already mentioned² indicates that access to electricity stands the sixth biggest obstacle faced by firms. Access to

² Link to the World Bank Enterprise Survey – Getting Electricity Questionnaire:

finance comes the first in the ranking, followed by tax rates, then informal sector, political stability, and poorly or inadequately educated workforce.

Figure 4 Biggest obstacles faced by firms (in %)



Source: (Enterprise Survey, 2020) (<http://www.enterprisesurveys.org>), The World Bank.

III. Make easier business to obtain easier finance:

As business is universal, the World Bank's indicator of Doing Business seems to be more than a simple global indicator that tracks how easy for an entity to run a company. It also tracks the level of investments in a business climate, which makes it easier for doing business in a country. Today, it is much easier to formulate a strong framework that aims to faster the future growth of countries by improving the ease of doing business.

Several factors highlight benefits and disadvantages in business. The geographic location, for instance, and availability of natural resources could give more advantages to a country's economic system. The World Bank attempted, via the Doing Business indicator, to establish an operational framework to measure the ease of doing business by combining 12 key factors in its annual report. These factors are also considered as 12 pillars of competitiveness which are grouped into four major categories: opening a business, getting a location, accessing finance, dealing with day-to-day operations, and operating in a secure business environment.

It is well accepted that access to finance is crucial for economic growth, for the private sector and economies development (IFC, 2010). The World Bank considers Doing Business as a collection of tools to establish a system of credit. A system that covers aspects that helps a country to access to finance, and protect small-scale investments. To act in this field, Doing Business measures the legal rights of borrowers and lenders using indicators evaluating and monitoring transactions and finance between actors. These legal rights aim to secure transactions (or collateral) law and bankruptcy laws, so guarantee will be provided, assets movable and used, and then landing can be facilitated (WB, 2021).

The more a country establishes reforms and facilitates doing business, the more permissions to additional borrowing permissions will get. In developing countries, capital stock of business in movable assets are around an average of 78 percent, while 22 percent are immovable property. Moreover, while lenders consider movable property in developing countries as unacceptable regarding to problems of protection and nonpossessionary interests, the modern secured transactions system helps economies so they can easily use assets as collateral (WB, 2021). In developing countries, research findings describe that, borrowers with collateral get access to credit, nine time more than to those without, and benefit from repayment periods up to 11 times as much and up to 50 percent of decrease in interest rates.

IV. The rise of the complexity:

As a result of the developments of global events such as the development of sciences and innovations, technologies, digitalization, and also the development of human activity on the Earth, the global context has become more dynamic. In this context, getting and producing information and statistics led to a critical decision-making for different actors from both public and private sectors. The challenge is also in achieving synergistic benefits for governments, policy makers and actors to coordinate actions and policies.

The rise in the complexity is also a result of the necessity in evaluating and monitoring progress towards the Doing Business indicators, in considering the interrelations in-between, but also in considering and tracking the progress taking into account the links with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Moreover, the necessity to coordinate actions and roles between international organizations is fundamental to collaborate effectively and to harmonize frameworks and linkages related to business environment.

The mutations occurring worldwide, scientific developments, economic growth in local and global scales, call for a continuous revision of the way business is measured and the related frameworks are compiled. Data producers have a vital role to play in this process so decision-makers could better understand the system how it is managed.

The World Bank continues to lead its services toward social and environmental sustainability, but also in terms of reporting the ease of doing business. The challenge will be to give more space by considering the social, environmental and economical dimensions in the process.

The importance of trusted data, resources and methods, motivate the World Bank to continue the efforts toward enhancing the quality of the Doing Business Framework. The World Bank, on behalf of the Board of Executive Directors, has taken the decision to discontinue the Doing Business Report, after data irregularities that were reported in June 2020 regarding the reports of 2018 and 2020. The World Bank upholds the need for a new approach to assess the business and investment climate. The World Bank will be able to capitalize on its past experiences and on the database related to Doing Business indicators to produce new generations of tools to measure business and investment, with a more trusted basis that captures a more reliable and accurate representation of business and its effect on society. The data bank and information of the World Bank still a reference for different actors such as governments, organizations, policymakers, private and public sectors, academia, journalists, and many others.

V. Conclusion

The electricity sector is one of the most highly regulated economic activities. It is vital for the economy on a global scale because all business requires electricity to operate. Its policies are also governed all over the world, but getting data and information around electricity is still questioned, as this sector falls subject to price makers and price takers, and subject to public actors and private actors which lead to consider factors that are not perfectly reflected in the price.

The Doing Business framework seems to be useful for all actors to establish a trusted environment for different the actors of public and private sectors, governments and others, so the measurement will be better understood, the evaluation and the monitoring well be more effective, and decisions to investment and doing business will be easier and efficient.

As the easier to get access to electricity the easier business will be, access to finance still the biggest obstacle faced by businesses. Policies and reforms continue to give way to incremental progress over time. However, international organizations, national governments, and actors from private and public sectors are invited to coordinate actions and policies to produce statistical tools, frameworks that aim to better track the progress and measure, in quantity and quality, developments of businesses, investments and business environment. The World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Economic Forum, Transparency International, and also the International Energy Agency, among others, should operate and cooperate within a coordinated framework to help establish agreed-upon definitions of concepts and indicators related to each field. They are also invited to collaborate to create a clear framework ensuring a well understood linkage between indicators, sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda, and to secure sustainable future.

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