

UNPACKING POLICY COHERENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP, IEH-GENEVA

16-17 November 2023

Report

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Background	2
Policy Coherence in Sustainable Development and its role in strengthening governance.	2
Policy coherence and the triple planetary crisis	3
The workshop	4
Session 1: Introduction, Expectations & Possible Way Forward	4
Session 2: Policy Coherence in Sustainable Development, PCSD Experience	8
a. Progress and experiences from using the Indicator 17.14.1 from UNEP	8
b. Experiences from implementing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD), from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)	9
c. Specialist Technical Assistance and Support for the Coordination Of Activities Relating to Environmental Issues, Ministry of Environment and Energy Security – country experience (Italy) 11	11
d. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution – Experiences from research	12
e. Public Strategy for Sustainable Development – a practitioner’s experience	13
Session 3: Going Beyond SDG 17.14.1	15
Session 4: Multilateral processes and policy coherence	15
a. United Nations University	15
b. Special Programme Supporting Policy Coherence at the National Level – The Chemicals and Waste Management Programme	16
c. Minamata Convention	16
d. GEF on Policy Coherence	17
e. ICCF on Policy Coherence project	17
Session 5: Policy Coherence and its role in environmental governance	18
Session 6: Strategizing on policy coherence for environmental governance	19
Outcomes	19
Conclusion	20

Introduction

In 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the aim to put the world on path towards a healthy, prosperous, and equitable future. Among these intrinsically integrated and indivisible SDGs, SDG 17 strives to “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” and SDG 17 has 19 targets and 25 indicators, including SDG target 17.14 on “Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development” (PCSD), with indicator 17.14.1 on “Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development”.

As the custodian agency for this indicator, along with 25 environment-related indicators, UNEP spearheaded the development of the methodology to measure progress on indicator related to policy coherence for sustainable development, in cooperation with various experts and organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As a result, in 2020, the UN InterAgency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG) upgraded SDG 17.14.1 from Tier 3[1] to Tier 2, which means “Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.”

Since then, UNEP has been engaged in supporting Member States in their pursuit to use policy coherence as key enabler for achieving the SDGs and use the indicator 17.14.1. One of the significant steps in this direction is the development of a handbook on the indicator and undertaking several capacity development activities at national level.

During 2023, UNEP’s Law Division and its Environmental Policy Unit (EPU) started to discuss the need for enlarging the scope of issues related to policy coherence and identified this as a critical element to achieve future environmental governance and policy management. This is in line with a number of recent developments, such as the decision during the 65th Environment facility (GEF) Council Meeting that approved a council paper on policy coherence to guide the work of the GEF, decisions of Conference of Parties (COPs), such as the 15th COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that calls for Parties to ensure policy coherence guide the national implementation.

To further discuss the experiences from using SDG indicator 17.14.1 and the guidance and decisions from other multilateral processes, the EPU organized a two day meeting in Geneva (16-17 November 2023) to discuss ways to consider policy coherence support future environmental governance by inviting select experts, representatives of MEAs, country SDG focal points and others to unpack policy coherence issues and come up with a set of ideas to mainstream, policy coherence issues across a number of multilateral processes.

Background

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and its role in strengthening governance.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is a conduit to achieve the comprehensive set of goals in the Agenda 2030. An important component of PCSD is the integration of sustainable development dimensions into policymaking at all levels. This supports a shift towards a specific governance model for which integrated policy-making and monitoring also across levels accountability, transparency, responsiveness, stability, equity, inclusion, empowerment, and broad participation are the key characteristics. To effectively address the integrated universal, indivisible

and transversal nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, governments and stakeholders must increasingly work across sectors and constituencies to breakdown the institutional and policy silos to realize the benefits of synergistic actions, identify unintended negative effects of policies, and manage trade-offs and – internal and transboundary- spillovers across the SDGs.¹

Policy coherence for sustainable development can help policymakers better understand how their policy choices today can affect the future and how their choices could impact on wellbeing and sustainable development at large. Institutions like UNEP, OECD, national systems leading by example and MEAs can play a role in providing useful information to guide decision-making in this regard.

Policy coherence for sustainable development and the triple planetary crisis

Leading UNEP's work on the PCSD, the Law Division is identifying areas and partners for strengthening policy development and to address the triple planetary crises, of climate change, nature loss and pollution in a coherent manner. The overall objective is to support member states to comply with and enforce the various commitments related to SDGs, MEAs and other relevant multilateral processes.

One of the key challenges countries faces is their ability to use available science, information, and data to make policies or amend policies due to low capacities and resources as well as timely availability of such resources.

The UNEP Medium Strategy calls for effective support for strengthened environmental rule of law and achievement of environmental goals, in the context of sustainable development, builds on strong science-policy-practice linkages, and addresses the triple planetary crises and emerging environmental issues through strong legal and institutional frameworks and policy coherence. In practice, there is a need to support science-based policy making and ensure such policies support development of necessary legal frameworks.

Policy coherence is increasingly being reflected in the strategic objectives of other international organizations and entities e.g., in GEF², EU, OECD and other UN Agencies. UNEP has been active at the international level in fostering dialogue and cooperation on policy coherence for sustainable development. On the 11th of November 2022 UNEP launched with its key partners a Community of Practice on PCSD and the second meeting was held on the 15th of September 2023. In 2022 UNEP undertook work to develop a handbook on Policy coherence.

The Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Handbook on SDG 17.14.1 is expected to be finalized in 2024 given the new publication requirements of UNEP and the outcomes of the Community of Practice meeting were also shared and discussed at the workshop.

Enhancing UNEP's work on policy coherence in environmental governance for implementing is therefore critical. In this regard, policy coherence also plays an important role in effective

¹ "No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested." Currently, the global indicator framework does not contain any Tier 3 indicators. The OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0381>), which is open to adherence, provides a comprehensive standard to equip policy-makers and key stakeholders with the necessary institutional mechanisms and policy tools to enhance policy coherence, address integrated economic, social and environmental goals, and implement the SDGs in an integrated manner. 39 countries have adhered to this OECD legal instrument.

² https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023-09/EN_GEF.C.65.04_Enhancing%20Policy%20Coherence%20through%20GEF%20Operations_.pdf

implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as they are designed to address complex global environmental challenges and involve multiple countries working together to achieve shared goals. To ensure successful implementation, policy coherence is essential at the subnational, national and international levels.

The workshop

The workshop brought together stakeholders striving to link environmental governance as a key enabler to achieve sustainable development to share experiences and knowledge on the issue as well as on the PCSD SDG 17.14.1. The [agenda](#) (appended as Annex 1) included an exchange on the different interpretations of policy coherence and integrated approaches and tools for enhancing coordination, cooperation which were developed to support member states. In addition, participants (list of participants appended as Annex 2) explored how coherent implementation of actions can help to address the three planetary crises.

