Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Handbook on indicator 17.14.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals

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Disclaimers

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Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; see figure 1) and 169 associated targets at its core. This handbook outlines the composite indicator (a synonym for index) for indicator 17.14.1 of target 17.14 of Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development) (see figure 2). The composite indicator comprises eight domains, each with subindicators. The handbook gives examples for each of these domains and subindicators.

What is policy coherence for sustainable development?

Target 17.14 of Goal 17 is to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. This handbook uses the definition of policy coherence for sustainable development contained in the metadata for indicator 17.14.1 of that target, namely "the coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development" (United Nations [UN] 2021). This was preferred to a narrower definition, such as "the mechanisms put in place to support the coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals", in order to promote policy coherence for sustainable development well beyond 2030.

It is important to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development in order to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, environmental and social) in a balanced and integrated manner; to ensure coherence between policies at various levels of government; and to ensure that policies in different sectors are mutually supportive and do not work against each other. It is also important to address the international impact of domestic policy. Policy coherence is a way to take into account the indivisibility of the SDGs and the systemic nature of many sustainability challenges. It can also prevent or repair damage caused by incoherence between policies and their related governance frameworks (Meuleman 2018a; Meuleman 2018b). Additionally, recognising women's

Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

positive impacts as contributors on sustainable development is imperative. Integrating gender perspectives in policy coherence for sustainable development fosters outcomes that are both inclusive and equitable.

A strategy note on policy coherence issued by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA] 2021) explains that a fundamental premise of policy coherence is that there are interlinkages and instances of mutual dependence between elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and interaction between its various policy domains. The achievement of progress towards one target can either boost progress towards another (synergy) or make it more difficult to achieve it (a trade-off). Recognition of this interdependence and interaction is a key first step in ensuring that public policies are coherent with one another and will achieve their intended results. The roots of coherent policymaking are to be found in rational decision-making and have been addressed in public administrations for decades, mostly in the form of "coordination". Coherent policymaking is pursued because it is assumed to lead to increased levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Coherence can be pursued, and assessed, at all stages of policymaking, from the framing of agendas and the setting of goals to the design of policy instruments, their implementation on the ground and related follow-up and evaluation. An absence of coherence may result in a variety of governance problems, such as compartmentalization, siloed approaches,

fragmentation, competing and incoherent objectives and inconsistent policy mixes (Candel and Biesbroek 2016; Meuleman 2018a). These problems may be aggravated when Governments seek to deal with cross cutting policy agendas. A lack of coherence can also result in unclear signals to the general public about the relative importance of policy priorities.

The policy coherence mechanisms set out in this handbook may therefore include mechanisms that were already in place before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and any new mechanisms established in the decade leading up to 2030 should aim to continue well beyond that time frame. Nevertheless, given the role of the 2030 Agenda and the individual SDGs in defining the specific parameters of sustainable development, it is likely that Governments, in implementing the present methodology, will focus on bringing coherence to their policy approaches for achievement of the SDGs.

The global indicator framework for the SDGs and their targets includes an indicator to measure countries' policy coherence for sustainable development. Indicator 17.14.1 is formulated as "the number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development". In order to make the indicator universally applicable and adaptable to various national contexts, the methodology in the present handbook covers a wide range of mechanisms that, although they aim to achieve the same objective, express that objective in slightly different ways. To enable proper assessment of and reporting on the indicator, similar concepts, such as "an approach encompassing the whole of the government" and "an integrated approach", will be interpreted in the same spirit as the concept of "policy coherence". Whatever its name, it is important that the concept encompasses policies covering the three dimensions of sustainable development. A mechanism focusing solely on the concept of policy coherence for development, which is often limited to coherence between official development assistance and other policies, in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals, will not, therefore, be considered by this methodology.

Sustainable Development Goal 17 and target 17.14

Together with Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), Goal 17 is about making sure that the right governance tools are used. Goals 16 and 17 are key enablers of other, more policy oriented Goals. The 19 targets of Goal 17 are diverse. They cover financial and other resources, including official development assistance commitments, debt relief, investments, science and technology transfer, capacity-building and trade systems. A whole cluster of targets address systemic issues such as policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships, data availability, monitoring and accountability.

Figure 2: Target 17.14 of Sustainable Development Goal 17

Target 17.14 is a crucial target for making the SDGs work in synergy, horizontally, across policy sectors, and vertically, across levels of the government administration. The annual reports on the voluntary national reviews[1] presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development show that policy coherence is still a major challenge for countries. In most countries, government administrations have no dedicated team responsible for ensuring the coherence of policies on sustainable development. According to one expert, "the majority of countries cannot afford a full-time policy coherence unit, and for them there is a growing feeling that policy coherence for sustainable development is both too important to drop, and too ambitious and complex to

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1   Each year since adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs has produced a report entitled "Synthesis of Voluntary National Reviews".

actually do something about it" (Ronceray 2020).

In the metadata for indicator 17.14.1, it is stated that "policy coherence aims, as a minimum, to identify trade offs and mitigate negative impacts between policies. At a more ambitious level, it should also aim 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" (UN 2021).

International cooperation is a cross-cutting enabler for sustainable development, playing a crucial role in preventing conflicts over shared water resources— an integral component in the pursuit of global sustainability. Through collaborative frameworks and agreements, nations can forge pathways toward peaceful and equitable solutions, establishing a foundation for responsible and harmonious management of these vital resources. In addition to fostering a shared commitment to sustainable practices that benefit communities and ecosystems.

Indicator 17.14.1

The wording of indicator 17.14.1, as with many other indicators of the SDGs, is not self-explanatory. It needs further clarification to make it more concrete and to link it to the practices in public administrations and other public institutions.

Measurement of the status of implementation and progress towards achievement of target 17.14 is complex, but not impossible. Meaningful information on the indicator will be mostly qualitative, because simple enumeration, at global level, of the countries with mechanisms for policy coherence for sustainable development in place or, at the national level, of the mechanisms that have been put in place, gives no indication whether the mechanisms are effective.[2]

Since 2016, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been conducting pioneering work collating examples of

> ### Tier classification criteria/definitions for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators
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> **Tier I:** The indicator is conceptually clear and has an internationally established methodology, standards are available and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of the countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
>
> **Tier II: The indicator is conceptually clear and has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.**
>
> **Tier III:** No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but a methodology/ standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.
>
> As at 4 February 2022, the tier classification contains 136 Tier I indicators, 91 Tier II indicators and 4 indicators that have multiple tiers (different components of the indicator are classified into different tiers).
>
> Source: United Nations Statistics Division.

good practice in policy coherence for sustainable development and, on 11 December 2019, adopted a recommendation thereon at the political level. This has helped create a good foundation for the development of indicator 17.14.1.

As the custodian of indicator 17.14.1, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) coordinated the development of the composite indicator with its eight domains and subindicators. An external expert group was set up to refine the methodology. The group comprised representatives of the United Nations system entities and other international organizations, including OECD,

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2   An E-Handbook on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, designed to help national statisticians to monitor progress made in implementation of the Goals on the basis of data produced by national statistical systems, is available on the Sustainable Development Goal indicator website of the United Nations Statistics Division. The Division has also created the online Open Sustainable Development Goal Data Hub. Nevertheless, at the time of writing (mid-2021), neither the E-Handbook nor the Open Sustainable Development Goal Data Hub contained information on indicator 17.14.1.

Governments, academia, think thanks and non-governmental organizations. The draft methodology was pilot tested in four countries: Burkina Faso, Guyana, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

In February 2020, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators approved the indicator methodology, which meant that the indicator was reclassified under tier II of the SDG indicators system (see box). Countries are now encouraged to use the indicator. For an indicator to be classified under tier I, data needs to be regularly produced by countries.

The methodology in the present handbook goes beyond simply answering the question of whether there are policy coherence mechanisms in place and includes more detailed questions about different types of mechanism and how they are applied in practice. There are many mechanisms that could be useful in enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. The methodology aims to provide a basis for countries to engage in discussions about what policy coherence means at the national level and how it could be improved. Such discussions, and any strategies to improve policy coherence that might result from those discussions, could feed into the development of a voluntary national review or a national development strategy or plan to further inform the country's efforts to improve its ability to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through better policy coherence.

The methodology

The composite indicator 17.14.1 is the result of research that took into account existing work and literature, partners and indicators relating to similar issues. It comprises eight domains. Each domain is scored between 0 and 10. The percentage of the points scored out of the possible total of 80 points is then calculated. An online self-assessment tool in the form of a scoring table has been developed for the exercise.[3] It also exists in spreadsheet format[4] (see annex I).

The purpose of the present methodology is to ensure coherence between policies relating to the various dimensions of sustainable development.

As was mentioned, the composite indicator covers mechanisms related to eight domains for which there are specific subindicators. These allow countries to measure systematically the extent to which mechanisms are in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (see table).

UNEP began applying the methodology for indicator 17.14.1 in 2020 and sent out a questionnaire to all countries involving the collection of data using the methodology. Those data were verified and submitted to the United Nations Statistics Division; the exercise is due to be repeated every two years. UNEP also asked countries to fill in the self-assessment tool, either online or in spreadsheet form.

Your feedback is essential for improving the indicator

This handbook should be considered a living document and be regularly updated with countries' experience of putting in place and assessing mechanisms for policy coherence. This experience, and related challenges, lessons learned and solutions, can be shared so that UNEP, as custodian of the indicator, with partners, can further refine the methodology and disseminate it not only as a tool to enable effective reporting, but also one that supports national efforts toward policy coherence.

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Using the self-assessment tool for composite indicator 17.14.1, the eight domains and their subindicators can be allocated scores to determine the level of policy coherence for sustainable development in a country at any given moment. Periodic repetition of the self assessment exercise should show any progress over time.

The scoring is mostly qualitative and partially subjective. To guard against potential bias, it is recommended that the self-assessment involve a

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3   Access to the online self-assessment tool is available at https://wesr.unep.org/iris-sdg/login.
4   The spreadsheet format of the online self-assessment tool is available at https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/39616.

national commission or council on the SDGs with stakeholders from society and representatives of different government sectors and levels. If such a mechanism is not available, a country could consider setting up a dedicated multi-stakeholder platform.

The achievement of policy coherence for sustainable development is a long and complicated process. To make it a learning experience, use of tool should involve more than the simple scoring of each indicator and subindicator. The scoring should be the result of a dialogue and inclusive process rather than just "ticking the box", as indicated in a study commissioned by the European Commission on how to apply the indicator with case studies on Finland, Italy, and Romania. A concise report on that dialogue, explaining the reasons for each score, should ideally be part of the exercise (Meuleman et al forthcoming).

