

Chapter 2. Eight building blocks for coherent implementation of the SDGs

Enhancing policy coherence is one of the most difficult challenges to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to most Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by UN members to the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF). This chapter looks at plans and initial steps towards adapting institutional frameworks for SDG implementation taken by the 20 OECD countries that have presented VNRs to the HLPF so far: Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. It applies eight key elements of the Framework for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) as a lens to identify good institutional practices for PCSD as required in SDG Target 17.14. The analysis benefits from several examples from the VNRs that serve to illustrate national variations in the approaches and mechanisms used for implementation. This chapter also includes two contributions by two member institutions of the Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development which have developed analytical tools for coherent implementation of the SDGs. This chapter is complemented by country profiles presented in Chapter 3.

Introduction

More than two years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, many countries still face the challenge of effectively organising themselves to ensure an integrated implementation of the SDGs. The complexity of interlinkages among the SDGs is bringing to light new policy interdependencies that challenge sectoral structures and decision making processes in many governments. The 2030 Agenda compels governments to break out of policy and institutional silos and find new ways of working to widen participation, build consensus, create ownership across institutions and actors and ultimately to enhance policy coherence.

According to most of the 65 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by UN members to the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) so far, enhancing policy coherence is one of the most difficult challenges to implementing the SDGs (UNDESA, 2017^[1]). In practice, it entails adjusting structures and decision making processes to effectively integrate sustainable development goals into the mandate of existing institutions, necessitating an administrative culture that promotes cross-sectoral collaboration and is sensitive to the need for global action.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to enhancing policy coherence. Each country must determine its own institutional mechanisms and sequencing of actions. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight diverse experiences with a view to examining what works and what doesn't, and to identify good practices that can inspire other countries to improve their strategic frameworks, strengthen institutional mechanisms and monitoring and reporting systems, find effective ways to address transboundary impacts and ultimately enhance policy coherence in the implementation of the SDGs.

This chapter focuses on institutional mechanisms for policy coherence in SDG implementation. It looks in particular at plans and initial steps towards adapting institutional frameworks for SDG implementation taken by the 20 OECD countries that have presented VNRs to the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) so far: Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. Drawing on the VNRs and other official sources and reports, it highlights institutional mechanisms and practices which could form the basis of good practice guidance or tools for enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD), as called for in SDG target 17.14.

The chapter is structured according to eight elements from the PCSD Framework developed by the OECD in 2016 which are relevant and applicable to countries regardless of their administrative and political traditions (OECD, 2016^[2]): 1) political commitment and leadership; 2) policy integration; 3) long-term planning horizons; 4) analysis and assessments of potential policy effects; 5) policy and institutional co-ordination; 6) subnational and local involvement; 7) stakeholder engagement; and 8) monitoring and reporting. This chapter includes two contributions by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) and International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) – two member institutions of the Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development – which have developed analytical tools for coherent implementation of the SDGs. This chapter is complemented by Chapter 3 which presents country profiles from 19 countries highlighting institutional practices and mechanisms corresponding to the eight PCSD building blocks.

Policy coherence and the Sustainable Development Goals

Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) – embodied in target 17.14 – is an integral part of the means of implementation for all SDGs. It can help identify critical interlinkages among goal areas, manage potential trade-offs, promote synergies, and address negative impacts (Box 2.1). By assessing how efforts to attain a target in one sector could affect efforts in another, PCSD can also support more effective and cost-efficient actions. For example, some support programmes for farmers that contribute to SDG target 2.1 to end hunger may increase deforestation through conversion to crop and livestock production, thereby undermining efforts to halt biodiversity loss (SDG target 15.5). The OECD estimates that land use change for agriculture is the main source of biodiversity loss worldwide. Coherence can help avoid contradictions, address inconsistent policies, reduce inefficient spending and minimise negative effects and obstacles to achieving goals.

Box 2.1. What is policy coherence for sustainable development?

The OECD defines policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) as an approach and policy tool to systematically integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making. Its three main objectives are to:

- 1) Foster synergies across economic, social and environmental policy areas.
- 2) Identify trade-offs and reconcile domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives.
- 3) Address the negative spillovers of domestic policies.

Source: (OECD, 2014_[3]).

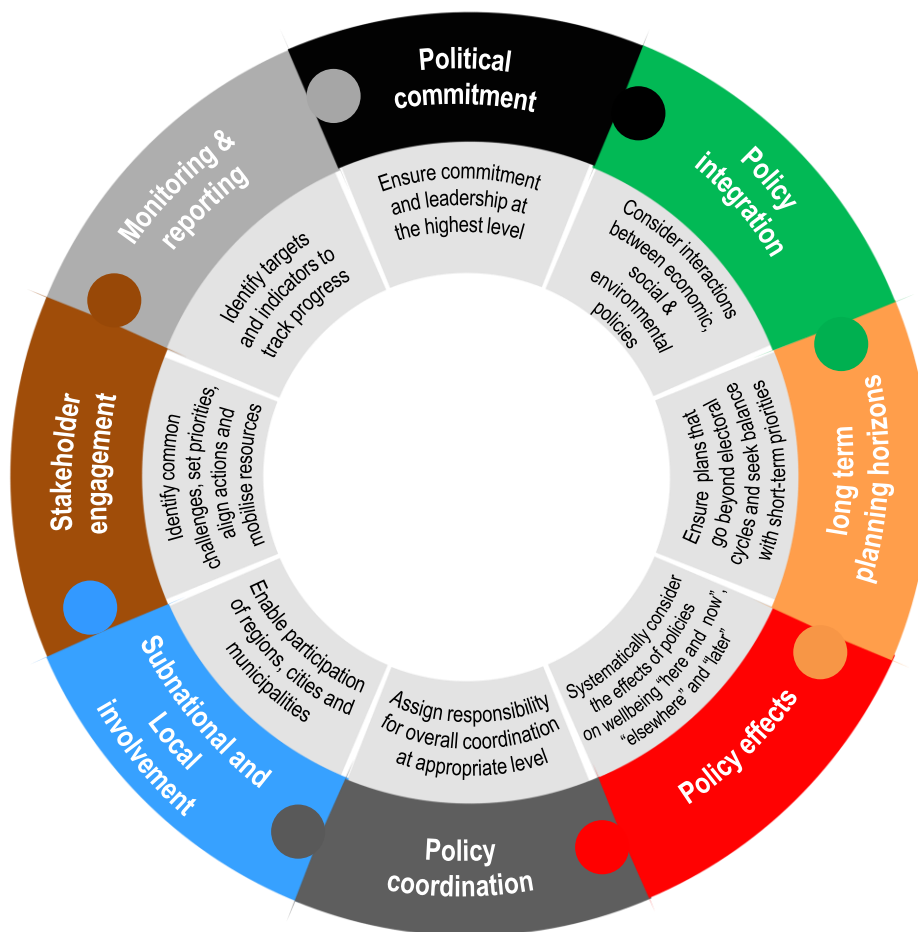
The VNRs presented by OECD countries to the HLPF in 2016 and 2017 illustrate the diverse institutional mechanisms that governments are putting in place to support SDG implementation (see Annex 2.A). Most of these countries have a long tradition of working towards sustainable development, often established as part of their implementation of Agenda 21 signed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. A key question is how these institutional structures and mechanisms operate to ensure a coherent implementation of the SDGs.

Eight building blocks of policy coherence for sustainable development

Policy coherence does not happen automatically – it is a political choice by governments to establish supporting institutional structures and take specific initiatives. Enhancing PCSD as called for in SDG target 17.14 will depend on mechanisms to anticipate, balance and reconcile divergent policy pressures, including conflicting domestic and international priorities; opposing economic, social and environmental concerns; competing sectoral interests; and reconciling short-term priorities with the long-term policy direction integral to attaining sustainable development objectives.

The experiences of OECD countries in promoting policy coherence for development over the past two decades, as well as in implementing national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) in accordance with Agenda 21, has led the OECD to identify eight building blocks essential for coherent SDG implementation (Figure 2.1). They represent structures, processes and working methods that can facilitate improvements in policy coherence and are applicable to countries regardless of their administrative and political traditions.

Figure 2.1. Eight Building Blocks of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development



Source: (OECD, 2017_[4]).