The [objectives](#) of the two-day workshop were to:

- i. Provide an overview and exchange of information on the existing PCSD processes, approaches, practices which support environmental governance.
- ii. Allow for technical level exchange on best practices on PCSD approaches and tools. Discussion on factors that hinder the uptake of these for strengthened PCEG and a link to science policy interface.
- iii. Discuss the strengthening of cooperation and strategic approach on PCEG. As part of that, brainstorming possible elements for a strategy that would assist in the uptake of policy coherence in environmental governance.

Session 1: Introduction, Expectations & Possible Way Forward

During this session, the workshop took a deep dive into some challenges which may include and not limited to the lack of coherence when developing approaches to ongoing and emerging policy areas such as science policy interfaces in support of delivering the mandates of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and the lack of coordinated focus on policy development on issues that are being addressed across different programmes and initiatives.

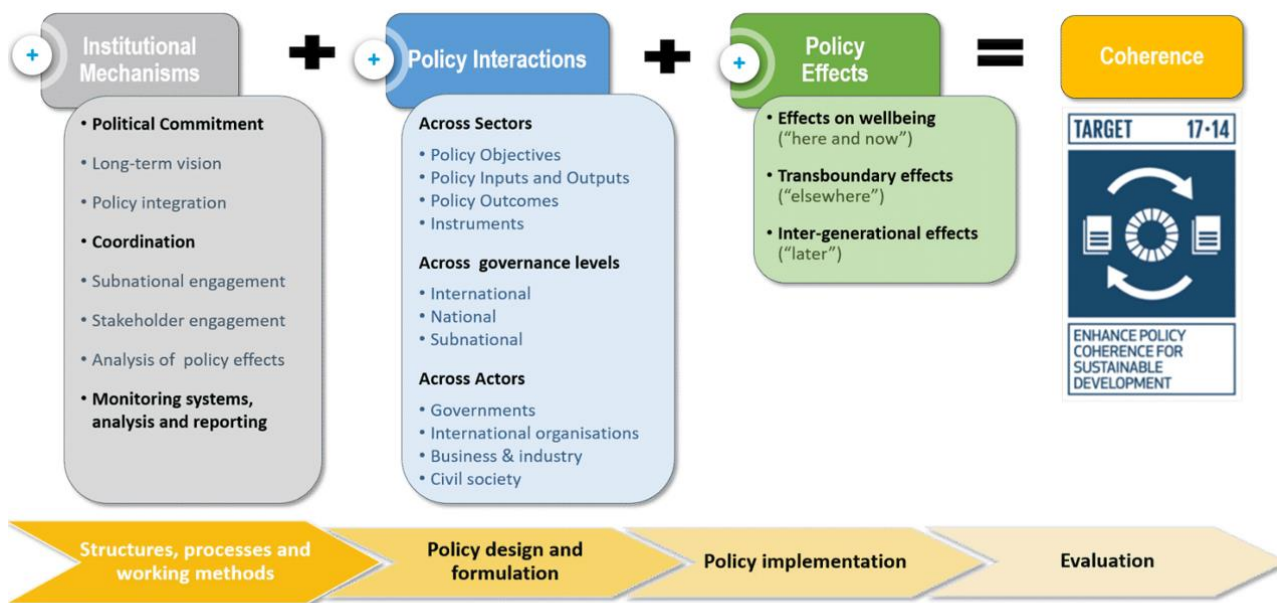
In the presentation to set the tone to the consultative workshop, Dr Pisupati noted while there are no universally agreed definition for PCSD, highlighting three definitions of policy coherence and these are:

- i. *“An approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policymaking. Its objectives in the context of the 2030 Agenda are to advance the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda by: (i) Fostering synergies and maximizing benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas, (ii) balancing domestic policy objectives with internationally recognized sustainable development goals, and (iii) addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries,”* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD.³
- ii. *“The coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development”* – UN Environment Programme.

³ OECD. OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development; OECD: Paris, France, 2019

- iii. The 65th GEF Council Meeting noted that *Policy coherence is being progressively mainstreamed in global dialogues as a critical mechanism which, if left unattended, can hamper the world's ability to reverse the current environmental trends and to reach its crucial nature-positive targets.*⁴

To an extent, the discussions that happen in the context of policy coherence for sustainable development focus on a few issues outlined in the illustration below as produced by OECD. It looks at how to achieve coherence using different actors and processes and mechanisms.



OECD, 2018

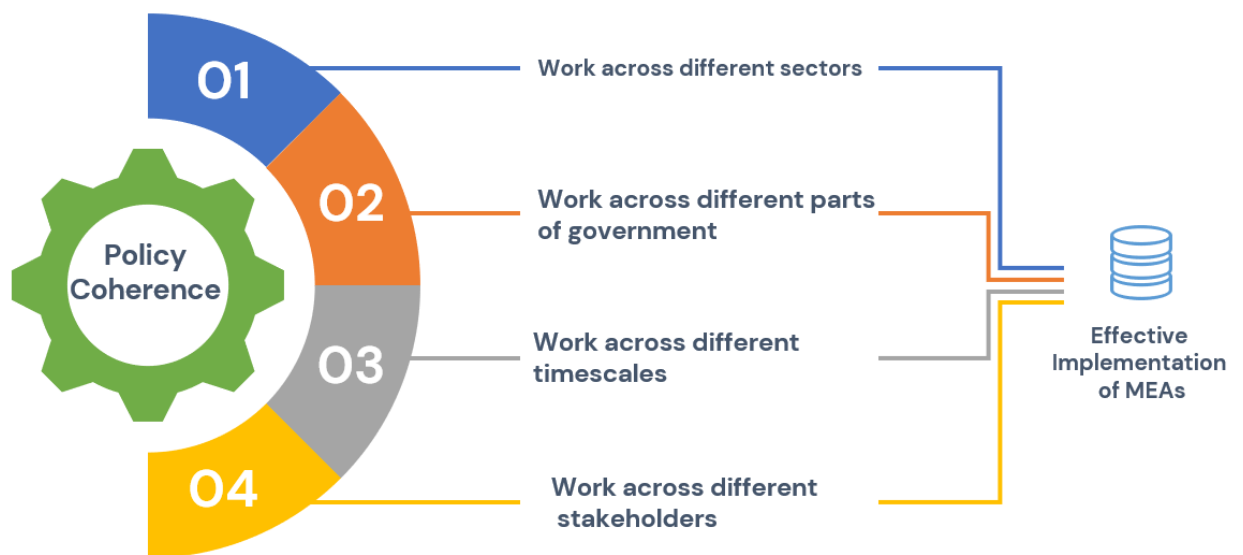
Stakeholder groups at various governance levels are working with different actors, but it is more crucial to examine the effects on wellbeing, the transboundary effects, and the intergenerational effects.

With respect to policy coherence and Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) working across different sectors, addressing synergies is important and increasingly attention is diverted to synergies through several processes, both technical and political processes. Below is an illustration that visualizes policy coherence in MEAs and suggests ways to explore synergies.