In order to help countries understand the methodology and its scoring system better, the present handbook explains the methodology in detail, with examples under each of the domains, taken, where possible, from voluntary national reviews. Relevant good practice from around the world is also highlighted, which could be used as evidence to allocate points during the self-assessment process. This is expected to facilitate countries' efforts to conduct the self-assessment and to provide more accurate data. The handbook is further intended as a resource for those countries that wish to introduce specific mechanisms to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. Additional examples of good practice have been shared by OECD in a series of reports on policy coherence for sustainable development published between 2016 and 2019.[5]

Composite indicator 17.14.1 of the SDGs: Domains and subindicators

1.   Institutionalized political commitment
    The country has institutionalized its commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest central/federal political level (5 points, with additional points for the following, as indicated, up to a maximum of 5 points)

1.1   Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives (1 point)

1.2   A dedicated budget (1 point)

1.3   Defined roles and responsibilities (1 point)

1.4   A requirement and mechanism for regular reporting (1 point)

1.5   Explicit consideration of international commitments (1 point)

1.6   Another nationally relevant mechanism (1 point)

2.   Long-term considerations
    The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that long-term considerations are integrated into decision making, policy development and planning (5 points, with additional points for the following, as indicated)

2.1   A commissioner, council or ombudsperson for future generations (1 point)

2.2   Other oversight mechanisms relating to the possible effects of policies or legislation on future generations (1 point)

2.3   Mechanisms for the regular appraisal of policies to ensure that unanticipated effects are addressed over time (1 point)

2.4   Impact assessment mechanisms that take into account the intergenerational effects of major infrastructure development (1 point)

2.5   Another nationally relevant mechanism (1 point)

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5   For example, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019). Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2019: Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality. Paris: OECD Publishing.

3. Interministerial and cross-sectoral coordination

The country has an institutional mechanism in place that periodically brings together relevant ministries and government entities to enhance coherence across policies related to sustainable development, including sectoral policies (5 points, with additional points for the following, as indicated, up to a maximum of 5 points)

3.1 A mandate to make decisions regarding trade-offs (2 points)

3.2 A centralized government body, such as the Office of the Prime Minister or President or other central national government entity, responsible for convening the mechanism (1 point)

3.3 Representation and coordination at both the political/strategic level and the technical level to ensure that there is political commitment, that it is translated into action and that there is alignment between the two levels (1 point)

3.4 A mandate to promote alignment of internal and external policies, including through the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent bodies) (1 point)

4. Participatory processes

The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that laws, policies, plans, programmes and major development projects at different levels of government, including at the overarching/general, sectoral and local levels, are developed through participatory processes that engage relevant stakeholders in a comprehensive manner (5 points)

4.1 Consultations mandated to take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle, i.e., not only during policy development, but also during the implementation, evaluation, and revision stages (1 point)

4.2 Requirement for institutions to disclose their rationale for taking or not taking into account input from the consultations (2 points)

4.3 An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention, such as petitioning and subsequent review, regarding policies related to sustainable development (2 points)

5. Integration of the three dimension of sustainable development, assessment of policy effects and linkages

The country has mechanisms in place that allow relevant public institutions to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into policy and planning processes and systematically to assess the wider effects of policies and cross-sectoral linkages (5 points, with additional points for the following, as indicated, up to a maximum of 5 points)

5.1 The application of the aforementioned mechanisms at all levels of government, from the national level to the subnational level (1 point)

5.2 An indicator framework related to the implementation of policies or plans that tracks progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development and the implementation of mitigation measures (1 point)

5.3 A full cost−benefit analysis of the impact of policies across all sectors conducted as part of ex-ante assessments related to new policies or plans (1 point)

5.4 The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and optimize synergies included in policymaking and planning (1 point)

5.5 Consideration of international spillover, such as the cross-border impact (1 point)

5.6 Another nationally relevant mechanism (1 point)

6.   Consultation and coordination across government levels
The country has mechanisms in place for aligning priorities, policies and plans across the various levels of government (10 points in total; the existence of any two of the following mechanisms is sufficient to score the 10 points)

6.1   Consultation and coordination mechanisms for the systematic collection of input from subnational government entities and the consideration of their priorities in national policy, strategy formulation and planning processes and for the integration of national priorities into subnational policies, plans and programmes

6.2   Contractual or other institutional arrangements for regular formal exchange between the central and subnational levels of government for systematic consultation, collaboration and the alignment of efforts

6.3   Mechanisms to enhance substantive coherence, such as policy or planning and budgeting templates or checklists that require demonstration of alignment between policies at the subnational and national levels before validation and budget allocation

6.4   Planning-cycle time frames that facilitate the alignment of national and subnational plans or systems that allow for the regular review of plans, policies, regulations and programmes to facilitate such alignment

7.   Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence
The country has mechanisms, including an institutional or regulatory framework, in place to monitor and evaluate systematically the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development and their impact across sectors and to produce reports to inform adaptive action (5 points, with additional points for the following, as indicated)

7.1   Requirement that aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into the reporting done by government entities to the parliament and to the public (2 points)

7.2   Existence and use of tools and information management systems that facilitate the availability, accessibility and comparability of centralized and harmonized data on sustainable development (3 points)

8.   Financial resources and tools
The country has mechanisms in place to promote the alignment of private and public financing with policy coherence objectives and to track related expenditure (5 points, plus one or more of the following for additional 5 points)

8.1   Checklists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development before validation and budget allocation at all government levels

8.2   Integrated financial information systems, including the use of budget codes to facilitate tracking, reporting and informed decision-making with regard to resource allocation at all levels of government or public expenditure reviews that are tagged to the various dimensions of sustainable development

8.3   A mechanism to ensure that cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and the priorities of both donors and recipients

Example of good practice

Under each domain, examples of good practice are given for each subindicator. At the end of the section on each domain, there is a short case study showing an example of successful implementation by one country. It must be borne in mind, however, that success always depends on how a mechanism or tool is tailored to the specific context; best practices that work in all countries are rare. Mechanisms for

policy coherence work only when they are sufficiently compatible with existing administrative systems and cultures.

To increase policy coherence, policymakers should take into account the underlying political factors at the root of the policy incoherence, such as the values, norms and vested interests unique to each country (Shawoo et al. 2020). Understanding the cultural characteristics and history of the public administration and governance in a country

helps with the establishment of policy coherence mechanisms that really work (Kuhlmann and Wollmann 2019; Meuleman 2013; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Additionally, gender perspectives and considerations should be integrated into all stages of the policy-making processes.

Nevertheless, examples of good practice can be an important source of inspiration. Vanheukelom, Mackie and Ronceray (2018) recommend being pragmatic and realistic when selecting actions to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development. They argue that the target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to implement policy coherence is characterized by its "sheer complexity and extreme level of ambition" and suggest that policymakers should not try to make all policies coherent with one another, but rather focus on a modest number of key sectoral policies, where more coherence could make a substantial difference.

The present handbook contains 83 examples, including eight short case studies, from 38 countries and four international organizations. Many of the examples of good practice in this handbook are taken from voluntary national reviews. As the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2021) notes not only are the voluntary national reviews a good source of such examples, the process of developing a voluntary national review can itself create momentum to refresh the wider institutional mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the SDGs and assessing alignment with national policy processes. This can play a significant role in ensuring an adequate level of policy coherence and links with national priorities and planning. Additional examples from countries members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development can be found in the organisation's reports on policy coherence for sustainable development published between 2016 and 2019.

The geographical distribution of the examples used in the present handbook can be seen in figure 3. The full overview is given in annex II.

Figure 3: Geographical distribution of the country examples used in the present handbook

- Africa 21%
- Asia 24%
- East Europe 12%
- Latin/Caribbean 7%
- West Europe etc 26%
- Internat.Org 10%
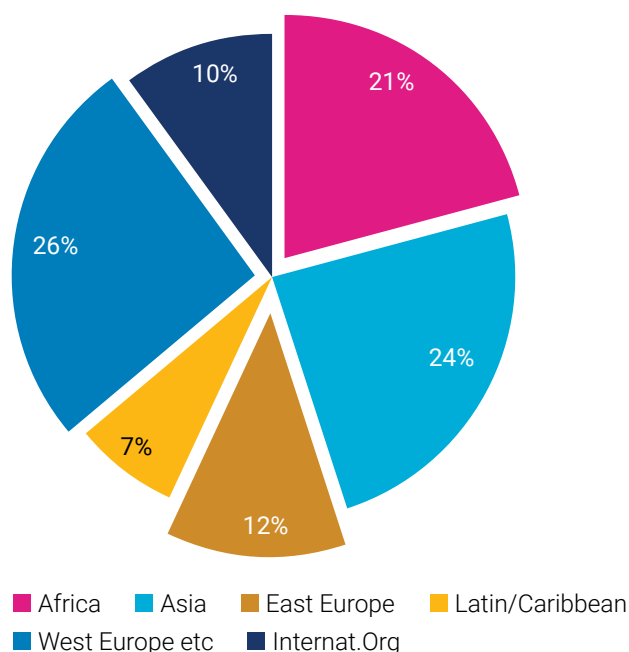
Capacity-building for policy coherence for sustainable development

Policy coherence mechanisms require an open mindset and the motivation to collaborate across institutional, political, and mental silos. In this regard, the United Nations has developed two training packages that are available on its learning website dedicated to sustainable development:[6]

- "Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development" is available as a facilitated e-learning course, designed to equip participants with an understanding of why policy coherence is important for achieving sustainable development, what coherent policymaking entails and what are some of the specific tools, mechanisms and approaches that can be employed to foster policy coherence. It was developed by the Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development of the United Nations System Staff College, in coordination with the National University of Singapore, acting through its Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, and the Hertie School in Berlin, Germany, and in collaboration with the Policy Coherence for

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6   UN SDG: Learn is a United Nations initiative that aims to bring relevant and curated learning solutions on sustainable development topics to individuals and organizations.

Sustainable Development Unit of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

- A toolkit on integrated policies and policy coherence is available online as an interactive learning package to promote policy coherence through participatory strategic planning. The package is recommended for use in situations where there is an interest in looking at the issue of integrated planning in more depth. The toolkit was developed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Governance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

- In addition, OECD offers an online toolkit on policy coherence for sustainable development.