These building blocks illustrate how different institutional mechanisms fit together and can contribute towards higher degrees of policy coherence in terms of: 1) mobilising whole-of-government action; 2) balancing economic, environmental, and social concerns; 3) reconciling short- and long-term priorities; 4) addressing potential negative impacts of domestic policies beyond borders; 5) ensuring co-ordinated and mutually supporting efforts across sectors; 6) involving subnational and local levels of government; 7) engaging key stakeholders beyond government; and 8) using monitoring and reporting systems to inform coherent policy making. There is no particular sequencing, but all eight must be in place for sustained progress towards policy coherence for sustainable development.

Political commitment

Greater policy coherence starts with strong political commitment and leadership. Political commitment, clearly and publicly expressed at the highest level, is an essential foundation for prioritising policy objectives. It must be backed by broad consensus among parties and parliamentary support, a strategic framework, time-bound action plans, and incentives (OECD, 2010_[5]). Strong political leadership is needed to shape national debate on how to shift towards a sustainable path and achieve the SDGs both nationally and internationally, guide whole-of-government action and build ownership across institutions and stakeholders. It is critical to orient policy development in line ministries and translate commitments into concrete measures at local, national and international levels.

The 20 OECD countries covered in this chapter have publicly expressed strong political commitment to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in national and international forums. For example, Mexico's President, in his statement to the 71st UN General Assembly in 2016, affirmed that his country had taken on implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a "commitment of the State" (UNGA, 2016_[6]). Based on this commitment, Mexico is aligning its existing national and sectoral plans, adapting institutional and legal frameworks and shifting policies in preparation for SDG implementation. Similarly, several countries have adapted or launched new sustainable development strategies, while others have developed more specific national implementation plans. In most cases these processes were based on broad consultations and a clear indication of commitment, such as volunteering for national reviews at the HLPF. Mexico and Switzerland will present VNRs for a second time in 2018.

Several countries have updated national sustainable development strategies developed for the 1992 Rio Conference as a starting point for implementation. In **Estonia**, for example, the Sustainable Development Commission launched a review of *Sustainable Estonia 21* to ensure compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In **Korea**, the Third National Basic Plan for Sustainable Development 2016-2035, which is updated every five years, was established in January 2016 as a framework to translate the SDGs into national policies. In 2016, **Switzerland** renewed its Sustainable Development Strategy, which defines the Federal Council's policy priorities for sustainable development in the medium to long term (2016-19) and outlines the country's contribution to the SDGs. The process of updating national sustainable development strategies has entailed extensive enhancements to better reflect the integrated, multi-level and long-term nature of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs (Box 2.2).

Box 2.2. National strategies updated to align with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

Belgium - The National Sustainable Development Strategy, approved in 2017 after consultation with stakeholders, provides an umbrella framework for government actors at the federal and federated levels to align their efforts towards the SDGs and aims to create the basis for a coherent approach to sustainable development policies. A new feature is the commitment of relevant authorities to collectively report on implementation twice per government term, and to engage in broad dialogue with key stakeholders (PMO Belgium, 2017_[7]).

Czech Republic - The 2010 Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development was revised to align with the principles, goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Adopted in April 2017, *Czech Republic 2030* identifies six national priority areas: People and Society, Economy, Resilient

Ecosystems, Regions and Municipalities, Global Development and Good Governance. It sets forth 97 specific goals to improve the well-being of citizens while respecting the principles of sustainable development, and provides an overarching framework for sectoral, regional and local strategies (Czech Republic, 2017^[8]).

Germany - In January 2017, the Federal Government approved a new version of the Sustainable Development Strategy, considered the most extensive enhancement since its adoption in 2002. It defines concrete targets and measures covering a wide range of policies. All federal institutions are called upon to contribute to achieving the targets with activities in their own fields. The Strategy presents measures to implement the 17 SDGs at three levels: 1) measures by Germany with domestic effects; 2) measures with global effects; and 3) concrete support for other countries in the form of bilateral co-operation (measures with Germany) (Germany, 2016^[9]). With the coalition treaty of the new government, Germany reiterated its high commitment to sustainable development. The treaty acknowledges that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of sustainable development are yardsticks for government action”.

Italy - The updated National Sustainable Development Strategy 2018/2030 is organised into five core areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The first four areas cover mainly the domestic dimension; the latter covers principles and objectives of international co-operation. Implementation is linked to existing national programming documents such as the National Reform Programme and the Economic and Financial Document (Italy, 2017^[10]).

Slovenia - The *Slovenian Development Strategy 2030*, adopted in December 2017, provides an umbrella development framework aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Strategy’s primary objective, “Slovenia, a country with a high quality of life for all”, will be achieved through balanced economic, social and environmental development, supported by sectoral, regional and municipal strategies and programmes as well as operational measures (Republic of Slovenia, 2017^[11]).

Sweden - The Policy for Global Development, adopted by the Riksdag (Parliament) in 2003, was relaunched in 2015, providing Sweden with a framework to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the global goals (Sweden, 2017^[12]).

Some countries have integrated the SDGs and key principles of the 2030 Agenda into their existing national development plans. **Mexico** is considering using its National Development Plan (NDP) as an overarching framework to guide government-wide policies and actions for achieving the 2030 Agenda. The country’s National Planning Law was updated in 2017 to integrate the 17 SDGs and key 2030 Agenda principles into national development planning and serve as a reference for future actions. Guidelines have been developed to support integration of the 2030 Agenda principles and approach into state and municipal development plans (Mexico, 2017^[13]).

Similarly, the **Netherlands** is integrating the vision and key principles of the 2030 Agenda into its existing government plan. The coalition agreement “Confidence in the Future”, presented to Parliament in October 2017, contains plans for: 1) investing in key public services; 2) improving security and ensuring opportunities in the economy for all; 3) addressing climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for the Netherlands; and 4) strengthening the role of Netherlands in the world, including through international co-operation with SDGs as guiding framework (Government of the Netherlands, 2017^[14]). In **Portugal**, incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into national plans and policies is organised around thematic areas identified as 5Ps: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace and Partnerships (Portugal, 2017^[15]). The government of **Turkey** intends to include the SDGs

as one of the main inputs for preparing the long-term strategic vision for its 11th National Development Plan (2019-2023).

Developing a specific time-bound action plan with clearly identified objectives that encompass all government policies helps to translate political commitment into action. Several countries are developing specific 2030 Agenda implementation plans in addition to their overarching strategic frameworks (Box 2.3). **France** is developing a roadmap to implement the SDGs with input from stakeholders at each stage (definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and regular reviews) (OECD, 2017^[4]). **Norway** has developed a plan for national follow-up on the SDGs linked to the budget process. In **Switzerland**, the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019 includes a concrete action plan structured into nine thematic areas closely related to the SDGs: consumption and production (SDG 12); urban development, mobility and infrastructure (SDGs 9 and 11); energy and climate (SDGs 7 and 13); natural resources (SDGs 2, 6, 14 and 15); economic and financial systems (SDGs 8, 10, 16, and 17); education, research and innovation (SDG 4); social security (SDGs 1 and 16); social cohesion and gender equality (SDG 5, 10 and 16); and health (SDG 3).

Box 2.3. National action plans for SDG implementation

Czech Republic - Implementation of *Czech Republic 2030* will include establishing mechanisms and tangible measures to ensure compliance between its strategic and specific goals and the objectives of other sectoral strategies, concepts and programmes, and minimise existing policy gaps. (Czech Republic, 2017^[8]).

Denmark - The government has formulated an Action Plan focused on the 5 P's: Prosperity, People, Planet, Peace and Partnerships. Partnerships are cross-cutting, but for the other dimensions the government has developed a total of 37 concrete national targets for achievement of the SDGs, prioritising areas where strengths exist but improvement is needed (Denmark, 2017^[16]).

Finland - The government plan submitted to parliament in 2017 provides a framework for implementation, national follow-up and review up until 2030, focusing on two areas: 1) a carbon-neutral and resource-wise Finland; and 2) a non-discriminatory, equal and competent Finland (PMO Finland, 2017^[17]).

Italy - With the endorsement of the National Sustainable Development Strategy by the Council of Ministers, a future Plan of Action will be developed to include numerical and quantitative targets at 2030, as well as monitoring and review mechanisms including analytical models to measure the impacts of policies on the NSDS objectives (Italy, 2017^[10]).