⁴ [EN_GEF.C.65.04 Enhancing Policy Coherence through GEF Operations .pdf \(thegef.org\)](#)

Policy Coherence and MEAs

Taking the focus beyond SDGs

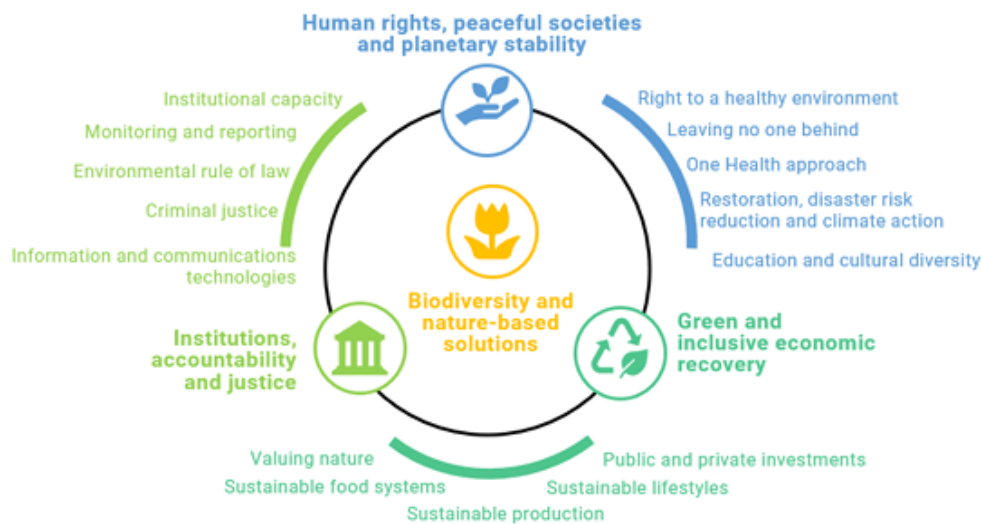


One example of effort that is currently being undertaken, and noted in this presentation, was the preparation of countries to deliver national biodiversity strategies, the updating part of it, setting national targets, and the third element, working across different time scales, and the last element, collaborating with different stakeholders. The whole-of-society approach, which entails identifying the interests and focal areas that are now considered or emerging as top priorities for achieving not just the effective implementation of individual multilateral environmental agreements, was also noted. One of the key issues that stakeholders, policymakers, and scientists are facing is looking at synergistic actions that support policy coherence in implementation.

Also noted in this presentation is the [UN Common Approach](#) to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the United Nations policy and programme planning and delivery." This approach was endorsed in 2021 by the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.⁵ As shown in the illustration below through the common approach, the UN system commits to mainstream biodiversity and catalyse collective action to address the drivers of biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and ultimately living in harmony with nature. It also leverages the convening power and expertise from across the UN system. A common approach on biodiversity will contribute to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

⁵ [UN Common Approach to Biodiversity | United Nations - CEB \(unsceb.org\)](https://www.un.org/development/desa/pubs/2021/05/un-common-approach-to-biodiversity/)

Figure I
Impact areas and medium-term objectives of the Common Approach to Integrating Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Development into United Nations Policy and Programme Planning and Delivery



The following are some of the issues raised during the introductory session for the consultative workshop:

- Understand policy coherence for sustainable development.
- Assess experiences of what is working and what is not under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Discuss policy coherence and environmental commitments (MEAs)
- Identify principles and approaches (e.g. using Global Biodiversity Framework)
- Elaborate on actions into the future – Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) and Policy Coherence for Environmental Governance (PCEG).

During the discussions, the following questions emerged.

1. How do we govern policy coherence?
2. How does it translate into different levels of implementation?
3. What are the available metrics?

The participants discussed the need for all MEAs and multilateral agreements to be implemented in an integrated and synergistic manner, there is a need to focus on policy coherence so that the co-benefits of a coherent approach can enhance efficiency.

At the country level, there is [fragmentation of our environmental governance and policy making of MEA's bodies](#) resulting in certain conflicts which stem from the inconsistencies of policies.

Session 2: Policy Coherence in Sustainable Development, PCSD Experience

In this session sharing experiences from implementing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD), lessons learnt, and future plans and presentations were made by experts. Policy coherence for development (PCD), now considered as one of the multiple dimensions of PCSD, is a legal requirement for the EU, although PCSD is more simply an element of the policy framework of the EU in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The short presentation given by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) suggested that useful lessons can be learned from the experience with PCD, particularly on how to manage cross-border spillover effects of policies.

The presentations focused on:

a. Progress and experiences from using the Indicator 17.14.1 from UNEP

SDG indicator 17.14.1 aims to measure progress toward SDG target 17.14, “Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.” This is one of the 19 targets under SDG 17, which seeks to “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”. This indicator is now classified as Tier II Indicator: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development is important for:

- achieving the implementation of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development (economic, social, and environmental) in a balanced and integrated manner.
- coherence between policies at various levels of government.
- and the most important is to foster synergies and produce policies that mutually reinforce each other, and to ensure that policies put in place are implementable and sustainable as they are inclusive of the concerned stakeholders’ perspectives.

This indicator is important for SDG 17 as it will help in [leading coherent policy development and it is also important for achieving the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental](#).

As the custodian agency, UNEP took the lead in the development of the methodology in close collaboration with relevant partners and experts, including the OECD. These consultations took place from July 2018 to October 2019, followed by pilot testing of the draft methodology in Burkina Faso, Guyana, Kenya, and Tanzania. Subsequently, a further refined methodology was submitted to the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, which then reclassified SDG 17.14.1 to Tier II, which means that the “Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries”. UNEP used a composite indicator, and this indicator measures the policy coherence:

- Between different levels of government (local to national).
- Across key government ministries, departments, and agencies and across sectors and themes.
- Between national and international policy and across national boundaries.
- In terms of promoting a long-term vision and coherence across political mandates.

The questionnaire for SDG 17.14.1 has been developed in the 6 UN official languages and was sent to countries in their official language in the 2022 data drive and UNEP in cooperation with OECD

launched on 15 November 2022, a global CoP on the SDG indicator 17.14.1 and carried out the second meeting on 13 September 2023.

