

Executive summary

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 17.14 calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) as a key means of implementation. Governments and stakeholders recognise the relevance of PCSD for identifying, understanding and managing interactions among highly interconnected SDGs, and for addressing the potential transboundary and intergenerational policy effects of domestic and international action. They are also increasingly recognising the need to break out of institutional and policy silos to realise the benefits of synergistic actions and to effectively address unavoidable trade-offs across the SDGs. Most importantly, they recognise the need for coherent approaches to ensure that “no one is left behind”, the underlying principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2018 edition of *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development* shows how integrated and coherent policies, supported by strong institutional mechanisms, can contribute to the “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies” – the theme of the 2018 United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). It applies the institutional, analytical and monitoring elements of the PCSD Framework to identify challenges and opportunities facing governments as they move to implement the SDGs, both at the national level and collectively at the global level.

Chapter 1 (Building coherent approaches to transformation) applies a PCSD lens to identify critical interlinkages among the five SDGs under 2018 HLPF review:

- SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; and
- SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

It brings together several strands of OECD analysis to show that each goal has a different but complementary role in achieving the 2030 Agenda’s primary aspiration of “shifting the world onto a sustainable path”. It emphasises that the SDGs cannot be achieved through single-sector or silo approaches. The chapter explores each of the five goals in terms of: 1) major challenges; 2) fundamental synergies and trade-offs that need to be managed to ensure a coherent and effective implementation; and 3) potential policy and governance responses. It also encourages enhanced policy coherence across actors, governance levels and timeframes to ensure a sustainable transformation, and address the

root causes of vulnerability – such as weak institutions, socio-economic inequalities, and the depletion of natural resources.

Chapter 2 (Eight building blocks for coherent SDG implementation) highlights new policy interdependencies that challenge sectoral structures and decision-making processes in many governments. It emphasises that enhancing PCSD, as called for in SDG 17.14, depends on supporting institutional mechanisms able to anticipate, balance and reconcile divergent policy pressures. This means adjusting structures and decision-making processes to effectively integrate sustainable development goals into the mandate of existing institutions, and fostering an administrative culture that promotes cross-sectoral collaboration sensitive to the need for global action.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to PCSD. Each country must determine its own institutional mechanisms and sequencing of actions. The chapter explores plans and initial steps towards adapting institutional frameworks for SDG implementation taken by the 20 OECD countries that have presented Voluntary National Reviews (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 building blocks for PCSD as a lens to identify good institutional mechanisms and practices: 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.

Chapter 3 (Country profiles: Institutional mechanisms for policy coherence) complements the analysis of the eight PCSD building blocks. It presents up-to-date country profiles from 19 countries on institutional arrangement for promoting PCSD: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. The chapter draws on responses to a survey sent out to the members of the informal network of national focal points for policy coherence with questions corresponding to the eight PCSD building blocks. The results are intended to form the basis for developing process indicators for each of the building blocks.

Chapter 4 (Tracking progress in policy coherence for sustainable development) aims to support government efforts to monitor SDG target 17.14 at the national level, as well as to contribute to the development of the global methodology for indicator 17.14.1 (Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development).

It focuses on three key elements of the PCSD Framework that need to be considered when tracking progress on PCSD at the national level: 1) institutional mechanisms; 2) critical interactions; and 3) transboundary and intergenerational policy effects. It applies this approach to the five thematic SDGs under review by the 2018 HLPF, and provides examples from both OECD and partner countries to illustrate the need to identify and use different combinations of indicators depending on national context, priorities and long-term policy objectives. The chapter draws extensively on existing OECD measurement frameworks and data sources.

Chapter 5 (Aligning domestic and international agendas for Agenda 2030) highlights the importance of enhancing PCSD at multiple levels. While governmental action at the national level will remain the key driver, progress cannot be achieved without stakeholder

engagement, collective action across national boundaries and collaboration among international processes and institutions. Collective efforts are at the heart of SDG 17 to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

It is in this spirit that members of the PCSD Partnership have been invited to contribute to this report with individual opinion pieces. While some have been integrated into other relevant chapters, those highlighting challenges and tensions in addressing policy coherence at the international level are presented here in Chapter 5.



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