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The eight domains of composite indicator 17.14.1 and their subindicators

Domain 1: Institutionalized political commitment

Introduction and country examples

1. The country has institutionalized its commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest central/federal political level (5 points).

The first of the eight domains aims to assess whether the country has institutionalized its commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest political level. The institutionalization of political commitment to policy coherence, by the President or the Prime Minister, for example, is essential for instilling a culture of policy coherence and guiding action to achieve it at all levels of government. Such commitment also enables the institutional reforms that might be necessary for the establishment of new or the enhancement of existing mechanisms to promote policy coherence. The commitment may be captured in national law or other official documents endorsed by the Government.

During one of the events known as the Voluntary National Review Labs, held during the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (UN DESA 2020a), the importance of having an institutional agenda for the SDGs from the start was noted, as business-as-usual implementation of the SDGs runs the risks of policy incoherence and a siloed approach to implementation. The institutional framework for the Goals must cover the whole policy cycle and enable the involvement of all actors. It was also underlined that political will to implement the Goals and a shared vision, among government and non-State actors, of how to realize them were preconditions for success.

It is important to note that domain 1 is intended to assess political commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development and not just to sustainable development as framed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Belgium has a National Sustainable Development Strategy (2017) and a Federal Council for Sustainable Development, which serves as a platform for implementation of the SDGs. Sustainable development is anchored in article 7bis of the Belgian Constitution. The achievement of sustainable development is a common goal, with efforts shared by the country's Federal State, communities and regions, which are all committed to considering the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development and the principle of intergenerational solidarity.

In Germany, the Federal Chancellery promotes policy coherence for sustainable development by issue, backed by all ministries. The State Secretaries' Committee is the central steering institution of the country's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2016, updated in 2021. It is composed of representatives of all ministries and chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. The whole-of-government approach taken by Germany also requires all ministries to participate actively (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] n.d.a).

In Greece, to reflect the importance of the planning and coordination efforts to achieve the SDGs at the highest political level, the Government decided, in December 2016, to enact a law to assign responsibility for the task of monitoring and coordinating national implementation of the Goals to one of the main government entities, the former General Secretariat of the Government, now merged into the Presidency of the Government. As a permanent mechanism close to the political leadership and working closely with the parliament, the General Secretariat of the Government played a key role in promoting a whole-of-government approach, preventing and resolving overlaps and disagreements and mainstreaming the SDGs into thematic legislation and sectoral policies. An interministerial coordination network for the SDGs was established in 2016 to support the work of the General Secretariat of the Government (OECD 2018).

Following a merger in 2019, the General Secretariat of the Government ceased to exist, and the oversight of policy, including on sustainable development, is now the responsibility of the Presidency of the Government.

In Kenya, following an exercise in 2017 to map all the SDGs against the mandates of government agencies, lead ministries and other stakeholders were identified for each goal and target. The lead ministries spearhead the planning, implementation, tracking and reporting of their respective goals. They are also responsible for mainstreaming the SDGs into planning frameworks, budgets, work plans and performance-contracting in their respective sectors (Kenya 2020).

In Kyrgyzstan, in 2015, a Coordination Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, was established and tasked with working on adaptation, implementation and monitoring in relation to the SDGs. The Committee brings together relevant ministries and government agencies, the parliament, the Office of the Government of Kyrgyzstan (which also acts as secretariat), the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan and other national institutions, along with representatives of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Committee works under the direct responsibility of the Prime Minister (Kyrgyz Republic 2020).

In Morocco, upon the recommendation of the Court of Accounts, which carried out an assessment of the preparedness of the Government of Morocco to implement the SDGs, the Government set up a National Commission on Sustainable Development, bringing together various ministerial departments and the High Commission for Planning. The Commission is headed by the Head of the Government. In the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2017−2030, two of the seven priorities contribute directly to policy coherence for sustainable development: priority 1, consolidate sustainable development governance; and priority 7, promote a culture of sustainable development. The strategy is meant to be the logical and strategic framework that allows coherence and synergy among programmes, sector plans and policies in a perspective of sustainability and in the spirit of participation of all (Morocco 2017).

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

1.1 Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives

1.2 A dedicated budget

1.3 Defined roles and responsibilities

1.4 A requirement and mechanism for regular reporting

1.5 Explicit consideration of international commitments

1.6 Another nationally relevant mechanism)

1.1 Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives

Although a milestone for achieving full, or rather optimal, policy coherence is difficult to formulate, specific objectives on policy coherence for sustainable development can be set and, consequently, progress can be assessed.

The National Sustainable Development Strategy of Germany contains the Federal Government's concrete ambition to use the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an opportunity to increase its efforts towards policy coherence, with particular reference to Sustainable Development Goal target 17.14. Various policy areas have been bundled together to achieve greater coherence in light of their significant systemic interdependence. Coordinators for Sustainable Development have been appointed in all ministries (OECD 2018). The 2021 update of the Strategy recalls the systemic dimension of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and considers improved policy coherence and coordination as "a precondition of sustainable development, combined with respect for the sovereignty of every country (Germany 2021). In the 388 pages of the new strategy, however, no further concrete action is explicitly mentioned.

The German example illustrates that elaborate coordination mechanisms at the highest level may not be sufficient to attain policy coherence for sustainable development and that it may be useful to determine specific actions, integrated into a strategy or a separate action plan.

1.2 A dedicated budget

A dedicated budget for action to promote policy coherence for sustainable development is an indication of political priority, which may also accelerate concrete action. A special budget, even if it is small, helps those responsible for policy coherence for sustainable development to act flexibly and quickly and to provide a tailored response when opportunities to push for more coherence emerge.

In Norway, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for ensuring a coordinated budget to foster implementation of the SDGs. It assigns each of the 17 Goals to a coordinating ministry that must cooperate with other ministries involved in the follow-up of relevant, cross-cutting targets. The ministries' progress reports are compiled by the Ministry of Finance and submitted to the parliament as part of the annual national budget White Paper (OECD 2019).

1.3 Defined roles and responsibilities

The designation of a contact point for policy coherence within a government is, in the same vein as having a dedicated budget (see subindicator 1.2), a way to make visible the ambitions related to policy coherence for sustainable development. A contact point can, however, also perform the functions of a mailbox, a meeting place and convenor of conversations on how to deal with the practical and political obstacles that hinder policy coherence for sustainable development.

In 2019, the Government of Italy created a new unit to support the Prime Minister in coordinating government policies on well-being and sustainable development. The unit has very clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Its purpose is:

- To coordinate and monitor the specific activities of the ministries in support of the policies of well-being and quality of life and of sustainable development;

- To assist the regions, autonomous provinces and local authorities with issues of the well-being and quality of life of the territories and sustainable development;

- To promote the coordination and integration of national and local plans, programmes and strategies at various levels in order to improve quality of life;

- To promote, strengthen and coordinate the policies and initiatives of the Government of Italy for the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

- To coordinate the process of harmonization of the indicators on well being and quality of life with the SDGs in order to identify a single, defined and representative set of indicators to be included in the economic planning cycle;

- To promote and elaborate specific methodologies and guidelines, the detection and measurement of well-being indicators relevant for the evaluation of the quality of life of citizens, also in collaboration with the Italian National Institute of Statistics;

- To promote suitable initiatives to overcome any obstacles and delays and indicators for verifying the state of implementation (OECD n.d.b).

1.4   A requirement and mechanism for regular reporting

In addition to having a dedicated budget and contact point, regular reporting on policy coherence for sustainable development is another way to make related ambitions visible. Reporting frequency is a crucial factor. A five-year cycle, for example, will not maintain enough pressure on daily government practice, while a monthly reporting would overburden the administration.

To connect the silos, all federal ministers in Belgium have agreed to produce a concrete road map, containing parameters and indicators, for their contributions to climate action. Twice a year, an interministerial working group will evaluate progress in its implementation (News Belgium 2021).

In Kenya, the SDGs have been included in performance contracting guidelines at the subnational level as a weighted area in the performance matrix. County officers are required to demonstrate how they have mainstreamed the SDGs

into their plans, strategies, activities, projects and programmes as a measure of performance. This has led to greater focus on implementation of the SDGs at the county level (Kenya 2020).

In some countries, the parliament is represented in the institutional framework to implement sustainable development. In Germany, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development works to support the Government's National Sustainable Development Strategy and raises policy-related sustainability concerns in the parliament. The Council also formally reviews the conduct of sustainability impact assessments of draft legislation, holds regular public hearings and publishes policy papers to trigger debate on various aspects of sustainable development. In Colombia, a cross-parliamentary group participates in the monitoring of the goals and targets related to sustainable development (UN DESA 2016).

1.5   Explicit consideration of international commitments

The relation between the domestic and external/international dimension of sustainable development may be self-evident in developing countries that have relations with donor countries, but that is not the case in many of the donor countries themselves, such as most of the European Union member States (Niestroy et al. 2019). Consideration of international commitments on economic, social, and environmental issues combined with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a common compass for sustainable development efforts can be made mandatory in a national sustainable development strategy or plan.

Even in 2001, the Fourth Environmental Policy Plan of the Netherlands contained a central formula that incorporated the link to the external dimension: sustainable development is about "here and now, elsewhere and later" (Netherlands, former Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment). This resulted in more attention being paid to the external footprint of the country.

Conversely, the economic, social or environmental impact on one country of another country's footprint could be made clear in the affected country's national strategies or plans, although there might be political

or contractual reasons not to publish the related trade offs.

Germany has a dedicated coordination mechanism for bridging the internal–external divide. In order to bridge the gap between the internal elements of the SDGs (led by the Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection) and the external ones (led by the Ministry of Economic Coordination and Development), Germany has set up a mechanism that convenes at regular intervals the Sustainable Development Goal coordinators of all relevant ministries. The two ministries in fact share the leadership role in international settings, such as at meetings of European Council working parties, to ensure close coordination (OECD n.d.a). In the updated German Sustainable Development Strategy (2021), examples of the integration of internal and external considerations include the bilateral collaboration with other countries (e.g., South Africa and Ukraine) on sustainable urban development; science and technology cooperation with the Government of India and Indian businesses; and the integration of the SDGs into the trade policy of Germany.

The Government of Greece underlines the need for the development of a more effective, coherent and rule-based multilateral system that respects the principles of sustainable development and enables development opportunities for all. Greece already engages in cross-boundary environmental protection, for example as part of trilateral efforts with Cyprus and Egypt relating to Sustainable Development Goal 14, to address jointly marine pollution incidents, coastal erosion and coastal zone management and biological biodiversity (Greece 2018).[7]

1.6 Another nationally relevant mechanism

Other mechanisms showing the high-level, political institutionalization of policy coherence for sustainable development include the involvement of supreme audit institutions, as shown by examples from Kenya and the European Union.