Japan - In December 2016, the cabinet body “SDGs Promotion Headquarters”, headed by the Prime Minister, adopted the *SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles*, which represent Japan’s national strategy to address the major challenges for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The guiding principles set out a vision, five implementation principles, eight priority areas and an approach to the follow-up and review process. An annex includes 140 specific measures to be implemented domestically and abroad (Japan, 2017^[18]).

Luxembourg - Preparation of the Third National Plan for Sustainable Development in 2018 will be informed by an inventory of existing policies and international commitments currently integrating the SDGs, as well as a gap analysis. The National Plan specifies Luxembourg's priority areas for sustainable development at national and international levels, formulates concrete objectives and proposes actions and instruments necessary for their implementation.

Mexico - A National Strategy for implementation of the 2030 Agenda is being elaborated

through a broad consultation process under the co-ordination of the Office of the President. The new Strategy will incorporate a long-term vision to guide the elaboration of future National Development Plans. The National Council for 2030 Agenda will be responsible for its implementation.

A clearly stated commitment, widely communicated within and outside government, is a precondition for enhancing policy coherence. Providing specific guidelines and mandates on how to proceed across the administration is equally important. Half of the countries covered in this chapter have made explicit commitments to policy coherence as part of their strategies and plans for SDG implementation or their development co-operation policy (Box 2.4).

Box 2.4. Countries with explicit commitments to policy coherence

Belgium - Commitment to sustainable development is enshrined in the Belgian constitution since 2007, to which the federal state, the communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) and the regions (Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels-Capital) must contribute. The 2013 Law on Development Cooperation refers to policy coherence for development, and an intergovernmental declaration on adherence to PCD involving both federal and federated governments was signed in 2014. Reflections are underway to adapt existing commitments and the institutional architecture for policy coherence for development to the new realities of the 2030 Agenda.

Czech Republic - The overarching framework outlined in *Czech Republic 2030*, with sustainable development and well-being at its core, uses PCSD as a guiding principle for national, regional and local policies (Czech Republic, 2017^[8]).

Denmark - The government supports policy coherence for sustainable development, and line ministries integrate sustainable development in policy making. As part of its SDG Action Plan, the government will assess the consequences of new legislation and major initiatives (Denmark, 2017^[16]).

Finland - The government's plan for the 2030 Agenda, submitted to the Parliament in 2017, is the framework for implementation, national follow-up and review up until 2030. It also outlines both domestic and international commitments and makes an explicit commitment to policy coherence to support sustainable development. (PMO Finland, 2017)

Germany - The National Sustainable Development Strategy contains the Federal Government's ambition to use the 2030 Agenda as an opportunity to increase its efforts for policy coherence, with particular reference to SDG 17.14. Various policy areas are bundled to achieve greater coherence in light of the large number of systemic interdependencies. Ministry Coordinators for Sustainable Development have been appointed in all ministries as central contact persons.

Luxembourg - The report on implementation of the 2030 Agenda adopted in May 2017 addressed policy coherence and the need for whole-of-government involvement (Luxembourg, 2017^[19]). The National Plan for Sustainable Development as implementation strategy will further address PCSD. Close ties have been established between the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Commission and the Inter-ministerial Committee for Development Co-operation. Work is underway to clarify the role of development co-operation in SDG implementation. (OECD, 2017^[20]).

Netherlands - In 2016 the Netherlands adopted an action plan on policy coherence for development with time-bound goals and actions aligned with the SDGs focusing on key areas of

trade agreements, tax evasion/avoidance, investment protection, climate change, cost of remittances, sustainable value chains (including responsible business conduct), access to medicines and food security. The action plan will be revised in 2018 in light of the country's new policy on Foreign Trade and Cooperation.

Portugal - A National Plan for Policy Coherence for Development, aligned with the national priorities for the SDGs, will intensify joint work between various ministries, the national parliament, and representations in third countries (Portugal, 2017_[15]).

Slovenia - The new *Slovenian Development Strategy 2030* emphasises the importance of enhancing policy coherence for development and the need to establish better mechanisms of horizontal and multilevel co-operation, understanding cross-cutting topics and central planning, harmonising and monitoring domestic policies, and aligning national and international development goals (Republic of Slovenia, 2017_[11]).

Sweden - The Policy for Global Development (PGD) relaunched in 2015 underlines the centrality of policy coherence to promote sustainable development. After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, all ministries have for the first time developed internal action plans with concrete goals for the work of the PGD linked to the global goals. Horizontal and vertical policy coherence are regarded as challenges but also as opportunities to identify trade-offs and synergies in SDG implementation.

Policy integration

In adopting the 2030 Agenda, governments committed to “achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner” and to “implement the Agenda within [their] own countries and at the regional and global levels” (UNGA, 2015_[21]). Policy integration is central to balancing the often divergent dimensions of sustainable development, as well as maximising synergies and managing trade-offs at all stages of policy making.

Policy coherence is a key facilitator of integration. It is essential in ensuring that policies aimed at achieving one SDG contribute to progress in others – for example, that policies for improving energy efficiency (SDG 7) are designed in a way that contribute to achieving sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), building sustainable cities (SDG 11), ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) and combating climate change (SDG 13). It is equally important in avoiding the risk of progress on one goal occurring at the expense of another – for example, actions towards ensuring universal access to electricity and clean cooking (SDG 7) threatening achievement of the climate goal (SDG 13) or worsening air pollution, with negative consequences for health (SDG 3).

Policy integration requires strategic frameworks and mandates to ensure that policies and institutions: 1) work under a new logic of cross-sectoral collaboration, based on shared priorities, and 2) align sectoral objectives to overarching or higher level goals (such as the SDGs). This means specific measures, including budgetary, to incorporate SDGs into the mandate of each national institution. It also requires a decision making process (inter-ministerial, multi-stakeholder) with the capacity to take strategic decisions and influence planning, budgeting, legislation and sectoral programmes and policies. Policy priorities must take into account the fulfilment of international obligations. Integration should take place both vertically (across international, national, subnational and local levels of government) and horizontally (across policy communities and government entities) (OECD, 2002_[22]).

Experiences with implementation of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) developed as part of Agenda 21 signed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 show that policy integration is extremely difficult to achieve (OECD, 2005^[23]). Most NSDSs focused on environmental sustainability, with attempts made to integrate economic and social aspects. Sustainable development was perceived as an environmental issue rather than an integrated concept, and efforts were often led by environment ministries with a focus on the domestic setting.

In line with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, governments are taking measures to embrace economic, social and environmental concerns in a more coherent and balanced manner (Box 2.5). In the **Netherlands**, key policy domains for sustainable development have been assigned to the recently renamed Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, which is tasked with avoiding trade-offs and strengthening synergies. Similarly, the foreign trade and development co-operation portfolios are now under the responsibility of one minister. In **Korea**, the Third Basic Plan for Sustainable Development 2016-2035 was expanded to encompass economic and social development goals and mainstream the SDGs.

Some countries have integrated the dimensions of sustainable development into their national legislation. In **Belgium**, sustainable development is enshrined in the Belgian Constitution as a general policy objective for the Federal State, Communities and Regions in exercising their respective competences. **Chile** has recently adopted a range of laws – in the areas of education, labour, and taxation – supportive of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (UNDESA, 2017^[1]).

Other countries have developed guidelines or created working groups to support integration. In **Switzerland**, guidelines contained in the Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-2019 explain how the Federal Council should mainstream sustainable development in all of the Confederation's sectoral policies. In **Turkey**, a task force within the Ministry of Development composed of experts in relevant areas was mandated to integrate SDGs into public documents at all levels, including the National Development Plan, regional plans, annual programmes, and sectoral strategies.

As a key policy and priority-setting document for governments, national budgets are an essential tool for policy integration and coherence. Several countries are using budgetary processes to align actions and programmes with the SDGs. **Mexico** has incorporated a provision into its Guidelines for the Programming and Budgeting Process for the Fiscal Year 2018 establishing elements, dates and specific actions so that federal agencies and entities can link their authorised programme structures with the SDGs. In **Norway**, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for ensuring a co-ordinated budget to foster SDG implementation. It assigns each of the 17 Goals to a co-ordinating ministry who must co-operate with other ministries involved in the follow-up of relevant targets. Ministries' progress reports are compiled by the Ministry of Finance and submitted to the parliament as part of the national budget annual White Paper.