UNEP Developed a PCSD Handbook including 83 examples, including eight short case studies, from 38 countries and four international organizations. Capacity building exercises are continuously carried for countries. Recently, under the EC project on enhancing capacity for measuring progress towards the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs, 4 in-country (Jordan, Ghana, Senegal, and Uganda) training on policy coherence were implemented to strengthen their understanding about the self-assessment tool and enable country's officials to report on SDG 17.14.1. Limitations noted in this presentation on PCSD include the following:

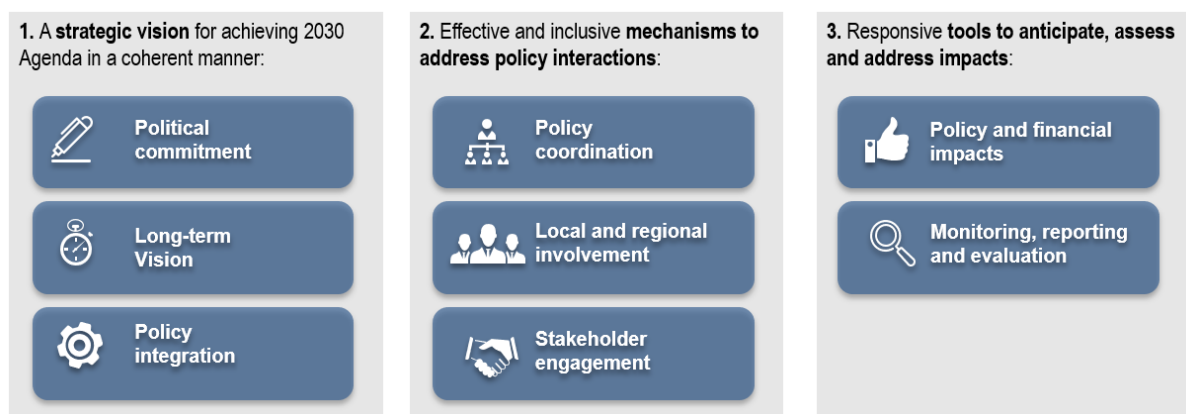
- There are many mechanisms that could be useful to assess at the national level which would be relevant to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.
- This methodology aims to provide a basis for countries to engage in discussions around what policy coherence means at the national level and how it could be improved.
- Such discussions and strategies to improve policy coherence that may results from it could feed into a country Voluntary National Review (VNR) or National Development Strategy or Plan development, to inform further efforts by the country to improve its ability to implement Agenda 2030 through better policy coherence.
- This document should be considered a living document which is regularly updated with the country experiences in putting in place and assessing mechanisms for policy coherence.
- These experiences, and related challenges, lessons learned and solutions, can be shared so that UNEP as custodian agency, with partners, can further refine this methodology and disseminated it not only as a tool to enable effective reporting but also to support national efforts toward policy coherence.

b. [Experiences from implementing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development \(PCSD\), from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organisation in which governments work together to find solutions to common challenges, develop global standards, share experiences and identify best practices to promote better policies for better lives. It has developed an internationally agreed standard (OECD legal instrument) on PCSD, which was adopted by all OECD members in 2019. The presentation was given by Ernesto Soria Morales, Head of Unit/Senior Policy Analyst. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD provides the framework to:

- Develop, evidence-based analysis, guidance, and tools to strengthen institutional mechanisms in support of policy coherence.
- Foster policy dialogue, exchange of experiences and peer-learning about governance and policy coherence challenges in advancing the SDGs (OECD Network of National Focal Points, HLPF, etc.,)
- Provide targeted country support, including through projects tailored to specific needs of countries as well as online courses and online tools for practitioners.
- Support capacity building in public administrations, including through online courses and online tools for practitioners.

The presentation also highlighted the 8 principles for enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development under three key pillars which are illustrated below.



Overall, there is widespread commitment to enhance PCSD in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, challenges remain in translating this commitment into practice. There is a need to raise awareness on transboundary impacts. [Obstacles to enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development, by level of importance](#) was highlighted in a survey in 2022 where OECD surveyed institutional capacities and tools to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) and these included the following challenges:

- Lack of long-term measures to ensure sustained commitment to PCSD beyond electoral cycles.
- Limited enforceability of PCSD measures.
- Capacity in human resources, insufficient expertise of policymakers on the topic, legal and political framework,
- Challenges in clearly communicating the benefits of PCSD across government.
- Absence of defined priority areas, time-bound actions, or key performance indicators for marking progress on PCSD.
- Technical capacity limited funding.
- Limited funding.
- Absence of lead institution responsible for promoting overseeing and implementing PCSD
- Limited support for PCSD at the highest levels of government.
- Absence of clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for promoting overseeing and implementing PCSD.
- Absence of resources and data to identify priorities and development PCSD policy strategy action plan program.

Forward looking OECD in 2024 will report to the OECD Council the the implementation, dissemination, and continued relevance of the PCSD Recommendation (its content will be a useful contribution to the [Summit of the Future](#) in September 2024) and will begin new country support projects on PCSD in Belgium, Ireland, Portugal with important peer-learning components. Importantly, OECD will Advance in the development of a monitoring methodological framework to help countries understand their progress on enhancing PCSD at the national level, with particular emphasis on transboundary impacts.

c. Specialist Technical Assistance and Support for the Coordination Of Activities Relating to Environmental Issues, Ministry of Environment and Energy Security – country experience (Italy)

The presentation was from Italy. In 2019, the Ministry for Environment and Energy Security submitted a project to the European Commission, under the DG Reform Structural Reform Support Programme (now Technical Support Instrument) which is meant to support structural reform at Member State's level. The title of the Project was "Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development: mainstreaming the SDG's into decision making process" and held the objective to support in the drafting of the National Action Plan on PCSD. The Project was realized in connection with the triannual review process of the first National Sustainable Development Strategy approved in 2017 and with the elaboration of the second Italian Voluntary National Review to the HLPF 2022. In both cases, PCSD resulted as a focus theme and described as an "enabler".

The project was carried out with the scientific support of the OECD Governance Directorate and was built on the 2019 OECD Ministerial Recommendations on PCSD. The project involved all branches of the Italian government, including central and local governments. It also involved the National Institute of Statistics, the Italian Agency for the Protection of the Environment as well as Universities and other National research centers. Non- institutional stakeholders were also engaged through the National Forum for Sustainable Development, an open-ended network of organizations now counting more than 200 members. The proceedings of the project allowed for engaging institutional and non-institutional actors in a structured and permanent manner around sustainable development, using PCSD as the entry point and innovative approach. The project made it possible to map the institutional entities – at central and local level - mandated with sustainable development as well as to assess the policy and monitoring cycles through the lenses of the SDG 17.14.1. Together with the creation of a structured multilevel and multistakeholder engagement process, the main results were a "Italy Governance Scan for PCSD" and a "National Action Plan on PCSD" annexed to the new National Sustainable Development Strategy approved in 2022. The project confirmed that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires managing complexity to attain its main principles of SDGs transversality, integrity, indivisibility, universality where is not possible for a single Ministry to act alone. It supported Italy in the understanding of its system potentiality. To build on such potentialities, the PCSD NAP suggests specific instruments, tools, and methods of work– inspired by the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach – making PCSD a concrete method of work. The PCSD NAP allowed for the institutionalization of the PCSD. In particular, inter alia:

- Setting the long-term vision to implement and monitor PCSD by suggesting ways to mainstreaming it in the programming, policy and monitoring cycles; .
- Including PCSD into the NSDS which, by law, is to be reviewed every three years .
- Making policy coherence existing experiences structural, mainly learning from the territorial level.
- Suggesting the use of specific methods of work to enact PCSD, i.e. intersectoral governing bodies; coherence matrixes to capture synergies, trade-offs and spillovers of existing policies; coherence fiches to capture synergies, trade-offs and spillovers of programmed new policies.
- Provide an assessment and monitoring framework to the PCSD NAP as to ensure the monitoring of PCSD along the way, considering it a process.