In 2018, the Office of the Auditor General of Kenya undertook an audit of the country's preparedness to implement the SDGs, looking at the efforts of the national and subnational governments. The audit included an examination of policy coherence and integration and concluded that the implementation of the *Road Map to the Sustainable Development Goals: Kenya's Transition Strategy 2016–2018* was facing financial and human resource constraints and that there were deficiencies in funding and delays in setting up coordination committees (Kenya 2020).[8]

In the European Union, the European Court of Auditors investigated the coherence between the agriculture and biodiversity policies of the Union, concluding that the common agricultural policy was not effective in reversing the decades-long decline in biodiversity and that intensive farming remained a main cause of biodiversity loss. The auditors found gaps in the European Union Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and insufficient coordination with the common agricultural policy. Moreover, the tracking of spending on biodiversity by the European Commission under the common agricultural policy was unreliable and most funding had little positive impact on biodiversity.[9] The publication of the audit report contributed to a more ambitious biodiversity strategy being adopted later in 2020, but so far it has not solved the main points of incoherence between the common agricultural policy and the policy on biodiversity.

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7   Greece, General Secretariat of the Government, *Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Athens, 2018).
8   Kenya, National Treasury and Planning, *Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals* (Nairobi, 2020).
9   European Court of Auditors, *Biodiversity on Farmland: CAP Contribution Has Not Halted the Decline* (Luxembourg, 2020).

Case study 1
The commitment of Finland to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach

Finland is a northern European country with 5.6 million inhabitants living on 303,815 km2 of land, which makes a population density of only 18 people per km2. A total of 86 per cent of the population live in urban areas. Finland, like most other European Union countries, has a relatively strong corporatist interest intermediation, with organized interest groups that represent major groups of society (for example, employers and employees or professional groups) forming the basis of the sociopolitical organization of society. The Ministries of Finance and Justice are responsible for administrative reform, which comes in support of improved policy coherence for sustainable development (European Commission [EC] 2018).

Policy coherence for sustainable development in Finland remains a challenge, not only in the national context, but also in the context of international and European Union cooperation (Finland 2020). The example of Finland, which is one of the most advanced countries in term of institutionalization and mainstreaming of the SDGs, illustrates the complexity of the challenge that indicator 17.14 poses to public administrations. Finland has an advanced national sustainable development strategy, "The Finland We Want by 2050: Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development", which is aligned with the SDGs and has a vision beyond the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Niestroy et al. 2019). The country has a well-established institutional framework for sustainable development, which includes the National Commission on Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister and thus directly linked to the highest political level (UN DESA 2020b).

All line ministries are included in the Sustainable Development Coordination Network and report annually on progress. There are no concrete timelines for achievement of specific policy coherence objectives, but the annual reporting cycle should trigger debate on issues related to policy coherence for sustainable development. Moreover, the national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development addresses policy coherence for sustainable development, long-term planning, transformation, global partnership, inclusiveness and participation.

Following an independent gap analysis, the national implementation plan is being carried out. The national sustainable development strategy has been fully linked to the national budget since 2019 (after being pilot tested in 2018). Under the active leadership of the Ministry of Finance, the SDGs are referred to in the justifications for the main expenditure titles to show more clearly the connections between the appropriations and sustainable development efforts. In addition, the popularized publication Budget Review focuses on sustainable development issues as one of its main topics. There is no budget dedicated to the promotion of policy coherence for sustainable development.

The national sustainable development strategy of Finland serves as a tool for the explicit promotion of policy coherence for sustainable development and to facilitate concrete implementation by various administrative sectors and societal actors. The Interministerial Coordination Network, which consists of the sustainable development focal points from all the line ministries is the key body supporting the Prime Minister's Office in its role as coordination secretariat. The Interministerial Coordination Network is mandated to mainstream the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into all sectors and aims to ensure and improve the balance among the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainability and to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development in the policy planning process (Finland 2020).

Various monitoring and reporting mechanisms cover policy coherence for sustainable development and, together, could be seen as forming a regular reporting mechanism thereon. In Finland, motions adopted by the parliament oblige the Government to use the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a guiding document when formulating its programme and to link the Agenda to all relevant policies and measures. The aforementioned national sustainable development strategy has a robust monitoring framework (Niestroy et al. 2019) and the Prime Minister's Office coordinates a National Follow-up and Review Network (UN DESA 2020b).

Nonetheless, Ylönen and Salmivaara (2020) argue that there is room for improvement. Their 2020 research paper claims that the mainstreaming of the expanded development agenda has been largely limited to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its development policy department; that the breadth of the sustainable development agenda has enabled individual targets to be cherry-picked, leading to less attention being paid to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole and to the principle of leaving no one behind; and that, despite an institutional framework seemingly ideal for policy coherence, traditional sectoral divisions between development policy and sustainability, perceived as an environmental issue, remain.

Finland scores positively on subindicator 1.5 "Explicit consideration of international commitments", as it recognizes that, as part of global efforts to achieve the SDGs, rich countries bear the special responsibility of identifying and tackling international spillover effects. The country's national sustainability monitoring system includes indicators focusing on global responsibility and policy coherence. These pertain, for example, to official development assistance, the Finnish contribution to international crisis management, the performance of Finland according to the Commitment to Development Index published by the Center for Global Development and the export and import of raw materials. Other indicators relate to global responsibility, such as the carbon footprint of private consumption and the number of resettled refugees. Nevertheless, very little is known about the global impacts of Finnish consumption (Finland 2020).

Domain 2: Long-term considerations

Introduction and country examples

2. **The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that long-term considerations are integrated into decision-making, policy development and planning (5 points).**

Policy coherence with the future is such an essential objective of sustainable development and is at the heart of the most well-known definition of sustainable development: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, General Assembly [UNGA] 1987). In ensuring that long-term considerations are taken into account in policy, it is necessary to think about various possible "futures", meaning different scenarios for what the future might look like, and then to integrate the various results when preparing the policy.

Mechanisms for thinking about possible scenarios for the future are usually referred to as foresight

mechanisms. In *Foresight Manual: Empowered Futures for the 2030 Agenda* (2018), developed by the United Nations Development Programme, foresight is defined as "a systematic, participatory, future-intelligence-gathering and medium-to-long-term vision-building process aimed at enabling present-day decisions and mobilizing joint action" (Miles, Saritas and Sokolov 2016). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has developed a course entitled "Foresight for development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs".[10]

Cabo Verde has put together a development vision using foresight methods such as horizon-scanning, trend analysis, cross-impact analysis and scenarios. The aim was to identify future strategic opportunities, challenges and risks in relation to the achievement of the sustainability objectives; to identify resilient and coherent priority policy areas/programmes; and to explore and identify the existing and new government structures required to reach the strategic objectives (namely, those that transcend sectors) collectively and coherently (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] Global Centre for Public Service Excellence 2018).

In accordance with its Law on Development Policy and Planning of 26 November 2015, Mongolia

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10 The course is available online on the UN SDG: Learn platform.

adopted, in 2016, its Sustainable Development Vision 2030. The Vision aims to align national policies with the SDGs. It comprises four pillars (economy, society, governance and environment), 44 objectives and 20 indicators. This long term Vision is implemented in the short term through policy documents and budgets and through the country's Three-pillar Development Policy 2018–2020, focused on economic development policy, sustainable governance policy and social policy. The Three-pillar Development Policy will be followed by two five-year development plans (covering the periods 2020–2025 and 2025–2030). An assessment by the National Development Agency of Mongolia found that approximately 45 per cent of the SDGs are represented in the Sustainable Development Vision 2030; 45 per cent are not reflected; and 10 per cent are not relevant to the country (UN DESA 2020c).

A key milestone in the context of strategic planning in Estonia is the completion of the country's long-term strategy, Estonia 2035, which creates a strong basis for a more systematic and robust reflection of the SDGs in sectoral strategies. Estonia 2035 sets strategic goals for the Estonian State and people for the next 15 years and determines the changes necessary to achieve them (Estonia 2020a).

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 includes articles on the rights of young people pertaining to their economic, social, cultural, and political participation. Article 51 (j) (7) directs the State to pursue policies that advance youth participation and empowerment. Article 18 provides for the right to equality (FuturePolicy.org n.d.).

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

2.1 A commissioner, council or ombudsperson for future generations
2.2 Other oversight mechanisms relating to the possible effects of policies or legislation on future generations
2.3 Mechanisms for the regular appraisal of policies to ensure that unanticipated effects are addressed over time
2.4 Impact assessment mechanisms that take into account the intergenerational effects of major infrastructure development
2.5 Another nationally relevant mechanism

2.1 A commissioner, council, or ombudsperson for future generations

Having a special person or institution to keep considerations about the future high on the political and administrative agenda is beneficial for policy coherence.

In Hungary, the 2011 Fundamental Law that came into force on 1 January 2012 advocates the mainstreaming of sustainability into public policies and contains key principles on the rights of future generations. Since 2012, the Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights responsible for the protection of the interests of future generations has been responsible for protecting the fundamental right to sustainable development for current and future generations, joining countries with similar institutions such as Australia, Canada and Norway (OECD 2019).

2.2 Other oversight mechanisms relating to the possible effects of policies or legislation on future generations

Wales, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has adopted the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, which calls on Welsh Ministers, in preparing a future trends report, to take account of any action taken by the United Nations in relation to the SDGs. It also requires Welsh

Ministers to publish indicators that must be applied for the purpose of monitoring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, for instance, successfully assisted the Welsh Government in ensuring that the Welsh land-use planning policy document would reflect the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The policy was subsequently revised and is now a future-focused document (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland [UK], Welsh Government 2018).

2.3 Mechanisms for the regular appraisal of policies to ensure that unanticipated effects are addressed over time

In Germany, since 2009 it has been mandatory at the federal level to conduct an assessment of the sustainability-related impact of draft government laws and ordinances. Within the framework of the legislative impact assessment, the extent to which the legislation would affect sustainable development is examined. The aim is to take sustainability systematically into account as a guiding principle of policy in the legislative process, thereby giving the issue weight at an early stage in the decision-making process. This sustainability impact assessment focuses on the long-term and unintended consequences of regulatory projects. The central point of reference is the National Sustainable Development Strategy, which defines related management rules, goals and indicators. The insights gained through the assessment should be used to improve the draft regulation as early as possible and minimize undesired effects (Germany, Parliament 2011).