Box 2.5. Examples of policy integration

Belgium - The Federal Institute on Sustainable Development (FISD) supports ministries and other stakeholders in integrating sustainable development into their core business. Two additional instruments support policy integration: an *ex ante* impact assessment of regulatory action and the Federal Long-Term Vision statement for the Belgian 2030 outlook.

Denmark - The government already assesses new legislative proposals in terms of their economic, environmental and gender equality consequences. It also supports policy coherence in sustainable development and line ministries to integrate sustainable development in policy making.

Finland - As part of the Government Implementation Plan, sustainable development objectives will be included in the performance targets and performance management of ministries. Attention will be paid in the budgetary planning process to the inclusion of information essential to the promotion and monitoring of sustainable development in performance targets and follow-up indicators for various administrative branches (PMO Finland, 2017_[17]).

Germany - The 12 management rules of the German Sustainable Development Strategy define general requirements for sustainable policy making. According to the new Strategy, the guiding principle of sustainability should be considered in every law and decree from the start. Sustainable development is enshrined in the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries as a mandatory criterion when assessing the impact of proposed laws and regulations (Germany, 2016_[9]). In March 2018, a new online tool (www.enap.bund.de) was introduced as part of the Sustainability Impact Assessment, which helps to check proposals for laws and regulations against all targets and indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy as well as SDGs.

Japan - The 2016 *SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles* are based on Japan's aspiration to "become a leader toward a future where economic, social and environmental improvements are attained in an integrated, sustainable and resilient manner while leaving no one behind." The guiding principles provide a framework for policy integration and direct the government and related agencies to incorporate the SDGs into their plans, strategies and policies as much as possible (Japan, 2017_[18]).

Long-term planning horizons

Adopters of the 2030 Agenda committed to "implement the Agenda for the full benefit of all, for today's generation and for future generations" (UNGA, 2015_[21]). The intergenerational nature of the SDGs calls for a long-term perspective that includes precautionary decisions and mechanisms to maintain commitment over time.

Government decision making rarely goes beyond the electoral cycle of four to six years – insufficient time to take intergenerational and long-term considerations into account. A key challenge is ensuring that sustained efforts on SDG implementation outlive electoral cycles, government programmes or cabinet compositions, and are balanced with short-term priorities. The 2030 Agenda has motivated some countries to apply 20- or 30-year timeframes to their national strategies (Box 2.6).

Box 2.6. Long-term planning horizons for SDG implementation

Belgium - The Federal Vision for Sustainable Development is based on a horizon to 2050. The Inter-ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development (IMCSD) has no fixed end date.

Finland - The vision and goals set forth in the National Commission on Sustainable Development's implementation plan, *The Finland we want by 2050 - Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development*, provide a long-term framework for sustainability. The plan defines several key actions, such as more closely aligning foresight activities with SDG implementation, developing competence among government officials, and creating conditions for long-term work.

Germany - The first Management Rule of the German Sustainable Development Strategy emphasises that "Each generation is required to solve the challenges facing it and must not unload them onto future generations. It must also make provisions for foreseeable future problems." Long-term effects of particular regulations are explicitly considered in the Sustainable Impact Assessment.

Italy - The National Sustainable Development Strategy 2018/2030 sets the path for a long-term vision based on the 2030 Agenda.

Slovenia - The recently adopted Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, which is the overall development framework of the state aligned to the SDGs, is a response to the Vision of Slovenia 2050 document. The Vision of Slovenia 2050 was developed through an inclusive process and is the key framework for the country's long-term orientations. (Republic of Slovenia, 2017_[11])

Policy Effects

In adopting the 2030 Agenda, countries affirmed that they were "setting out together on the path towards sustainable development, devoting [themselves] collectively to the pursuit of global development" (UNGA, 2015_[21]). This highlights the international dimension of sustainable development as well as the common goal of poverty eradication, particularly in developing countries. SDG implementation calls for consideration of how countries' development paths can impact one another and how domestic policies may affect the well-being of citizens in other countries.

With increasing global interconnectedness, transmission channels are numerous and countries necessarily impact on one another (OECD, 2017_[4]). Transmission channels include: financial flows or income transfers (ODA, remittances, loans); imports or exports of goods and services (economic activities "here" will impact on natural resources "elsewhere"); migration ("brain-drain"); and knowledge transfers. Building capacity to measure policy impacts is essential to enhance policy coherence. It can help identify transboundary impacts of consumption and production patterns and inform decision making by refining or re-prioritising policy objectives. Addressing and minimising potential negative transboundary effects is a key building block for enhancing PCSD. As part of the OECD study on Measuring Distance to SDG targets, work is underway to develop a framework for measuring transboundary effects within the SDGs, based on available indicators.

Some countries are working towards adopting broader forms of impact assessment to ensure the sustainability of policies (Box 2.7). Several have taken steps to ensure an effective interface between the domestic and international dimensions of sustainable

development as part of their SDG implementation processes. In **Finland**, for example, the National Commission on Sustainable Development and Development Policy Committee have strengthened collaboration as part of the country's intention to implement the SDGs domestically and internationally under a single national implementation plan.

Box 2.7. Measures to identify and address potential transboundary impacts

Belgium - With the adoption of the 2013 Federal Long-term Vision for Sustainable Development a new *ex ante* impact assessment tool – the Sustainable Impact Assessment (SIA) – was integrated into the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in 2014. The RIA assesses possible effects of preliminary draft regulations on the dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental) and public services. It constitutes an important tool for PCSD.

Czech Republic - The Czech Republic aims at strengthening its institutional, analytical and control mechanisms to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development in order to reduce any adverse impact of the country's policies beyond its borders. It particularly seeks to protect human rights in national entities' supply chains. The quality of policies will be improved through better *ex ante* impact assessments and enhanced *ex post* evaluations.

Denmark - The government already assesses the economic, environmental and gender consequences of new legislation. As part of the Action Plan for SDGs the government will also assess the consequences of new legislation and major initiatives for the SDGs when considered relevant to the Danish context and where the impact is significant (Denmark, 2017_[16]).

Finland - As part of the Government Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda, steps will be taken to explore the inclusion of sustainable development impact assessment in key policy and legislative motions. The existing impact assessment process for bill drafting will be developed to ensure better co-ordination with sustainable development goals and to identify coherence between goals and actions undertaken at national and global levels (PMO Finland, 2017_[17]).

Germany - Management Rule 12 of the German Sustainable Development Strategy emphasises that actions in Germany must consider the burdens they create in other parts of the world. With the new Strategy, Germany aims to contribute to the SDGs at three levels: measures with effects in Germany; measures implemented by Germany with global effects, in particular activities for the benefit of global public goods; and concrete support for other countries and joint implementation of measures with Germany, in particular in the context of bilateral development co-operation.

Luxembourg - The Committee for Development Co-operation (CID) has adopted a new working method to analyse and deal with policy coherence issues. Once identified, topics are discussed in the CID, which can formulate recommendations to the government. It also sets out a list of topics to be discussed during the year, such as the common pension compensation fund, economic partnership agreements, the common agricultural policy, taxation, COP21 and social protection. Members can propose that policies with potential transboundary and intergenerational effects be reviewed at the design stage. Civil society also supports the CID in identifying such topics.

Netherlands - The 2016 action plan on policy coherence for development identifies potential transboundary effects, specifically on developing countries, related to the eight themes the Netherlands is focusing on which are linked to the SDGs. The 2017 annual report on PCD provides detail on the different effects of each theme and examines conflicts of interests related to three of them (access to medicines under the WTO/TRIPS Agreement; remittance costs; and tax avoidance) and illustrates how the Netherlands is pursuing policy coherence on these issues (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017_[24]).