PCSD entry points along the policy cycle

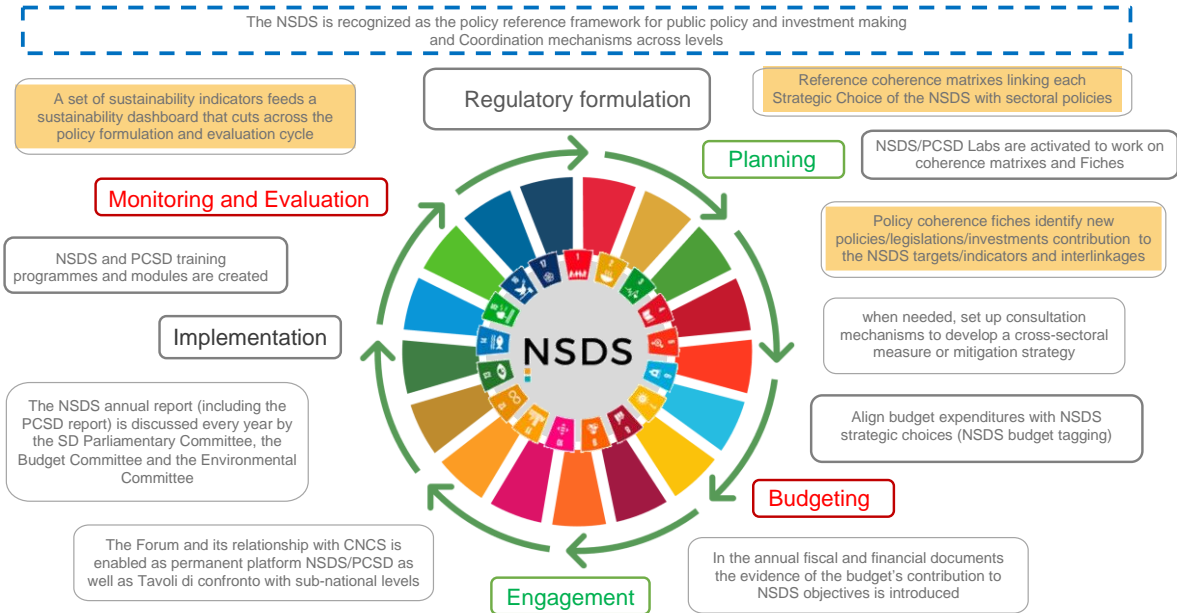


Fig. 1 Suggested restructuring of the policy-cycle according to PCSD (PCSD NAP)

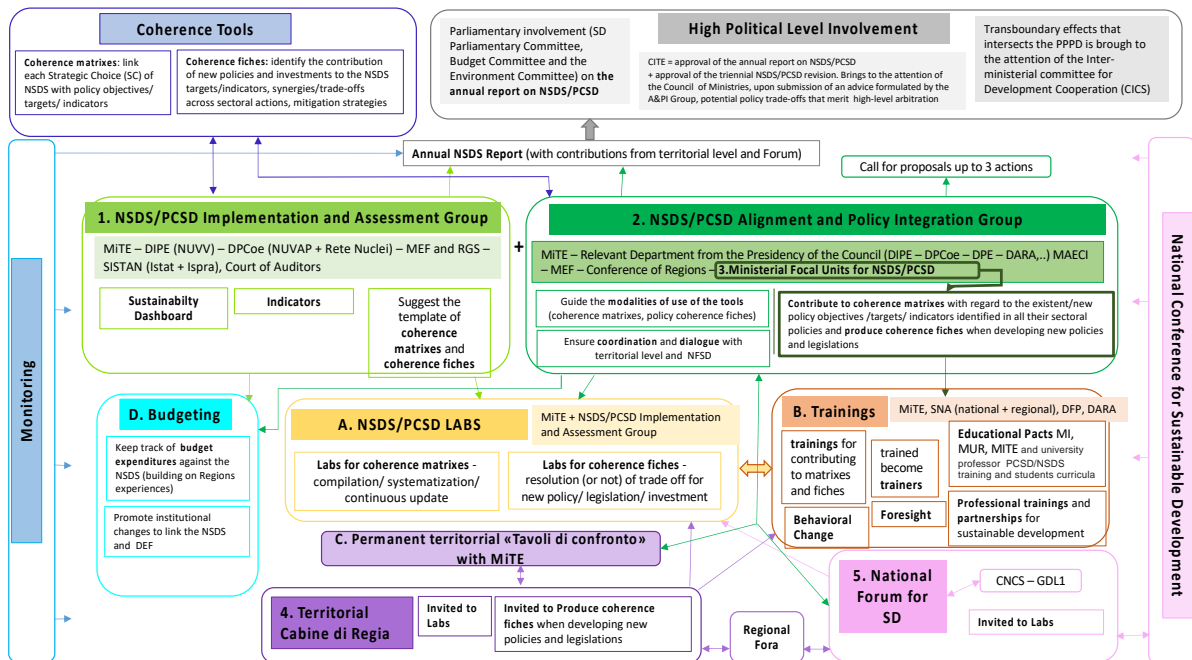


Fig. 2 Suggested whole-of-government and whole-of-society reformulation of the interactions according to PCSD (PCDN NAP)

d. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution – Experiences from research

According to the Chair of the Marine Policy Center (MPC) in the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the issue of policy had grown in its sophistication in addressing a variety of issues, and that that is quite impressive. From a purely academic and scholarly point of view, in terms of the

actual impact at the country level, there is still a lot that needs to be done, and in fact, many of the presentations so far noted this as well.

Oceans cover about 71% of the planet Earth and are connected to all the sustainable development goals. When it comes to oceans, it's not as pronounced as it ought to be, especially in terms of the impact that it has on all blue foods, food security, biodiversity issues, and climate change.

The Marine Policy Center conducts social scientific research that integrates economics, policy analysis, and law with the Institution's basic research in ocean sciences. Broad areas of recent research include:

- ecosystem-based conservation and management of living resources
 - dynamics of coupled natural and human systems.
 - natural capital and ecosystem services
 - coastal and marine spatial planning and zoning
 - shoreline change and coastal resilience.
 - coastal and marine natural hazards
-
- economics of ocean observing systems
 - offshore energy development
 - oceans and human health

While MPC's research is based in rigorous academic disciplines, much of it is applied in nature and motivated by current issues in coastal and marine resource conservation and management and marine industries.

e. [Public Strategy for Sustainable Development – a practitioner's experience](#)

The presentation noted that several countries are seriously lagging on achieving most of the SDGs and that policies are not the problem, but governance was lagging. Better implementation through better governance frameworks and tools were needed. PCSD provided a framework which created good governance preconditions for policy coherence especially as it is part of effective sustainability governance as illustrated below.