2.4 Impact assessment mechanisms that take into account the intergenerational effects of major infrastructure development

At the time of writing this handbook, it was not possible to identify examples specifically related to the topic of the intergenerational effects of major infrastructure development.

2.5 Another nationally relevant mechanism

Finland has established an official mechanism to enhance the dialogue between the government and the parliament. The Committee for the Future is the committee responsible for issues related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the parliament. In 2017, the Committee was mandated to take overall responsibility in relation to the Agenda. It prepares implementation plans, the government's annual reports and State budget proposals in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On the basis of the statements drafted by the Committee for the Future and amended by other relevant parliamentary committees, the parliament drafts its position on the government report on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to formal meetings, the Committee for the Future has organized several open hearings on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The dialogue between the government and the parliament has proven to be very fruitful, improving understanding of sustainable development in all political parties and thereby contributing to long-term planning and policy coherence for sustainable development (Finland 2020).

Case study 2
Long-term considerations in Bhutan

Bhutan is a landlocked country in the eastern Himalayas, bordered by China to the north and India to the south. It has a population of over 754,000 and a territory of 38,394 km2. Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy with Vajrayana Buddhism as the State religion. The Constitution 2008 establishes a parliamentary government with an elected National Assembly and a National Council.

The Bhutanese concept of "gross national happiness" is the country's central mechanism for ensuring that long-term considerations are integrated into national policymaking. Gross national happiness aims for sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development, conservation of the environment, the preservation and promotion of culture and the promotion of good governance. It constitutes a guiding principle for all political decision-making processes in the country. As such, it is unparalleled in the world in terms of its relevance for day-to-day policymaking. The concept of gross national happiness has emerged from and is part of a series of forward-looking decisions made since the 1970s that have made Bhutan a frontrunner in formulating and implementing effective sustainable development policies that have resulted in economic, social and environmental gains. Bhutan is on track to move out of the group of least developed countries into the group of moderately developed countries in 2023, despite the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The Gross National Happiness Commission, composed of all ministry secretaries, ensures that overarching State policies, such as the five-year programmes, correspond to the principles of gross national happiness. Planning officers provide working links between individual ministries and the Commission.

Although gross national happiness is the starting point for all policies, the gross national happiness screening tool assesses proposed policies in terms of their concrete compatibility with gross national happiness objectives, thereby providing a systematic means of ensuring compliance in practice. The screening tool is an impact assessment tool that addressed long-term impact. The Gross National Happiness Commission may send back policy proposals that fail this test.

The status of Bhutan as a role model stems from its success in conceptualizing sustainability beyond specific problems and integrating sustainable development into all aspects of social and economic life. Sustainability is institutionalized both from the top down (through the Constitution) and from the bottom up (through school curricula and participatory processes). Sustainable development informs long-term policy visions and concrete plans, such as the five-year plans.

Bhutan is drawing important lessons from the coronavirus disease pandemic, including in relation to the need and possibilities for the long-term transformation of its food system, local economy, public service delivery, approaches to learning, data ecosystem and preparedness for disasters and future pandemics. The Foreign Minister of Bhutan states in his foreword to the country's 2021 voluntary national review that, as Bhutan works build back better from the pandemic, the country remains committed to accelerating achievement of the SDGs so that progress towards an inclusive, low-carbon and resilient development pathway can be sustained (Bhutan 2018; Bhutan 2021; Niestroy, Schmidt and Esche 2013).

Domain 3: Interministerial and cross-sectoral coordination

Introduction and country examples

3. The country has an institutional mechanism in place that periodically brings together relevant ministries and government entities to enhance coherence across policies related to sustainable development, including sectoral policies (5 points).

Institutional fragmentation can significantly influence policy coherence. The Government of Sri Lanka, for example, includes 470 departments that have overlapping mandates. The coordination between the two institutional bodies for climate and implementation of the SDGs – the Climate Change Secretariat and the Sustainable Development Council – is limited, as they fall under two separate ministries, which are themselves disconnected from the important National Planning Department (Shawoo et al. 2020). This leaves the Ministry of Sustainable Development, Wildlife and Regional Development, which is the line ministry responsible for sustainable development in Sri Lanka, in a challenging position (Sri Lanka 2018).

Most countries, however, have a smaller number of departments, with usually one or more horizontal mechanisms for coordination among ministries and/or other government bodies. Their effectiveness varies. It is important to have a tiered approach, as a committee of State secretaries or junior ministers is effective only when there is a supporting group below, at the civil service or technical level.

The Government of South Africa has created new institutional mechanisms for internal coordination to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in monitoring progress towards the SDGs and evaluating related policies and to improve coherence between global, regional, national and subnational development plans. The Cabinet provides policy leadership for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is supported by a National Steering Committee, composed of the Directors-General of 11 ministries, and by an Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development Agendas (South Africa 2019).

Bangladesh has formed an interministerial SDGs Implementation and Review Committee comprising secretaries from 20 ministries, with the General Economics Division of the Bangladesh Planning Commission serving as its secretariat (UN DESA 2020b).

In Estonia, the interministerial working group on sustainable development consists of representatives of ministries and Statistics Estonia. The work of the group takes place through electronic communication and meetings when needed. For example, the working group participated in the process to decide on the country's sustainable development indicators and to prepare its position on issues related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within the European Union. The interministerial working group works horizontally and addresses issues at a general level. Sectoral issues are discussed in the relevant sectoral committees, such as the Research Policy Committee, the Transport Sectoral Committee, the Energy Council and the Gender Equality Committee. A strategic planning system ensures the integration of SDGs and related topics into the various sectoral development plans. The Regulation of the Government of the Republic on the preparation of strategic development plans stipulates that such preparation must be based, among other things, on the global SDGs. There is no separate plan to achieve the objectives of the Estonian Sustainable Development Strategy. The objectives are met through sectoral development plans and implementation programmes (Estonia 2020b).

3.1   A mandate to make decisions regarding trade-offs

In Czechia, implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is coordinated by the Government Council on Sustainable Development. The body is led by the Prime Minister's office, which was chosen as the lead because of its ability to see more clearly the trade-offs that need to be made to achieve the Goals. This is based on the reasoning that the Prime Minister's Office is impartial when it comes to ministerial portfolios (OECD 2017).

3.2   A centralized government body, such as the Office of the Prime Minister or President or other central national governmental entity, responsible for convening the mechanism

In Germany, the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development manages the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development. It brings together representatives of all ministries and it is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery (OECD n.d.a).

3.3   Representation and coordination at both the political/strategic level and the technical level to ensure that there is political commitment, that it is translated into action and that there is alignment between the two levels

Finland has a well-established institutional framework for sustainable development, which includes the National Commission on Sustainable Development, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and thus has a direct link to the highest political level (UN DESA 2020b).

3.4   A mandate to promote alignment of internal and external policies, including through the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent bodies)

In its 2019 European Union Report on Policy Coherence for Development, the European Commission states that "we can effectively support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda if we take into consideration and minimise as much as possible the negative effects that our policies can have on developing countries, hence living up to our commitment of 'leaving no-one behind'" (EC 2019).

3.5   Another nationally relevant mechanism

In Belgium, the coordinating minister for climate change has called on all other ministers to act as a climate minister in their own field (e.g., transport, energy or agriculture). The Government has established an obligation for all ministers to report on their own ministerial climate road maps every six months (News Belgium 2021).

Case study 3
Interministerial and cross-sectoral coordination in Colombia

Colombia is a country in South America bordering the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean and five other countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). It is a presidential participatory democratic republic, with 32 departments at the subnational level and the Capital District of Bogotá, the country's largest city. The country has 50 million inhabitants on 1,418,748 km²of land. Colombia has the second-highest level of biodiversity in the world.

Colombia has often been described as an international champion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Government has made significant efforts to establish coherent policymaking throughout its implementation of the SDGs. Colombia has been able to set up valid mechanisms of interministerial and cross-sectoral collaboration, a key element for enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development.

In 2015, the year of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Government of Colombia laid the institutional foundations for effective cross-sectoral and interministerial coordination; Presidential Decree 280 of 18 February 2015 established the High-level Interinstitutional Commission for the Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its SDGs. The Commission represents significant political commitment to coherence at the national level. The Commission is composed of government officials from all ministries and is chaired by the Head of the National Planning Department. The Commission monitors, evaluates and follows up on the implementation of the SDGs and has the explicit task of facilitating coordination and ensuring coherence across all development sectors. It works together with a Technical Committee, and the function of Technical Secretariat of the Commission is performed by the Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Policies of the National Planning Department. Furthermore, the Commission organizes regular multilevel consultations with the private sector, civil society and academia (UN DESA 2021).

The Commission, its Technical Committee and the Technical Secretariat have developed the main cross cutting initiatives of the national government to promote the integration and implementation of the SDGs in the country (Colombia 2018).

This structure for cooperation has been key to the country's ability to maintain the scope of its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and prevent implementation using a sectoral approach. An example of the success of the intersectoral approach was the joint effort of the Commission to prioritize the indicators and define the national targets in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This exercise was possible thanks to the presence of the producers of information, the policymakers and the budgetary authorities together in the discussion forums. As a result, the goals and their indicators have the support and commitment of leading and accompanying entities essential for their fulfilment. The Commission's entities have also enabled the inclusion of the SDGs in various national and subnational policies and plans. Furthermore, work with United Nations agencies in Colombia, the main representatives of the private sector, universities and other civil society actors has been possible thanks to this mechanism.

In addition to facilitating joint work, the Technical Committee has been effective in facilitating and communicating about the different alliances generated around the SDGs and in avoiding duplication and the development of isolated initiatives. It is important to highlight the role played by the Technical Secretariat of the Commission as a focal point for national government entities. This arrangement has been effective in promoting the coordination of government actions, the identification of common agendas and the generation of information and technical input for use by all entities that require it. It has also allowed progress to be made in the generation of alliances among non-governmental actors in relation to the SDGs (Colombia 2018).