Policy – and institutional – co-ordination

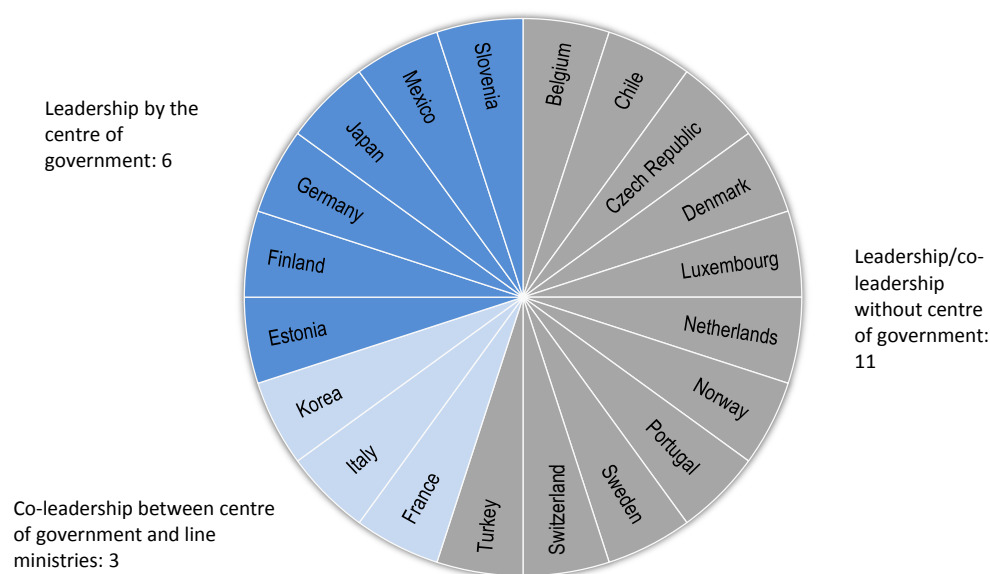
The cross-cutting nature of the SDGs poses co-ordination challenges at each level of the policy making process. It requires that governments strengthen existing mechanisms for horizontal co-ordination (between entities of a particular tier) and vertical co-ordination (between national, subnational and local levels).

Appropriate co-ordination mechanisms allow ministries, public sector agencies and other key stakeholders to share information, define and distribute responsibilities and efficiently allocate resources for SDG implementation. Involving a wide range of government departments and other stakeholders helps to ensure a holistic perspective on issues, give voice to diverse interests, address potential trade-offs, raise public awareness and create ownership.

An OECD Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the Implementation of the SDGs suggests that countries recognise the role of centres of government (CoG): in 19 out of 31 countries surveyed the CoG is helping to steer and co-ordinate SDG implementation (OECD, 2016^[25]). In nine of the OECD countries that have presented VNRs so far, the Office of the President or Prime Minister leads SDG implementation either on its own or supported by line ministries. In the other countries, co-ordination responsibility is assigned to line ministries with cross-cutting influence (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Leadership in coordinating SDG implementation

OECD countries that presented VNRs in 2016 and 2017



Note: Based on information from VNRs and (OECD, 2016^[25]).

Source: Adapted from (OECD, 2017^[26]).

Both approaches are effective for enhancing policy coherence, provided they have clear mandates to resolve policy divergences and tensions arising from different sectoral interests. Elements to consider include: 1) the neutrality and convening power of the body responsible for co-ordination functions throughout the administration; 2) mandates of the

co-ordinating body to deal specifically with policy divergences and resolve conflicts of interest; 3) capacity and resources to influence changes in policy making; and 4) involvement of outside actors as a way to identify common challenges and build ownership of new agendas.

Some countries have established central co-ordination mechanisms at the highest level to ensure political leadership and facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration. For example, in 2016 **Japan** created a new cabinet body, “SDGs Promotion Headquarters”, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all ministries to lead co-operation among ministries and government agencies in implementing the SDGs (Japan, 2017^[18]). Similarly, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Mexico and Slovenia have placed responsibility for overall co-ordination of SDG implementation directly under the Head of Government (Box 2.8).

Box 2.8. Countries with central co-ordination mechanisms at the highest level

Estonia - The national co-ordination mechanism for sustainable development is led by the Government Office Strategy Unit under the central government.

Finland - Co-ordination for national implementation of the SDGs is led by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). The co-ordinating secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development was transferred from the Ministry of the Environment to the PMO in 2016, along with responsibility for planning, preparing, co-ordinating and ensuring implementation. An Inter-ministerial Coordination Network consisting of sustainable development focal points from each line ministry supports the PMO.

Germany - Chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery, the State Secretaries’ Committee serves as the central co-ordinator for the Sustainable Development Strategy. Its role is to ensure that the Strategy is applied to all policy areas. All ministries retain primary responsibility for contributions to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda in their respective policy areas (Germany, 2016^[19]). A new directors’ working group for sustainable development (UAL-AG) has been established. This group comprises representatives from all ministries and, led by the Federal Chancellery, deals with all questions of sustainable development relevant to the ministries. The strategic and content-related work of the UAL-AG will be expanded in future also in line with its role as a central interface in the overall architecture of the National Strategy.

Mexico - The President established the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a bonding mechanism between the Federal and local governments, civil society, the private sector and academia. It is chaired by the President and composed of state secretaries. The National Council is tasked with co-ordinating actions for the design, implementation and evaluation of policies to comply with the 2030 Agenda. The work of the Council is supported by an Executive Secretary located within the Office of the President.

Slovenia - The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy has been appointed as the 2030 Agenda implementation co-ordinator. The co-ordinator for monitoring the achievement of the goals of the 2030 Agenda at the national level is the body responsible for development. Communication and harmonisation with the ministries and government offices will be carried out by the Permanent Interdepartmental Working Group for Development Planning. The working group allows more effective coordination and an active contribution to the compilation of the central strategic and implementing documents of the Republic of Slovenia and also oversees the inclusion of the 2030 Agenda in draft documents and the transfer of information about the importance of the 2030 Agenda in individual areas.

In France and Italy, the centre of government and line ministries work together on SGD implementation. In **France**, efforts are co-ordinated by the General Commissariat for Sustainable Development (CGDD), mandated by the Prime Minister, in close partnership with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) for the international dimension. In **Italy**, the prime minister leads co-ordination and management of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), with support from the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the internal and external dimensions respectively. The Ministry of Finance will be tasked with creating synergies between NSDS implementation and formal economic policies (Italy, 2017_[10]).

In some countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays an important role. In **Chile** the new National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and composed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Business Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of the Environment (Chile, 2017_[27]). In the **Netherlands**, the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation is in charge of overall co-ordination. An SDG network of focal points with representatives from each ministry and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities has been established and meets regularly. The network is chaired by a specially appointed high-level co-ordinator for national SDG implementation, assisted by a small secretariat (Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2017_[28]).

In **Portugal**, general co-ordination is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure. This is to ensure close alignment between the domestic and international dimensions of the 2030 Agenda and maintain a structured dialogue with United Nations bodies. Intra-governmental guidelines for the 2030 Agenda were adopted for the first time by the Council of Ministers in 2016. The Inter-ministerial Commission for Foreign Policy oversees domestic implementation, while the Inter-ministerial Commission for Co-operation Policy is responsible for incorporation of the SDGs into development co-operation and overseeing the external dimension. A network of focal points from different government departments has also been established to facilitate systematic exchange of information (Portugal, 2017_[15]).

Similarly, in **Sweden** the Minister for Public Administration is responsible for co-ordinating and promoting implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, while the Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate is responsible for international implementation, through the Policy for Global Development and development co-operation (Sweden, 2017_[12]). A consultation group of state secretaries from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation has been established, as well as an interministerial working group for the 2030 Agenda.

Luxembourg has put in place co-ordination, planning and evaluation mechanisms under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure. The composition, organisation and functioning of the Inter-Departmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) were modified to better reflect the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and ensure inter-governmental co-ordination. The Director of Development Co-operation is being designated Vice-Chair of the ICSD to better integrate the domestic and international dimensions of the SDGs. Collaboration between the ICSD and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Development Co-operation has been strengthened (OECD, 2017_[20]). In the **Czech Republic**, the Ministry of environment is responsible for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Government Council for

Sustainable Development is chaired by the First Deputy Minister and Minister for the Environment.

In both Denmark and Norway, the Ministry of Finance plays a key role. In **Denmark**, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for co-ordinating national implementation. Line ministries are responsible for designing policies with attention to the SDGs when relevant, and co-ordination is supported by an interministerial SDG working group. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the SDGs in the context of the United Nations and other international forums, as well as for international engagement in support of the SDGs. Both ministries maintain close co-ordination efforts. In **Norway**, responsibility for following up each of the 17 goals is allocated to a specific co-ordinating ministry. These ministries consult with other ministries involved in following up the various targets. Ministries report progress annually in their budget proposals to the Norwegian parliament. The Ministry of Finance sums up the main points from all ministries in a national budget white paper.