The 11 Principles of effective governance for sustainable development developed by UN CEPA and endorsed by UN ECOSOC; used by UNDP, APRM and several countries include effectiveness (competence sound policy making, collaboration), accountability (integrity, transparency, independent oversight) and inclusiveness (leaving no one behind, non-discrimination, participation, subsidiarity, and intergenerational equity)

It also discussed the difference between environmental policy and environmental governance. PCSD needs a dual approach, and one is to assess, monitor and measure progress and as a starting point, use the indicator 17.14.1 for stock-taking. This process also allows for peer learning to accelerate PCSD and to collect data and include indicator 17.14.1 in the national SDG monitor, for political visibility.

The second approach is to improve institutions, mechanisms, processes, mindsets and make national action plans which are linked to the sustainable development strategy. This approach also includes the formulation of national action plans and creating the opportunity to make Ministries of Interior as allies for the SDGs.

On indicator 17.14.1, it was noted that the indicator is not yet often used and statistical offices (incl Eurostat) find the indicator “not statistical” (reliable, comparable data). Good practice experience shows that the self-assessment should involve all ministries, involve stakeholders, and would benefit from peer review - to be arranged in a Protocol.

The presentation also made the following recommendations:

Possible quality requirements: a protocol for indicator 17.14.1:

- a. Appoint a PCSD indicator focal point, e.g., the SDG coordinating team.
- b. Ensure government-wide participation and ownership.
- c. Ensure participation of subnational authorities.
- d. Ensure participation of societal stakeholders.

- e. Organise peer review.
- f. Clarify the scoring method and the detailed questions.
- g. Consider an independent external assessment.
- h. Present results both as dashboard and as total score.
- i. Take interlinkages, incl. spill-over and transboundary effects into account.
- j. Make the results of the assessment publicly available.
- k. Commit to reassess annually.
- l. Ensure follow-up of the self-assessment.
- m. Add an explanatory memorandum.
- n. Ensure sufficient financial and human resources.
- o. Set up a training course on PCSD.

Also noted is that PCSD can be applied to environmental governance and environmental integration principle and that the key obstacles or challenges of policy incoherence are in the administrative and governance structures of countries and subnationally are to be considered. Therefore, MEA secretariats could best play a coaching, training, engaging role to promote PCSD in the countries, starting with supporting self-assessments (using the indicator). At another level what about policy incoherence between MEAs and with non-environmental agreements? How can PCSD play a role there?

According to UNSTATs (DESA), indicator 17.14.1 on PCSD is still a weak performer and therefore **risks being abolished** if it is not used a lot more.

Session 3: Going Beyond SDG 17.14.1

Exploring going further in the implementation of Beyond SDG 17.14.1 was discussed and increased momentum on the implementation of SDG17.14.1.

Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) – emerging issues Going beyond SDG 17.14.1 on policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) to strengthen environmental governance at various levels. Learning from the PCSD processes for designing policy coherence approaches for environmental governance, the participants focused on the following questions:

- How can we use policy as an instrument of change in reversing the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature protection and pollution?
- What kind of support and capacities are needed at national level to comply with and enforce the various commitments including those related to MEAs, SDGs, outcomes from multilateral processes and Environmental Governance?

Session 4: Multilateral processes and policy coherence

To share information and hear about the work being done by multilateral processes, including the MEAs in terms of their focus and opportunities related to policy coherence in the context of environmental governance. Understand and know about the work being done by multilateral processes, including the MEAs in terms of their focus and opportunities related to policy coherence in the context of environmental governance. Presentations/interventions from participants on how they interpret policy coherence and identify implementation options.

a. United Nations University

Among its many activities, UNU facilitates capacity development, conducts research, and organizes courses for stakeholders from different sectors. During the CBD COP10, the Japanese Ministry of

Environment responded with the Satoyama initiative. The Satoyama Initiative is a socio-ecological systems approach to promote living in harmony with nature, but it also promotes what is called socio-ecological resilience. Implementation should be focused on the local level, so it is subnational, but requires a lot of national support. It is necessary to focus activities at the level of implementation and then see how they can be aligned with broader intergovernmental policy processes. There are multiple priorities for big policy goals when they are translated into action on the ground because there are so many users and advocates. In a landscape, there could be different kinds of governance regimes, so how is it managed and governed?

The initiative examines economic and ecological vulnerabilities and provides a few key indicators so that communities can begin discussing them. In the end, communities and local stakeholders decide which criteria is best suited for their context, and they come up with a few interesting strategies for addressing their well-being. They actively pursue government departments that can facilitate their actions. UN University does that looks at also knowledge generation, training, capacity development.

A UNU online course discussing policy coherence across diversity in climate change is planned for next year.

b. Special Programme Supporting Policy Coherence at the National Level – The Chemicals and Waste Management Programme

The Special Programme, also known as the Chemicals and Waste Management Programme, is a funding mechanism that provides support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enhance their sustainable institutional capacity to develop, adopt, monitor, and enforce policy, legislation, and regulation for effective frameworks for the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and SAICM.

Policy coherence begins at the national level at first, but on a second level if we are discussing the triple planetary crisis and pollution. To implement the various multilateral environmental agreements effectively, synergies must be created between them. A crucial aspect, and institutional strengthening is only considered if things are addressed at a cross-cutting level.

In order to move forward from pollution, we really need to encourage cross-sectoral collaboration, which will be achieved through collaboration mechanisms. The Special Programme supports country-driven institutional strengthening at the national level, in the context of an integrated approach to address the sustainable financing of sound management of chemicals and wastes, considering:

- National development strategies, plans and priorities of each country; and
- Increase sustainable public institutional capacity for the sound management of chemicals and wastes throughout their life cycle.
- Further information can be found in the terms of reference of the Special Programme.

The presentation was given by Felix Herzog.

c. Minamata Convention

Policy coherence is embedded in the text of the Minamata Convention. Article 13 paragraph 1 calls on parties to provide resources for national activities to implement the Convention, in accordance with the national policies, plans and programmes. A few COP-5 decisions are relevant to policy coherence, and it looked closely at this sort of coordination, and this was a full and quite detailed decision that

talked about integrated action between Minamata and the Kunming Montreal framework, and it also asked the CBD COP to consider additional indicators under their target 7 on to cover highly hazardous chemicals and mercury. This is a strong decision that really requires such a kind of collaboration and coherence with the Biodiversity Convention, but it was accompanied by a detailed information document detailing the obligations that we have in Minamata, how they relate to biodiversity, and what can be done.

COP-5 Decisions relevant for policy coherence



Mercury and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- Taking into account the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the COP encouraged Parties to take a number of steps to advance **integrated action** on mercury reduction and biodiversity.
- COP invited the COP to the Convention on Biological Diversity to consider **additional indicators**, under Target 7, to cover highly hazardous chemicals and mercury.