Domain 4: Participatory processes

Introduction and country examples

4. The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that laws, policies, plans, programmes and major development projects at different levels of government, including at the overarching/general, sectoral and local levels, are developed through participatory processes that engage relevant stakeholders in a comprehensive manner (5 points)

The Government of Japan has organized roundtable meetings on promotion of the SDGs to strengthen stakeholder collaboration for their implementation. The meetings brought together representatives of several ministries and a wide range of other stakeholders, including from non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, academia, the private sector and international organizations. Furthermore, when developing laws or policies, the Government has widely sought the opinions of and held dialogue with its citizens. To reinforce awareness and create an incentive for stakeholders, the Government has also established the Japan SDGs Award to reward the commitment of private companies and/or other organizations in implementing the Goals (Japan 2017).

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

4.1 Consultations mandated to take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle, i.e., not only during policy development, but also during the implementation, evaluation and revision stages (1 point)

4.2 Institutions are required to disclose their rationale for taking or not taking into account input from the consultations (2 points)

4.3 An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention, such as petitioning and subsequent review, regarding policies related to sustainable development (2 points)

4.1 Consultations mandated to take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle, i.e., not only during policy development, but also during the implementation, evaluation and revision stages

In South Africa, civil society, the private sector and academia are recognized as stakeholders and as such are involved in the national coordination mechanism to strengthen implementation of development policies and to review progress on the SDGs and other related agendas. The Government of South Africa aims to encourage stakeholders to align their objectives and missions with those of the SDGs, national development plans and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want of the African Union. Other government actions include the mapping of the efforts of the various stakeholders to identify synergies and promote alignment among policies and programmes; the creation of platforms for sharing and networking; the establishment of a virtual space for regular communication on joint efforts; and the identification of tools and mechanisms to enhance coordination among groups and associations (South Africa 2017).

Throughout its policy cycle, the Government of Germany maintains a dialogue with relevant stakeholders. The purpose of the dialogue is twofold: it allows the Government to illustrate clearly the newly proposed measure, and it enables stakeholders to express their ideas, suggestions and/or criticism. Throughout the years, this has improved the quality of actions by the Government and has increased public acceptance of policy decisions. Furthermore, three to four times a year, the Government organizes a forum aimed at ensuring the regular exchange of information and ideas about the sustainability agenda among representatives of non governmental organizations, local authorities, the scientific community and the private sector (Germany 2016).

4.2 Requirement for institutions to disclose their rationale for taking or not taking into account input from the consultations

In Slovakia, public consultations are legally required for any legislative proposal submitted to the Government. When drafts are uploaded on to the government portal,[11] they enter the interministerial comment process. All drafts are open to comments by the public, which must be provided within 15 working days. All comments are visible, and whenever a comment receives support from more than 500 individuals or organizations, the Government is obliged to provide written feedback on the comment, regardless of whether it is taken into consideration or rejected. The feedback becomes part of a dossier, which is submitted to the Government for further discussion (OECD 2016).

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4.3 An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention, such as petitioning and subsequent review, regarding policies related to sustainable development

In 2014, the Government of the Republic of Korea introduced a new regulatory petition system on a dedicated government portal.[12] This online system enables any member of civil society to easily submit a suggestion or give feedback regarding a regulatory reform, in addition to the other forms of petitioning available, such as email, mail, fax or personal visits. The petitioning process entails three steps: (i) the petition is submitted for review by the agency concerned, which has to respond within 14 days; (ii) petitions that are not accepted by the agency concerned are submitted for a second review by the Office of the Prime Minister; and (iii) if the response by the agency is found by the Office of the Prime Minister to be unreasonable, the agency has to conduct a second review of the petition within three months. If the agency and the Office of the Prime Minister cannot reach agreement, the petition can be brought before the Regulatory Reform Committee for a final decision. All accepted petitions need to be implemented within three to six months. The resulting policy changes can also be found on the portal (OECD 2016a).

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11   The government portal can be found at www.slov-lex.sk.
12   The government portal can be found at www.better.go.kr.

Canada is a country in North America, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west and northwards into the Arctic Ocean. It covers 9.98 million km2, making it the world's second-largest country by total area. It has around 38 million inhabitants. Canada has a long history of supporting sustainable development and stakeholder participation. The country has a parliamentary system within the context of a constitutional monarchy and has a tradition of liberalism and an egalitarian, moderate political ideology.

In its 2018 voluntary national review, the Government of Canada strongly supported the overarching principle of leaving no one behind expressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and interpreted it as meaning that everyone can participate in, contribute to and benefit from the achievement of the SDGs.

In Canada, public consultations are a core part of the development of any new strategy, as legally required by the Federal Sustainable Development Act 2008. According to article 5(e) of the Act "the principle of collaboration, which is the principle that is important for stakeholders to collaborate in the pursuit of common objectives" is to be "considered in the development of sustainable development strategies". In addition, the Guidelines for Effective Regulatory Consultations state that the Government must "make systematic efforts to ensure that interested and affected parties have the opportunity to take part in open, meaningful and balanced consultations at all stages of the regulatory process, that is, development, implementation, evaluation and review" (Canada 2007).

In December 2018, the Canadian Government released a draft federal sustainable development strategy 2019–2022, which built on the strategy 2016–2019 by laying out 13 goals for the following three-year period. The draft was subject to a 120-day public consultation period. The public consultation procedure included a wide variety of stakeholders; provincial governments, indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, the private sector and individuals were all involved in the process. The Government of Canada also involved the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, which comprises members representing each province, indigenous peoples, environmental non-governmental organizations, the private sector and labour organizations.

How public consultation work is organized in practice

Once a strategy has been released, stakeholders can submit comments in various standard forms, such as email, fax and letter. With respect to the draft federal sustainable development strategy 2019–2022, the Government provided an additional layer of engagement tools, such as an online discussion space named "Get Involved", a number of public webinars and a social media campaign that widely targeted the Canadian population. The platform "Get Involved" enabled citizens to type in their comments easily.

Stakeholder comments generally fall into three categories: (i) those that highlight concerns with respect to the reasoning or methodology behind the draft; (ii) those that raise points of concern regarding issues of distribution; and (iii) those that issue an alternative review or analysis to be taken into consideration by the respective Government department. In Canada, it is fairly common for a draft to be amended or updated as a consequence of the stakeholder consultation procedure (OECD 2016b).

The public consultation on the draft federal sustainable development strategy 2019–2022 closed in April 2019, after having reached more than 250,000 Canadians. Following the consultation, departments and agencies reviewed the incoming comments and answered stakeholders' concerns, mainly through standard letters. During such consultations in Canada, when a stakeholder's comment or proposal is taken on board, the department concerned can amend the regulatory draft, and, in exceptional situations, it can also amend the costs and benefits section. A summary of all the comments collected during the consultation on the draft federal sustainable development strategy 2019–2022 can be found online (Canada 2019).

Domain 5: Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, assessment of policy effects and linkages

Introduction and country examples

5. The country has mechanisms in place that allow relevant public institutions to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into policy and planning processes and systematically to assess the wider effects of policies and cross-sectoral linkages (5 points)

Portugal has created an institutional framework that brings together the political and operational tools needed to promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in a consistent and integrated manner. Existing institutional structures have been mobilized to assume the roles and responsibilities needed: (i) the Interministerial Committee for Foreign Policy, chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, is the main forum for interministerial coordination both of the internal implementation of the SDGs by line ministries and of the reporting that feeds into the follow-up and monitoring processes at the regional, national and global levels; and (ii) the Interministerial Commission for Cooperation leads, coordinates and monitors the integration of the Goals in development cooperation, putting into practice the external dimension of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2014, the Commission was mandated to address policy coherence for sustainable development and will work with the focal points of the various ministries on a national work plan therefor based on the SDGs.

The Netherlands has had an action plan for policy coherence for sustainable development since 2016. It contains objectives linked to the SDGs, along with related actions and indicators. Progress on the plan is reported annually to the parliament (Netherlands 2018).

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

5.1 The application of the aforementioned mechanisms at all levels of government, from the national level to the subnational level (1 point)

5.2 An indicator framework related to the implementation of policies or plans that tracks progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development and the implementation of mitigation measures (1 point)

5.3 A full cost–benefit analysis of impact of policies across all sectors conducted as part of ex-ante assessments related to new policies or plans (1 point)

5.4 The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and optimize synergies included in policymaking and planning (1 point)

5.5 Consideration of international spillover, such as the cross

5.6 Another nationally relevant mechanism (1 point)

5.1 The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government, from the national level to the subnational level

The Government of Greece has been working on pursuing initiatives and actions that promote the interlinkages among the SDGs in policy fields of utmost importance for sustainable development, including the agricultural, tourism and cultural sectors. The Ministry of Culture and Sports places particular emphasis on linking cultural heritage with the local community through the development of synergies between tourism and awareness-raising. This enhances the cultural product and strengthens the country's position on the international tourism map, thus contributing to its economic and social growth (Greece 2018).

5.2 An indicator framework related to the implementation of policies or plans that tracks progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development and the implementation of mitigation measures

Most national indicator frameworks on the SDGs, as well as the European framework, are about measuring progress related to specific policy objectives or targets. Measurement of the effectiveness of policies on sustainability is close to measurement of policy coherence for sustainable development. Indicator 17.14.1 offers countries a tool for assessing policy coherence for sustainable development, which is a precondition for the effectiveness of policies on sustainable development.

Colombia is a good example here as the country has detailed indicators and a mechanism for cross-sectoral policy coordination. It links 98 per cent of the indicators in its National Development Plan 2018–2022 directly with one or more of the SDGs and has connected the SDGs to the national budget. Its High-level Interinstitutional Commission for the Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its SDGs monitors, follows up and evaluates the achievement of the targets of the Goals, with the explicit aim of facilitating coordination across development sectors (UN DESA 2021).

5.3 A full cost–benefit analysis of the impact of policies across all sectors conducted as part of ex-ante assessments related to new policies or plans

Many countries have forms of ex-ante regulatory impact assessment for all key policies and legislation. This explicitly addresses the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social), as in the case of the impact assessment system of the European Commission. The importance of addressing, in an impact assessment, as many of the linkages between policy areas as possible should not be underestimated, as it enables Governments to tackle a considerable number of challenges to

policy coherence at the early stages of the decision-making process. The Council of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development adopted a recommendation in December 2019, which inter alia articulates the need to:

(a) Introduce, where possible, regular assessments to identify and assess potential positive and negative impacts on sustainable development, building on any existing tools such as Regulatory, Environmental, Gender and Social Impact and Strategic Assessments;

(b) Adopt ex-ante and ex-post impact assessment practices that take into account transboundary impacts, paying particular attention to economic, social, gender and environmental impacts on developing countries as well as the promotion and protection of human rights.