Cross-sectoral structures support co-ordination in Belgium and Switzerland. **Belgium** has revitalised its Inter-Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development (IMCSD), gathering ministers in charge of sustainable development and development co-operation at different levels (Federal, Communities and Regions) as the central co-ordination mechanism for SDG implementation. The Inter-departmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) supports co-ordination between federal government departments. The advisory Federal Council for Sustainable Development and the Advisory Council for Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) help engage key stakeholders. An inter-departmental mechanism in **Switzerland** co-ordinates implementation of the SDGs. A dedicated office at the Ministry of Territorial Affairs (Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure) is in charge of co-ordinating the activities jointly with a unit within the Agency of Development Cooperation (Foreign Affairs) supported by a steering body including environment, health, statistics, agriculture and foreign affairs.

Subnational and local involvement

The 2030 Agenda emphasises that “governments and public institutions will work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities” (UNGA, 2015_[21]). Subnational and local governments are essential for delivering a wide range of public services as well as the economic, social and environmental transformations needed to achieve the SDGs.

As the level of government closest to the people, local governments are in a unique position to identify and respond to sustainable development needs and gaps. Indeed, most underlying policies and investments are a shared responsibility across levels of government; it is estimated that 65% of the 169 targets underlying the 17 SDGs will not be reached without proper engagement of, and co-ordination with, local and subnational governments (SDSN, 2016_[29]). Subnational governments were responsible for 59.3% of total public investment in 2015 throughout the OECD area and for almost 40% worldwide (OECD/UCLG, 2016_[30]). Most investments were related to infrastructure for basic services for which cities and/or regions have core competences, and correspond to dedicated SDGs (e.g. education, health, social infrastructure, drinking water, sanitation, solid waste management, transport, and housing).

To co-ordinate national and local SDG implementation, some countries are building on existing mechanisms developed for Agenda 21. In **Belgium** the Inter-Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development, composed of federal, regional and community

ministers responsible for sustainable development and development co-operation, is used as a central co-ordination mechanism. In **Estonia**, local municipalities apply the main principles of sustainable development through action plans and local legislation adopted during processes related to Agenda 21. Cities and regions in **Finland** have representatives in the National Commission on Sustainable Development. **Norway** uses existing mechanisms for co-operation with local and regional authorities, such as regular consultations between the central government and local authorities. Similarly, **Turkey** uses existing structures and current high-level councils to promote SDGs at the local level. Some countries are creating or strengthening mechanisms to link and co-ordinate national, subnational and local levels of governments for SDG implementation (Box 2.9).

Box 2.9. Subnational and local involvement in SDG implementation

Czech Republic - Preparation of *Czech Republic 2030* included co-operation with local and regional authorities. The Government Council on Sustainable Development includes a thematic Committee on Sustainable Municipalities, where municipal associations are represented. In 2017, representatives of municipalities, regions and other regional and local actors were involved in discussions also through roundtables organised in eight regional capitals.

Denmark - Each year the government negotiates the following year's budget for municipalities and regions. An agreement for 2018 was reached with local governments on 1 June 2017 and with regional governments on 6 June 2017. The government and municipalities and regions agree to co-operate to achieve the SDGs and integrate sustainable development in policy making.

Germany - The German Sustainable Development Strategy adopted in January 2017 creates mechanisms for co-ordination between the Federal Government, Länder and municipalities. These include: the Sustainability Network of Lord Mayors, the regional hubs (RENN) initiated by the German Sustainable Development Council and the Federal-Länder Experience Pool (Bund-Länder-Erfahrungsaustausch). The latter offers room for regular communication on current issues of sustainable development at Federal and Länder level. Currently 13 out of 16 Länder have already drawn up or are working on their own sustainable development strategies.

Italy - Through the State and Regions Conference and in accordance with national legislation, the government will encourage local and regional authorities to take an active part in the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy at their own territorial level (Italy, 2017_[10]).

Mexico - The recently established National Council for the 2030 Agenda led by the President provides a platform for aligning efforts at the federal, state and municipal levels. The National Governors' Conference (CONAGO) established in 2017 an Executive Committee for Compliance with the 2030 Agenda. So far 17 states, under the National Governors' Conference, have created state commissions to support SDG implementation at regional and local levels.

Netherlands - The Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) has launched the *Municipalities4GlobalGoals* campaign to promote awareness of the SDGs among municipalities and help them contribute to the goals.

Stakeholder engagement

The 2030 Agenda emphasises that “all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan” (UNGA, 2015_[21]). Major barriers to

policy coherence are strongly rooted in differing perceptions of the issues involved. Coherent implementation of the SDGs requires mechanisms for dialogue and engagement whereby governments and key stakeholders identify common challenges, set priorities, align policies and actions, and mobilise resources for sustainable development. This is the spirit of SDG target 16.7, which calls for “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels” (UNGA, 2015_[21]).

Diverse stakeholders – including business and industry, civil society, science and academia – have important roles to play in SDG implementation. These range from resource mobilisation, provision of solutions and innovations, change in production patterns and lifestyles, and advocacy and accountability to giving voice to the concerns and needs of under-represented communities and regions and helping to ensure accountability. Stakeholder consultation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national SDG plans and strategies is now an inherent feature of many national processes (Box 2.10).

In **Belgium**, Advisory Councils engage stakeholders from civil society and academia such as the Federal Council for Sustainable Development or the Advisory Council for Policy Coherence for Development. In **Finland**, both the Commission on Sustainable Development, a prime minister-led mechanism, and the Development Policy Committee, a parliamentary body, include stakeholders such as civil society and private sector and interest groups. Both committees support and promote the implementation of the SDGs. In **France**, the National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI) and the National Council for the Ecological Transition (CNTE) are key fora for involving civil society, the private sector and citizens.

Box 2.10. Stakeholder engagement in national SDG plans and strategies

Czech Republic - Preparation of *Czech Republic 2030* involved hundreds of experts from different sectors, including nine committees and several working groups under the Government Council on Sustainable Development, a series of round tables, public regional consultations, CSO platform consultations and discussion in both chambers of parliament. The government is also engaged in dialogue with the private sector through the promotion of corporate social responsibility and encouraging voluntary commitments by private entities and other actors and individuals to the SDGs.

Denmark - Several large companies are working to integrate the SDGs into their business models, strategies and investments, including by implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and actively engaging in the UN Global Compact. The Danish government, in collaboration with partners, hosts a series of workshops aiming to accelerate companies’ engagement with the SDGs (Denmark, 2017_[16]).

Finland - Society’s Commitment to Sustainable Development provides a tool for operational commitments allowing active engagement by citizens and organisations. In 2016 more than 400 commitments to action promoting sustainable development were made by companies, schools, non-governmental organisations, administration, trade unions, political parties, cities, and private individuals (PMO Finland, 2017_[17]).

Germany - The Federal Government has established a Sustainability Forum (“Nachhaltigkeitsforum”), a regular dialogue with social stakeholders at which the federal government presents progress on implementing the 2030 Agenda. Social organisations also report on their own steps to implement the 2030 Agenda and comment on progress made by the Federal Government. Another important instrument for stakeholder engagement is the

Sustainable Development Council, whose members cover the different stakeholder groups and the three dimensions of sustainable development. Since 2001, the Council advises the Federal Government on all matters relating to sustainability.

Italy - A multi-level consultation process was developed for the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) involving all ministries, regions and key stakeholders. More than 200 NGOs have provided inputs to reflect the vision of the 2030 Agenda into the NSDS. Stakeholders are directly engaged in carrying out initiatives linked to SDGs and NSDS implementation. They include the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), which gathers over 150 organisations in the economic and social fields (Italy, 2017^[10]).

Japan – To strengthen stakeholder collaboration for SDG implementation, the government established the *SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting*, consisting of representatives from government ministries and agencies as well as relevant stakeholders. Roundtable meetings were held to draft the SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles as well as in preparation for the voluntary national review. As a way to reinforce awareness and incentivise stakeholders' actions, the government has also established the “Japan SDGs Award” to commend the work of private companies and other organisations which contribute to mainstreaming and implementing the SDGs (Japan, 2017^[18]).

Netherlands - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established the Netherlands' *SDG Charter*, a multi-stakeholder platform aimed at developing partnerships for SDG implementation. Over 100 organisations including Dutch companies, NGOs, knowledge institutes and philanthropists have signed up. The recently launched *SDG Gateway* is an online community of active stakeholders across sectors where potential partners can find each other (Kingdom of the Netherlands, 2017^[28]).