International cooperation and coordination

- The COP welcomed the opportunity for the Secretariat to become an observer at the meetings of the **UN Climate Change Conferences**.
- The COP also welcomed the recent adoption of the **Global Framework on Chemicals**, requesting the Secretariat to further collaborate with relevant bodies in recognition of the collective commitment to addressing chemical and waste-related challenges on a broad political scale.

Effectiveness evaluation

- COP established an **Effectiveness Evaluation Group** to oversee the development of the first report to evaluate the effectiveness of the Convention.
- Effectiveness evaluation to be completed by **COP-7**.
- Agreed on a list of **indicators** (most of them based on national reporting submissions).

Review of the financial mechanism

- COP completed the second review, and invited parties, the GEF, and others to take a number of actions to enhance implementation.
- COP provided additional details to supplement the guidance of the COP to the Global Environment Facility: the Global Environment Facility, in planning for its ninth replenishment period, should **promote synergies with other focal areas**, including the biodiversity focal area, as it advances work under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Secretariat of the Minamata Convention was represented by Marianne Bailey and Maria Irene Rizzo.

- A question raised to the MEAs was whether the indicator 17.14.1 can be used in MEAs and particularly where effectiveness of implementation is to be measured.
- Are you considering the effects of policies that drive the gold sector or perhaps the mining sector that may conflict with the objectives of the Convention?

d. GEF on Policy Coherence

The GEF Secretariat noted that policy coherence agenda is mainstreamed into GEF-8 programme design and implementation and looking at GEF 9 which will run from 2026 to 2030, would expect that policy coherence will remain or increase.

e. ICCF on Policy Coherence project

The GEF project consists of an iterative process intended to produce a global guide for legislators to ensure policy coherence. A major focus of the engagement is engaging parliamentarians and legislators and pushing environmental policy agendas through collaboration with the executive branch. As part of the project, lawmakers and public parliamentarians are going to be provided with a guide on how they can achieve better policy coherence and better align public and private investment. The second bit is country pilots working with three key countries - Colombia, Mongolia, and Zambia. A general observation is that there is a great deal of theory on policy

coherence. Since the literature and resources are abundant, there is interested in connecting with those who have experience executing policy coherence projects in the field.

As a response, the operationalization of PCSD in Italy was highlighted and the eight case studies UNEP had developed that reflected country experiences.

Session 5: Policy Coherence and its role in environmental governance

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) as a conduit to achieve this comprehensive set of goals is critical to international, regional, national, and local governance. An important component of PCSD is the integration of sustainable development dimensions into policymaking. This supports governance in which accountability, transparency, responsiveness, stability, equity, inclusion, empowerment, and broad participation are included. To effectively address the integrated, indivisible, transversal and universal nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, governments and stakeholders must break down institutional and policy silos to realize the benefits of synergistic actions, identify unintended negative effects of policies, and manage unavoidable trade-offs and – internal and transboundary- spill-overs across the SDGs. In doing so, the intention is to focus on policy that serves both internal and external to UNEP through

- i. serving as an influencer of policy uptake or change by member states, and
- ii. an enabler of policy development, implementation, compliance, and enforcement.

Questions raised during this session included:

- What is being done on policy coherence in general (other than SDGs, mapping)?
- What are the emerging ideas and approaches (e.g. MEAs, ongoing multilateral processes)?

The consultative workshop heard that one important tool to improve coherence at the national level is the national budget processes and exploring the issues-based approach for the budgeting process.

Discussions also highlighted the following issues which can be explored in detail as well and these include but are not limited to:

- international organizations and secretariats can serve as drivers of policy coherence.
- identifying the synergies across the conventions, there are also maybe some of the potential tradeoffs and lessons from countries to MEA synergies.
- communicate the importance of coherence in a simpler way in a way that is actionable.
- engaging with public administration officials and institutions and how policy coherence can lead reforms; (reference was made to the European Commission's Quality of Public Administration Handbook).
- online training program on operationalizing PCSD and PCEG.
- the dialogue on policy coherence is quite important and policy coherence is not only the responsibility of governments, (quality of that dialogue, but also that stakeholder really influence policymaking).
- how can member states ensure that the stakeholder participation is becoming something meaningful to improving policy coherence.
- How can we influence the agendas of multilateral meetings, including the Pact of the Future negotiations?
- How can we support the upgrading of SDG 17.14.1 to Tear I?

Session 6: Strategizing on policy coherence for environmental governance.

Practitioners are increasingly focusing on the synergies between different approaches and policies. A central focus of environmental governance is policy coherence. Environmental governance includes policy actions taken both domestically and internationally and policy coherence plays a crucial role in effectively implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as they are designed to address complex global environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Importantly, they involve multiple countries working together to achieve shared goals. To ensure successful implementation, policy coherence is essential at both the national and international levels. During the session, participants discussed how to expand the scope of PCSD discussions beyond SDGs and focus on ideas UNEP can further work on. This session is also summarized in the outcomes in the next stage of this report.

Outcomes

At the end of the two-day workshop participants became aware of what each entity and individual was working on in policy coherence with a better understanding of the policy coherence landscape. Furthermore, they identified areas of stronger collaboration on policy coherence for environmental governance and addressed the objectives of the consultations which include but not limited to the following:

- a. Developing better ways of sharing information on the existing PCSD processes, approaches, practices which support environmental governance, using all opportunities in the multilateral and international arena.
- b. Document best practices on PCSD approaches and tools and a plan to address factors that hinder the uptake of these for strengthened PCEG with a link to science policy interface. (Under the Community of Practice)
- c. Identified areas to strengthen cooperation and strategic approach on PCEG and PCSD.
- d. Address policy coherence in MEAs particularly the Rios, and other environmental multilateral agreements.

In addition, an approach paper on how to deal with policy coherence for environmental governance will draw heavily from PCSD, and the impacts of SDG 17.14.1 will be developed. The approach paper will also explore answers to the following questions.

- e. What are the main challenges for policy coherence in the implementation of MEAs?
- f. To analyse the problem, it might be useful to distinguish specific dimensions of challenges for policy coherence. Considering the scope and sectors of policy coherence we can distinguish between coherence between MEAs (“internal coherence”) and coherence between MEAs and other international agreements (“external coherence”), such as the UN 2030 Agenda. Institutionally we can distinguish between policy coherence within country governments (in as far relevant for MEA implementation), and between MEAs and their secretariats?
- g. Is it possible to identify obstacles for policy coherence and root causes? E.g. obstacles for policy coherence might stem from differing legal contexts, the lack of frameworks for cross-cutting collaboration, diverging interests between sectors or from the mindset or lack of

capacities of staff in MEA secretariats or government representatives involved in the work of MEA bodies.

- h. Would it be useful and feasible to draw a causal loop diagram (CLD) of key relations between issues?
- i. Based on the identification of a number of relevant challenges and obstacles for policy coherence we will explore experiences as well as approaches, principles, and indicators for developing policy coherence approaches for stronger environmental governance. Again, different dimensions and tracks for improving policy coherence can be distinguished: e.g. capacity building, institutional frameworks, legal instruments etc.