The question of which assessment tools should be used is a key one; every assessment tool is a looking glass through which some issues can be seen very clearly and others not at all. A good practice in this respect is the Better Regulation Toolbox of the European Commission (EC 2021), which proposes that it is often best to use a combination of methods, such as cost–benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis and multicriteria analysis. In April 2021, the European Commission announced that the SDGs will be mentioned explicitly in all of its impact assessment reports.

In 2015, the Office of the Chief Economist of the Australian Government published a report, advocating a "situationally appropriate selection of methods and approaches from a wide repertoire" for ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments. It states that, "in addition to the appropriate selection and implementation of methods, the key to mitigating risks associated with any particular method is to avoid evaluation that relies on a single method" (Rogers et al. 2015).

The Better Regulation Office of the General Secretariat of the Government of Greece has organized training seminars for the senior staff of the Better Regulation units within ministries and the ministers' advisers. The training related to the drafting of regulatory impact assessments and explanatory reports and to the ex-post evaluation

of regulations (Greece 2018). Greece has also developed guidelines on the SDGs to inform the process of conducting regulatory impact assessments (Niestroy et al. 2019).

5.4 The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and optimize synergies included in policymaking and planning

Since 2011, the Netherlands has been using its Integrated Assessment Framework to assess in terms sustainability every proposal for a new policy, piece of legislation or regulation submitted to the parliament. The assessment is conducted at an early stage of the policymaking procedure, allowing for the enhancement of policy coherence and for an ex-ante assessment to identify whether the new policies are in conformity with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The assessment procedure comprises three steps, during which a number of issues are to be addressed: (i) problem analysis; (ii) instrument selection; and (iii) assessment of impacts. In addition to the three steps, 20 standard kinds of possible impact are assessed by ministries during the process, such as the impact on citizens, on business, on gender equality and on developing countries.

5.5 Consideration of international spillover, such as the cross-border impact

The second voluntary national review of Finland (2020) explains the difficulties encountered in assessing international spillover and other transboundary effects. International spillover refers to the costs or benefits that are generated by one country's actions in relation to another country and

that are not reflected in market prices. In the context of the SDGs, the spillovers relate to the impact of one country's actions on another's ability to achieve the Goals. According to Finland, comprehensive assessment of spillovers is not possible owing to a lack of data. In cases where there are indicators, they are often not the object of political agreement. In general, the assessment of spillovers is most advanced in the field of international trade. The Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network have analysed the spillovers caused by international trade on the environment, security, economy, finance and governance (Sachs et al. 2019). In their analysis, Finland scored 67.1, which is an average result for a high-income country.

5.6 Another nationally relevant mechanism

Consideration of the transboundary impact of national policies has a long tradition in environmental policymaking. The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, adopted by States members of the Economic Commission for Europe, lay down the general obligation of countries to notify and consult one another on all major projects, plans and programmes under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across State boundaries. Thus, for countries that have ratified the Convention and the Protocol, there is a mechanism in place to help promote transboundary policy coherence.

Case study 5
Promoting policy linkages and integration in Lithuania

Lithuania is a European country bordering the Baltic Sea, Belarus, Latvia, Poland and the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation. It covers an area of 65,300 km2 and has a population of 2.8 million. Lithuania has a semi-presidential system. The Head of State is the directly elected President, who appoints the Prime Minister and the other members of the Cabinet. The political landscape shows a fragmented, multiparty system with a number of small parties, in which coalition governments are common.

Policy integration is key to harmonizing the often contradictory priorities in the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social); to enhancing cooperation; and to reducing compromises at all stages of policymaking. Effective policy integration ensures that the implementation of one goal does not occur at the expense of another and that international and national policies and plans are aligned (OECD 2018).

Lithuania stands out as following good practice for policy integration. The country has established various institutional frameworks for the coordination of the work of governmental bodies, awareness-raising and the incorporation of environment-related elements into national implementation plans. This promotes policy integration and the identification of the potential effects of policies.

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2011) is the strategic document envisioning and outlining national implementation of SDGs in Lithuania. The document highlights the country's commitment to policy coherence for sustainable development.

Institutional framework

The Ministry of Environment has been appointed as the national coordinator for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, operating as the secretariat for the National Commission for Sustainable Development. The Commission is chaired by the Prime Minister and brings together representatives of national and subnational bodies, non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector (Lithuania 2018).

Identifying policy effects and integrating policies for sustainable development

The integration of environmental, economic and social principles and actions in national strategic documents is a key the approach by Lithuania to make sure they are mutually reinforcing and coherent. Additionally, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development requires the main provisions of sustainable development to be "integrated into special sectorial plans, programmes, regional and municipal planning documents and other legal acts" (OECD 2018). Synergies and trade-offs are analysed using the planning documents and sectoral strategies of ministries, which are required to take into account all the sustainable development principles in the National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Before and after implementation of the policies, their effects are analysed through impact assessment procedures and consultations with various stakeholders. Open communication among parties has been made a fundamental part of such environmental assessments. For instance, if it is considered that economic activities are to have damaging transboundary effects, the parties concerned have to be notified at an early stage.

In practical terms, all norms, standards and national plans are the result of ongoing collaboration among ministries. In the fields of industry, construction, transport, energy and agriculture, decisions are taken through an integrated approach, which promotes the use of best available techniques, effective pollution-prevention technologies and life-cycle approaches to production.

> **Example: an integrated approach to pollution prevention in Lithuania**
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> Lithuania has implemented an integrated system for the prevention and control of pollution that includes water-, air- and soil-protection and waste-management measures. It follows three principles: (i) best available techniques are applied, natural resources are used rationally and economically and their use is energy efficient; (ii) waste is prevented, prepared for reuse, recycled, recovered or disposed of; and (iii) the use of hazardous substances is reduced and these substances are gradually replaced with less hazardous ones. According to the Law No. I-1495 on the environment assessment of proposed economic activity (last amended in April 2016), environmental and health considerations must be considered as part of any environmental impact assessment of any proposed economic activity before its implementation. This set-up prevents environmental deterioration and ensures inclusive and representative decision-making at the local, regional and national levels (OECD 2018).

Domain 6: Consultation and coordination across government levels

Introduction and country examples

In implementing the SDGs, it is essential for the various government levels to work together effectively. This can be stimulated through the organization of peer-learning sessions and the sharing of good practices. This might be done, for example through city networks, twinning exercises, study visits, webinars and direct collaboration on topics ranging from waste and water management to transport solutions and climate action. Another way is to ensure links between the voluntary national reviews and the increasing number of subnational reviews (voluntary local reviews). Their simultaneous conduct, in a collaborative manner, within a country can increase understanding between the different levels and facilitate the sharing of experiences of the review processes (UN DESA 2020a).

6. The country has mechanisms in place for aligning priorities, policies and plans across the various levels of government (see the individual subindicators below for the number of points available)

The Government of Indonesia has adopted a clear approach to strengthening coordination between the national and subnational levels with a view to facilitating implementation of the SDGs. Presidential Decree No. 59 of 2017 formally requires the

integration of the SDGs and the national medium-term development plan into medium-term regional and local plans. The Decree also calls for the preparation of a roadmap for implementation of the SDGs and other action plans, annual reports and biannual monitoring systems at the subnational level. In order to ensure that the subnational levels bought into the process, the national government developed a series of communication strategies, technical guidelines and a set of metadata indicators (Global Task Force of Local and Regional Governments [GTF] 2019).

In 2016, the Republic of Korea established a mechanism to align national sustainable development policies at the subnational and local levels. Local governments voluntarily established their own implementation strategies for sustainable development and drafted evaluation reports to measure their progress at the local level. This provided a strong basis for local-level implementation of the SDGs (Republic of Korea [ROK] 2016).

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

6.1 Consultation and coordination mechanisms for the systematic collection of input from subnational government entities and the consideration of their priorities in national policy, strategy formulation and planning processes and for the integration of national priorities into subnational policies, plans and programmes

6.2 Contractual or other institutional arrangements for regular formal exchange between the central and subnational levels of government for systematic consultation, collaboration and the alignment of efforts

6.3 Mechanisms to enhance substantive coherence, such as policy or planning and budgeting templates or checklists that require demonstration of alignment between policies at the subnational and national levels before validation and budget allocation

6.4 Planning-cycle time frames that facilitate the alignment of national and subnational plans or systems that allow for the regular review of plans, policies, regulations and programmes to facilitate such alignment

6.1 Consultation and coordination mechanisms for the systematic collection of input from subnational government entities and the consideration of their priorities in national policy, strategy formulation and planning processes and for the integration of national priorities into subnational policies, plans and programmes

The Inter-Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development in Belgium is a multilevel panel that comprises federal, regional and community ministers responsible for sustainable development. The panel is used as a central coordination mechanism for policy coherence for sustainable development at all levels (OECD 2018). In addition, all sustainable development actions undertaken at the local level

are recorded by the Advisory Council for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and openly displayed online.[13]

6.2 Contractual or other institutional arrangements for regular formal exchange between the central and subnational levels of government for systematic consultation, collaboration and the alignment of efforts

The Government of Burkina Faso has decided to bring the implementation and monitoring system of the SDGs into the National Economic and Social Development Plan, which envisions cooperation between the national and local levels. Under the National Steering Committee for the Plan, 13 regional committees have been created to ensure regular dialogue at the regional level, thereby helping to coordinate implementation of both the Plan and the SDGs. The regional committees also ensure the timely and concrete follow-up of the regional and local development plans and annual assessments and enable engagement at the subnational level for vertical and horizontal policy coherence (GTF 2019).

The Netherlands has a general multilevel governance mechanism that is also used for collaboration on implementation of the SDGs. For strategic policy issues, so-called intergovernmental dossier teams are established to discuss what each of the three tiers in the Dutch administrative system (national, provincial and local) can contribute. This is an example of what can be termed real-time collaborative multilevel governance (Meuleman 2019).

6.3 Mechanisms to enhance substantive coherence, such as policy or planning and budgeting templates or checklists that require demonstration of alignment between policies at the subnational and national levels before validation and budget allocation

The Association of Local and Regional Authorities in Norway is a national members' association for

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municipalities, counties, and public enterprises under municipal or county ownership. It enables ongoing dialogue between the local and central authorities at both the political and the administrative levels. Such dialogue, also known as consultative meetings, takes the form of plenary sessions and bilateral meetings between Association members and ministries. The consultative meetings aim to provide a forum for discussing the framework for distribution of revenues in relation to the tasks carried out by the local authorities; the financial situation of the local authorities; and efficiency measures. The consultations also deal with arrangements for involving the Association in ministry studies on the cost of reforms and the effect of legislative proposals on the municipalities (Norway 2016).