Monitoring and reporting

Informed decision making is a critical element of enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. Coherent implementation of the SDGs requires mechanisms to monitor progress, report to governing bodies and the public, and provide feedback so that actions and sectoral policies can be adjusted in light of potential negative or unintended effects. Monitoring and reporting systems can be used to collect evidence on: 1) the performance of institutional mechanisms to co-ordinate policy and foster more integrated approaches for implementation; 2) critical trade-offs and synergies between policies in different domains; and 3) transboundary and long-term impacts of domestic actions. See Chapter 4 which introduces a three-part framework for tracking progress on PCSD.

Some countries are strengthening their monitoring and reporting systems accordance with the 2030 Agenda and adding elements that can be instrumental for enhancing policy coherence in SDG implementation (Box 2.11). In Germany, for example, the government is revising national targets and indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy with a view to strengthening its international dimension accounting for the global impacts of domestic policies.

Box 2.11. Monitoring and reporting systems as a tool for policy coherence

Finland - The Government Implementation Plan foresees that reporting on SDG implementation will pay attention to identifying groups, including those outside Finland's borders, that are at risk of falling behind in their development (PMO Finland,

2017^[17]).

Germany - The German Sustainable Development Strategy includes national targets and 30 new indicators, some of which include transboundary consequences of national policies. These include a target to increase the share of imports from LDCs and indicators on sustainable public procurement, food losses, and hunger eradication (Germany, 2016^[9]).

Netherlands - The annual report on policy coherence for development monitors progress in eight themes set out in the PCD Action Plan presented to the Parliament in 2016. The Action Plan includes specific targets and criteria in these themes which are linked to relevant SDGs. The 2017 report provides details on trade-offs and synergies for three of the themes (access to medicines, remittance costs and tax avoidance), and illustrates how the Netherlands pursues a concerted effort on these issues (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017^[24]).

Contributions by Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Partners

The opinions expressed and arguments employed in the contributions below are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the OECD or of the governments of its member countries

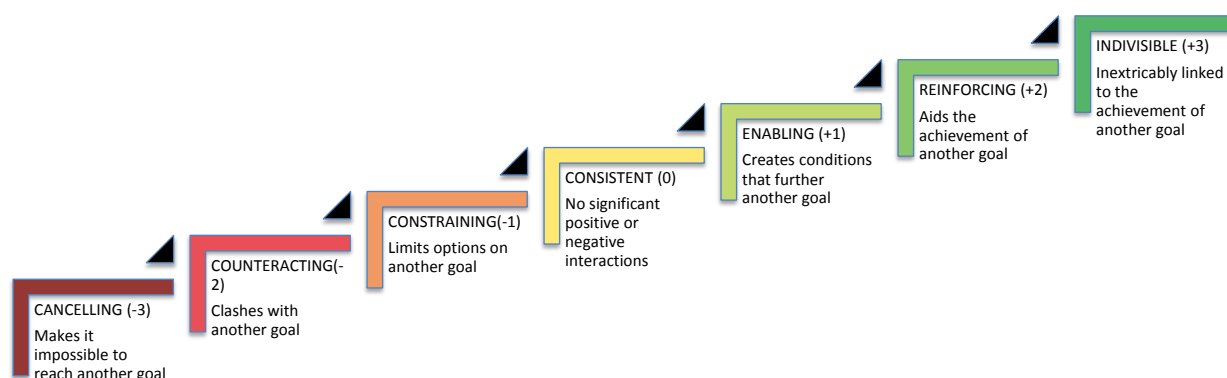
Applying the SDG interactions framework: preliminary lessons learnt

Stockholm Environment Institute

The 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for a balanced, integrated approach to sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Integrating the SDGs into national planning and budgeting requires that governments contextualise the goals, identify priorities and make decisions about how to sequence SDG implementation. This implies clear implementation challenges for governments worldwide.

Against this background, the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), together with research partners at the International Council for Science, has developed a conceptual framework for mapping and analysing interactions between SDG targets (Nilsson, Griggs and Visbeck, 2016^[31]). The framework proposes a seven-point scale that captures both positive and negative interactions and allows for a more detailed assessment of interactions that goes beyond current tendencies to analyse interactions only in terms of synergies and trade-offs (Figure 2.3). By exploring and assessing interactions between the SDGs, the framework aims to help policy makers design more coherent and resource effective policies to generate progress on the 17 SDGs overall.

Figure 2.3. Seven-point typology of SDG interactions



Source: adapted from (Nilsson, Griggs and Visbeck, 2016_[31]).

In 2016, SEI researchers applied the framework in a country context (Sweden) seeking to identify the systemic impacts of the interactions between 34 SDG targets using a cross-impact matrix and network theory analysis (Weitz et al., 2017_[32]). In the past year, SEI has undertaken pilot studies with the objective of refining a methodology which is both usable and useful for policy makers. In December 2017 the framework was for the first time applied in a stakeholder workshop: with the government of Mongolia on targets from Mongolia's National Sustainable Development Vision 2030, with the support of UNDP Mongolia. Together with UNDP and the Center for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) in Sri Lanka, SEI is also supporting the Government of Sri Lanka in using the framework to bolster policy coherence when integrating the SDG targets into national development strategies. The project was launched in October 2017 and will continue into the second half of 2018. One of the project outputs will be guidelines for governments interested in applying the SDG interactions framework.

While the framework and methodology for assessing SDG interactions is ongoing, some preliminary reflections have emerged based on the experiences from the pilot studies in Mongolia and Sri Lanka.

Ensure commitment and strong sector participation

The SDG interactions framework demands strong government commitment. The process inevitably requires considerable investments of time: in preparations, selecting targets to focus on, scoring interactions and translating the findings into actual policy. When scoring of interactions is conducted by sector experts, broad sector participation is key to ensuring sufficient expertise and avoiding sector-driven biases. The quality and credibility of results may suffer if key stakeholders or sectors are missing from the process.

Design a strategic process for target selection

The framework serves as an input to policy making processes fostering a more coherent implementation of the SDGs. The prospect for this to have an impact on policy is best in the case of strong government ownership in the selection of the targets to be analysed using the methodology (i.e. typically a subset of the 169 SDG targets will be analysed using the interactions framework). However, when the selection of targets for assessment is linked to a formal process for SDG prioritisation, this step can be both political and

time-consuming. The process needs to be adequately planned and accounted for to achieve a careful balance between inclusiveness versus feasibility.

Adjust the framework to national demands

A core strength of the SDG interactions framework is its flexibility in different national contexts, and options for adjustment depending on what policy process the framework aims to feed into. This was highlighted in the Mongolia pilot, where the framework was applied to targets derived from a national development plan rather than to SDG targets. Furthermore, as a follow-up to the SDG interactions workshop, the government adapted the methodology for applying the approach to individual sector plans. Other possible processes the framework could feed into include:

- initiating discussions on national or sector target prioritisations at the time of a mid-term review or drafting of new national or sectoral development policies;
- identifying partnerships between ministries and co-ordination mechanisms, e.g. for organising working groups in charge of the implementation of Agenda 2030;
- providing input to advocacy work within government and giving greater attention to policy issues considered particularly important across ministries,
- providing input to national voluntary reporting to the yearly United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

Value the process itself

The process of applying the SDG interactions framework may be just as important as the final results in terms of bringing about policy coherence. It brings together government stakeholders with different sectoral focuses together to study the relationships between targets in detail. As a scoping exercise to increase government knowledge of interactions, the framework provides a new platform for cross-sectoral dialogue which may be less politically sensitive than other formal fora.

Avoid over-complication

A successful and meaningful assessment process demands considerable time and resources from stakeholders. Demands must be limited in order to maintain a sufficiently high level of commitment and participation. One of the key challenges going forward is to strike a balance between a process that is inclusive, comprehensive and based on sound arguments and evidence while at the same time not being so complex and time consuming as to overwhelm stakeholders.

To conclude, the experience of applying the interactions framework has been encouraging so far. With joined forces, significant progress has been made in developing a user-friendly and useful approach to support coherent SDG implementation. SEI looks forward to further testing and refining the approach with government stakeholders and research and policy partner organisations.

Because reality is not a game

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How do children learn about the intricacies of social life? How does the military prepare for complex and highly uncertain missions? How do pilots and surgeons train for life-threatening situations?