Exploring the uptake of policy coherence for environmental governance in practice – at the national, regional and international levels – and providing guidance to bring about a common approach for in the work that all experts working on PCSD is important for progressing towards the Agenda 2030.

Conclusion

The workshop agreed that working together to strengthen SDG 17.14.1 is critical and supporting countries to report other SDGs using this indicator should be explored. Efforts to promote the indicator moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 will require the support of all entities working on PCSD.

*Environmental Policy Unit
Environmental Conventions and Policy Branch
Law Division*

Annex 1 – Agenda

Unpacking Policy Coherence in Environmental Governance - Consultative Workshop

Date: 16-17 November 2023, International Environment House, Geneva

Day 1

Session 1

Introductions, expectations, and description of the consultations.

The workshop will take a deep dive into some challenges which may include and not limited to the lack of coherence when developing approaches to ongoing and emerging policy areas such as science policy interfaces in support of delivering the mandates of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and the lack of coordinated focus on policy development on issues that are being addressed across different programmes and initiatives.

Balakrishna Pisupati, UNEP

Session 2

Experiences from implementing PCSD so far, lessons learnt and future plans.

Presentations from participants (Louis Muelman, OECD, UNEP, Italy, EPCSD)

Facilitator – Ruci Botei, UNEP

Session 3

Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) – emerging issues

Going beyond SDG 17.14.1 on policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) to strengthen environmental governance at various levels. Learning from the PCSD processes for designing policy coherence approaches for environmental governance. How can we use policy as an instrument of change in reversing the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature protection and pollution? In doing what sort of policy support and development and support member states to comply with and enforce the various commitments including those related to MEAs, SDGs, outcomes from multilateral processes and Environmental Governance?

Facilitator – Louis Muelman and Ernesto Soria Morales, OECD

Session 4

Information, knowledge and experience sharing.

To share information and hear about the work being done by multilateral processes, including the MEAs in terms of their focus and opportunities related to policy coherence in the context of environmental governance. Understand and know about the work being done by multilateral processes, including the MEAs in terms of their focus and opportunities related to policy coherence in the context of environmental governance.

Presentations/interventions from participants on how they interpret policy coherence and identify implementation options.

Facilitator – Fabien Tondel EPCSD

DAY 2

Session 5

Policy Coherence and its role in environmental governance

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) as a conduit to achieve this comprehensive set of goals is critical to international, regional, national, and local governance. An important component of PCSD is the integration of sustainable development dimensions into policymaking. This supports governance in which accountability, transparency, responsiveness, stability, equity, inclusion, empowerment, and broad participation are included. In order to effectively address the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, governments and stakeholders must break down institutional and policy silos in order to realize the benefits of synergistic actions, identify unintended negative effects of policies, and manage unavoidable trade-offs across the SDGs. In doing so, the intention is to focus on policy that serves both internal and external to UNEP through (i) serving as an influencer of policy uptake or change by member states, and (ii) an enabler of policy development, implementation, compliance, and enforcement.

Balakrishna Pisupati UNEP

Session 6

Develop elements of a strategy on policy coherence for environmental governance.

As environmental governance discourses revolve around multiple concepts, such as inter-organizational relations, polycentric governance, integrated management, landscape governance, environmental policy integration, coordination, mainstreaming, coherence, policy mixes, governance architectures and systems, regime complexes, institutional interaction, and nexus approaches, and structures are noted. Practitioners are increasingly focusing on the synergies between different approaches and policies. A central focus of environmental governance is policy coherence.

Environmental governance includes policy actions taken both domestically and internationally and policy coherence plays a crucial role in effectively implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) as they are designed to address complex global environmental challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Importantly, they involve multiple countries working together to achieve shared goals. To ensure successful implementation, policy coherence is essential at both the national and international levels. During the session, participants will discuss how to expand the scope of PCSD discussions beyond SDGs and focus on ideas UNEP can further work on.



EMG - Hossein Fadei (EMG) & UNEP - Balakrishna Pisupati

Annex 2 - List of Participants

1	Minamata Convention on Mercury	Ms. Marianne Bailey	Senior Management Officer- Minamata Convention	marianne.bailey@un.org. PHONE. +41 22 917 89 77
2	Minamata Convention on Mercury	Maria Irene Rizzo	Associate Expert	irene.rizzo@un.org
3	Minamata Convention on Mercury	Monika Stankiewicz	Executive Secretary	monika.stankiewicz@un.org
4	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)	Ms Sofie Hermann Flensburg	Secretariat for governance matters, including synergies and GBF alignment	haruko.okusu@cites.org/ sofie.flensburg@cites.org
5	BRS	Maria Cristina Cardenas-Fischer	Head of Unit & Senior Policy Advisor (Policy and Strategy Unit)	Telephone: +41 (0) 22 917 87 40
6	Woods Hole Research Institut	Mr Ramakrishna Kilaparti	Advisor	Kilaparti.ramakrishna@gmail.com
7	ICCF	Jaime Cavalier	EA, Policy Coherence project	jcavelier@internationalconservation.org
8	EMG	Hossein Fadaei (EMG)	Programme Management Officer	hossein.fadaei@un.org
9	OECD	Ernesto Soria Morales	Executive Secretary	Ernesto.SORIAMORALES@oecd.org
10	PCSD	Louis Meuleman	Director, Public Strategy for Sustainable Development (PS4SD),	louismeuleman@ps4sd.eu
11	Ministry for the Environment and Energy Security	Francesca De Crescenzo	Government	Francesca <decrescenzo.francesca@mase.gov.it>

	General Directorate for Circular Economy (DG EC)			
	Unit IV – tools and technologies for sustainable development			
12	PCSD	Andreas Versmann	PCSD	Andreas.versmann@ps4sd.eu
13	Fabien Tondel	ECDPM	Policy Head	ft@ecdpm.org
14	UNEP Panama	Robert Erath	Task Manager ,GEF	robert.erath@un.org
15	UNEP Law Division	Balakrishna Pisupati	Head of Unit, Environment Policy Unit	balakrishna.pisupati@un.org
16	UNEP Law Division	Ruci Mafi Botei	Programme Management Officer, Environment Policy Unit	ruci.botei@un.org
17	UNEP EWAD	Dany Ghafari	Programme Management Officer	dany.ghafari@un.org
18	GEF	Hannah Tomkinson Fairbank	Senior Biodiversity Specialist for Asia.	hfairbank@thegef.org
19	GEF	Dikshya Devkota	Consultant, GEF Front Office	ddevkota@thegef.org
20	UNEP - Special Programme Secretariat Chemicals & Health Branch, Industry & Economy Division	Felix HERZOG	Programme Officer - M&E Specialist	herzogf@un.org
21	UNEP	Wondwosen Asnake Kibret	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICER •	wondwosen.asnake@un.org