One way is through role play and free exploration – simulating and playing out possible scenarios, learning and testing action strategies in a simulator. These learning and training situations are based on collectively shared and consciously evoked experiences from real life scenarios. In addition to the opportunity to test actions, boldly try new strategies or explore nuances in areas of interest to participants, they also facilitate reflection on real-world consequences within a safe, simulated environment.

How then might policy and decision makers prepare for navigating the complexities of governance in a highly interconnected and complex world? We propose that role play and simulation games can also equip policy- and decision makers with improved skills to better master the challenges of the 2030 Agenda and what lies beyond.

The Sustainable Development Goals are an acknowledgement that transformation to sustainable and resilient societies cannot happen through a “business as usual” approach. Developing realistic solutions for global and local issues requires taking into account the complexity and uncertainty of multiple levels, collaborative decision making and communication with others, and connecting the dots across industries, sectors and stakeholders. Policy and decision makers must act within this complex reality of a global, highly interconnected system while being challenged by one of the most urgent needs of our time: ensuring sustainable development for all. A full understanding of the interconnected reality of the SDGs remains elusive and practitioners are seeking robust tools and guidance that can increase understanding and help to make integrated and coherent policy making a common practice.

The Centre for Systems Solutions (CRS) and the Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) has jointly developed “The World’s Future – A Sustainable Development Goals Game”, an innovative exercise combining the benefits of systems analysis and simulation techniques with the dynamics of group scenario-building and creative role play, to support capacity building among policy makers. Since 2017, participants from the OECD and the European Forum Alpbach, as well as participants from DG DEVCO and the European External Action Service of the European Commission, have engaged in “The World’s Future” game. Their responses and reflections have been diverse and multilayered, such as:

“It was a humbling and eye-opening experience for me as a policy writer to be confronted with the complexity of policy making in action and trying to find sustainable solutions, even in a simplified version of reality.” Participant from DG DEVCO, EC

“I got a much clearer insight that policy making is actually very messy based on imperfect understanding of the system and incentives and on imperfect information of what others are doing.” Participant from OECD

More specifically, “The World’s Future” aims at helping players deepen their understanding of the complexities of the global system; identify and acknowledge interdependencies of actions in pursuit of the goals across policies, regions and time; better understand synergies, trade-offs, and feedbacks; and be able to reflect on negotiation patterns, effective communication and collaboration.

The game sessions have been broadly acknowledged as offering valuable insights to SDG implementation and an excellent way to facilitate sincere exchange between people from different working units and policy sectors. Our hope is that more and more policy makers will engage in playful, serious gaming and simulation exercises as a way to learn and enhance their skills to develop and implement more sustainable real world policy actions. Reality is not a game – but a game can help to improve reality.

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Annex 2.A.

Main institutional mechanisms for SDG implementation in 20 OECD countries

	Strategic framework / action plan	Institutional Mechanisms for coordination/engagement	International co-operation
Belgium	National Sustainable Development Strategy (approved in 2017) Federal Sustainable Development Strategy The Flanders Sustainable Development strategy The Wallonia Sustainable Development strategy The Brussels-Capital Region strategy	The Inter-ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development (IMCSD) involves federal, regional and community ministers for sustainable development and development cooperation The Inter-departmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) Federal Council for Sustainable Development Federal Institute for Sustainable Development (IFSD) Advisory Council for Policy Coherence for Development http://www.SDGs.be collects actions undertaken in the provinces and local governments	
Chile	Government Programme (2014-2018) Energía 2050	National Council for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Business Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of the Environment Government Network for the SDGs involving 23 ministries "Dialogues for a Sustainable Chile" organised by civil society National Indigenous Council Council of Social Responsibility for Sustainable Development of the Ministry of Economic Affairs	
Czech Republic	The "Czech Republic 2030" (adopted in April 2017)	Government Council for Sustainable Development (GCSD) chaired by First Deputy Minister and Minister for the Environment Department of Sustainable Development Interdepartmental Development Cooperation Council	The new Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018 – 2030 will reflect the SDGs
Denmark	National Action Plan for the SDGs	Ministry of Finance (responsible for coordinating national implementation) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (responsible for international engagement in support the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs) Inter-ministerial SDG working Group	Strategy for Development Policy and Humanitarian Assistance New Development Strategy "The World 2030"
Estonia	Estonian Sustainable Development Strategy <i>Sustainable Estonia 21</i>	Inter-ministerial working group led by the Government Office Strategy Unit Estonian Sustainable Development Commission	Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016-2020
Finland	<i>The Finland we want by 2050</i> (updated in 2016) Government's Plan for the 2030 Agenda (submitted to Parliament in 2017)	The Prime Minister's Office is responsible for coordinating national implementation. An interministerial Coordination Network with focal points from each ministry supports the PMO National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSD) The Development Policy Committee (DPC)	International Development Policy (updated in 2016) is steered by the 2030 Agenda
France	National Strategy of ecological transition towards sustainable development 2015-2020 National reform program (French transposition of Europe 2020, EU's ten-year jobs and growth strategy)	The General Commissariat for Sustainable Development (CGDD), mandated by the Prime Minister, in close partnership with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) Network of senior sustainable development officials The National Council for Development and International Solidarity (CNDSI) The National Council for the Ecological Transition (CNTE)	France's Development Strategy and Multiannual Development and International Solidarity Policy Act (2014)
Germany	German Sustainable Development Strategy (adopted in January 2017)	The State Secretaries' Committee chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery	

		Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development Sustainable Development Council Ministry Coordinators for Sustainable Development Directors' working group for sustainable development (UAL-AG)	
Italy	National Sustainable Development Strategy 2017/2030 (NSDS) Plan of Action (under development) National Reform Programme and the Economy and Financial Document	Prime Minister leads coordination with the support of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs The Ministry of Finance will be tasked to create strong synergies between the NSDS implementation and the formal economic policies	Three-year Strategic and Planning Document of the Italian Development Cooperation (2016-18)
Japan	SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles SDGs Action Plan 2018	Cabinet body "SDGs Promotion Headquarters", headed by the Prime Minister Public Private Action for Partnership (PPAP) SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meetings "Japan SDGs Award"	
Luxembourg	National Plan for Sustainable Development Law of 25 June 2004 on coordination of national sustainable development policy	Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Commission High Council for Sustainable Development Inter-ministerial Committee for Development Co-operation	
Mexico	National Development Plan National Strategy for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda (under development) National Platform for Monitoring the SDGs	National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (launched in 2017) Senate's Working Group for the Legislative Follow-up of the SDGs Commission for Compliance with the 2030 Agenda under The National Governors' Conference	
Netherlands	Dutch Coalition Agreement	Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, supported by an SDG-Coordinator. The SDG Coordinator leads an interministerial working group of focal points to support a coherent implementation of the SDGs.	New policy on Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, embedded within broader foreign policy, will take SDGs as guiding framework Action plan and annual report on policy coherence for development, aligned with SDGs.
Norway	National Strategy for Sustainable Development (updated 2011)	Ministry of Finance and coordinating Ministries The Storting (Norwegian parliament) Inter-ministerial contact group led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Portugal	A part of the sustainable development goals were already enshrined in the Constitution. Intra-governmental guidelines for the 2030 Agenda adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2016.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructures lead coordination 2 Commissions responsible for 1) the interministerial coordination of foreign policy, and 2) for co-operation policy Network of focal points from different government departments	
Korea	2015 Sustainable Development Act Third Basic Plan for Sustainable Development	Commission for Sustainable Development Committee for International Development Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment	Framework Act on International Development Cooperation
Slovenia	Vision of Slovenia 2050 Slovenian Development Strategy 2030	Government Council for Development	
Sweden	Policy for Global Development (PGU)	Minister for Public Administration Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate Consultation group for the 2030 Agenda Inter-ministerial working group for the 2030 Agenda The Scientific Council for Sustainable Development Multi-stakeholder National Committee	
Switzerland	Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) 2016–2019	Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC) National 2030 Agenda Working Group	
Turkey	10th National Development Plan 2014-2018 and Primary Transformation Programs 11th National Development Plan	High Planning Council Ministry of Development (contact point) Sustainable Development Coordination Commission led by the Ministry of Development Turkish Co-operation and Co-ordination Agency (TIKA)	Legal Framework on Development Cooperation (2011)

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