6.4 Planning-cycle time frames that facilitate alignment of national and subnational plans or systems that allow for the regular review of plans, policies, regulations and programmes to facilitate such alignment

The National Development Plan of Colombia uses a territorial approach. Regional pacts for productivity and equity define development visions and strategic projects prioritized by the regions themselves to boost their economies and take advantage of their capabilities. Each regional pact has an accompanying road map for coordination of the approach to investment in the territory and of the efforts of the respective levels of government. All of the indicators and targets in the regional pacts are linked with one or more of the SDG targets; this enables alignment of national and subnational plans (Colombia 2021).

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Case study 6
Consultation and coordination across government levels in Kenya

Kenya is a country in East Africa, with a land surface of 580,367 km2 and a population of more than 47.6 million. It is bordered by Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Indian Ocean. Kenya is a presidential representative democratic republic, in which elected officials represent the people and the President is the Head of State and Government.

The promulgation of the new Constitution in 2010 was a turning point for the approach to governance in Kenya and defined a new trajectory towards efficient development based on constitutionalism and the rule of law. The new Constitution has, inter alia, tackled the issue of cross-government alignment. It states that the two levels of government, namely the central and subnational levels, are distinct and interdependent. Relations between these levels of governments are to be conducted cooperatively and consultatively (Kobia 2020).

In order to put into practice the principles of consultation and cooperation set out in the Constitution, the Executive Office of the President, together with the county governors, has created the National and County Government Coordinating Summit. The Summit is a forum for facilitation and cooperation that enables dialogue among and joint policymaking by the national government and the county governments.

The national and county governments meet regularly, at least twice a year, for formal exchange on the current status of policymaking and policy integration, with the participation of the President and the 47 governors of the counties of Kenya.

The Kenyan Council of Governors brings together the 47 governors. The purpose of the Council is to institutionalize performance management in county governments, to make sure that counties share their development results and to eliminate the siloed approach in public affairs management. It also aims to harmonize planning efforts for an effective use of public resources.

The Council of Governors was established under the Intergovernmental Relations Act of 2012, which has also put in place several other bodies for intergovernmental relations and a dispute resolution mechanism for disputes between the national and county governments and among the county governments themselves.

The Public Finance Management Act, also of 2012, established the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council, which is now a forum for cooperation and consultation among all the government levels, both horizontally and vertically, on fiscal and economic topics.

In 2012, as part of the County Governments Act, the principle of subsidiarity was enshrined in law. The Act outlines the functions of county governments in relation to those of the national government. It sets out the obligation of the county governments to promote public participation and include non-State actors in planning processes. Furthermore, it provides for the supervisory role of the county assemblies and for the cooperation and collaboration mechanisms between counties and the national government.

Domain 7: Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence

Introduction and country examples

7. The country has mechanisms, including an institutional or regulatory framework, in place to monitor and evaluate systematically the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development and their impact across sectors and to produce reports to inform adaptive action (5 points)

In the Philippines, the Philippine Statistics Authority has created an internet-based platform, SDG Watch, for the dissemination of information on the SDG indicators for specific targets. For each indicator, it contains the baseline and implementation data and indicates which agency is the source of the data. It shows progress towards achievement of the SDGs in the Philippines.

Subindicators on specific additional elements (worth 1 point each, up to a maximum of 5 points):

7.1 Requirement that aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into the reporting done by government entities to the parliament and to the public (2 points)

7.2 Existence and use of tools and information management systems that facilitate the availability, accessibility and comparability of centralized and harmonized data on sustainable development (3 points)

7.1 Requirement that aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into the reporting done by government entities to the parliament and to the public

The National Administrative Department of Statistics in Colombia is responsible for most of the data production in the country. As such, it coordinates everything related to the adoption of standards, norms and best practices for the production and dissemination of official statistics, quality assessment and the use of administrative records for statistical purposes. One of the primary functions of the National Administrative Department of Statistics is to ensure the production of high-quality information and that progress in this area is replicated or extended to other national entities that have data-production responsibilities. Within the framework of the efforts of the High-level Interinstitutional Commission for the Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and its SDGs, established by Presidential Decree 280 of 2015, the National Administrative Department of Statistics created a task force on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and on the indicators of the SDGs to consolidate its work thereon. Furthermore, a cross-parliamentary group participates in the monitoring progress towards the Goals and their targets (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data n.d.).

Over the past decade, the Rwanda parliament has instituted changes to the budgetary process to ensure that more meaningful information is provided when the government submits its draft finance law to parliament. The draft finance legislation now provides an integrated view of projected spending organized by programme delivery, rather than by government institution. Since 2008, the Rwandan parliament has also demanded that more contextual information be provided with the budget, specifically in relation to the ways in which the budget affects men and women differently, although this information is included in the supplementary documentation only (Rwanda 2019).

7.2 Existence and use of tools and information management systems that facilitate the availability, accessibility and comparability of centralized and harmonized data on sustainable development

The reporting platform on the SDG indicators of the Australian Government has a dual aim. It provides an open-source, goal-by-goal, data report, and it centralizes and showcases action being taken by the government, businesses, civil society and academia to advance implementation of the Goals in the Australian context. Organizations undertaking concrete initiatives to help Australia achieve the Goals are invited to submit case studies for inclusion in the platform database (Australia 2018).

Case study 7
Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence in Egypt

Egypt is a transcontinental country connecting the north-east corner of Africa and south-west corner of Asia by the land bridge of the Sinai Peninsula. It is a Mediterranean country, with a surface area of 1,010,408 km2 and a population of 101,576,000. Egypt has a semi-presidential system of government and the oldest continuous parliamentary tradition in the Arab world.

The Government of Egypt has committed to implementing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate systematically the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development. Such monitoring and evaluation strategies also aim to ensure that the findings are used to take adaptive action.

Integrating sustainable development principles into public investment structures

During the last decade, Egypt has undergone systemic adjustment to ensure that sustainable development principles are integrated into any policy and project implemented at the national and subnational levels. The Government decided that, in order for public investments to be allocated more effectively, projects were to be prioritized for funding on the basis of their focus on achieving sustainable development criteria in all their dimensions.

Evaluating public investments

The Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform developed an integrated electronic system for planning and monitoring projects' compliance with sustainable development criteria. Before a public entity submits a project for funding, it has to assess the content with respect to sustainable development principles. The integrated electronic system can then link all submitted projects to the SDGs and key performance indicators, thereby evaluating how the different projects could contribute to national priorities in terms of the Goals and help achieve balanced regional development.

Monitoring public investments

In term of the monitoring process, the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, which is a member of the United Nations Inter-agency and Expert Group on the SDG Indicators, has created a specific unit for sustainable development, tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Goals. In particular, the unit focuses on the identification, classification and measurement of the indicators applied to the Goals and those in the national sustainable development strategy.

The unit has a further pivotal responsibility, namely the issuing of the periodical national statistics report on the SDGs. Such a report was first launched in 2018. It presents the indicators of the SDGs classified into the three tiers prescribed by the global indicator framework, on the basis on their level of methodological development and data availability.

Evaluation and monitoring data are available and accessible

Egypt has taken additional steps to ensure that monitoring and evaluation data are transparent and accessible. In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund, the Government has launched the Egypt SDG Observatory dashboard. The Observatory is a digital platform providing information and data in relation to national progress towards the SDGs. The data are managed using various categories, such as sectors, groups and key priority indicators defined by a number of United Nations agencies. The Observatory also includes a mobile application to simplify the use and dissemination of data to a larger public, ensuring increased transparency.

Findings are used for adaptive actions

Egypt undertook a rigorous review of its compliance with the Millennium Development Goals. Previous weaknesses have been addressed and lessons learned are now being successfully implemented. For example, the Government recognized the previous inadequacy of indicators at the government level; measurements at the national level did not reflect regional development disparities. The inability to tackle such disparities was understood as one of the major obstacles to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, which is the reason that the Government has now launched the Tafael ("activation") project to collect data at the municipal level. The new project actively involves municipalities, improving the quality of data collection and the sustainability of data production.

Domain 8: Financial resources and tools
Introduction and country examples

8. The country has mechanisms in place to promote the alignment of private and public financing with policy coherence objectives and to track related expenditure

Following the adoption of the SDGs, the Government of Norway prepared a plan for national follow-up of their implementation, linked to a budget process. Responsibility for each of the 17 SDGs was given to a coordinating ministry, which is required to consult with other ministries involved in the follow-up of the various targets under the Goal concerned. Each ministry is to report on the status of follow-up of its respective goal or goals in its budget proposal.

The Ministry of Finance then summarizes the information in the national budget white paper, which is presented to the parliament annually, with the State budget. This process also ensures that there is regular reporting to the parliament on the follow-up of the SDGs (Norway 2016).

The Republic of Korea has established a coordination mechanism to ensure coherence and alignment of official development assistance projects with the SDGs. Each ministry and agency carrying out such projects are requested to specify which Goals and targets are relevant. In order to enable the systematic evaluation of official development assistance programmes, the Government has made it mandatory for all national agencies working on international development cooperation to evaluate related projects twice every financial year. It has established a mechanism to check the contribution of projects to achievement of the SDGs (ROK 2016).

8.1 Checklists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development before validation and budget allocation at all government levels

Checklists can be used to measure the extent to which specific objectives are addressed in plans and budgets, but usually other contextual information will be needed to be sure that the checklists give a realistic picture. Specific checklists on policy coherence for sustainable development are probably rare, but a dedicated mechanism for monitoring budgeting in relation to the SDGs, as in the examples of Costa Rica and Sierra Leone below, is expected to support policy coherence.

The national investment plan of Costa Rica prioritizes: (i) a roadmap/timeline for investment; (ii) greater coherence across the various implementing entities; (iii) accountability between domestic and international actors; (iv) sustainability of financing by requiring budget allocation early in the project planning cycle; and (v) monitoring and evaluation (UN DESA 2020b).

The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development of Sierra Leone aims to promote continued integration of the SDGs into the plans of government

ministries, departments and agencies and local councils. It also ensures reporting from these institutions on their progress towards the Goals. The multilevel governance in Sierra Leone has many tiers. The country is divided into regions, the regions into districts, the districts into chiefdoms, the chiefdoms into sections and the sections into villages. Within the chiefdoms, there are ward committees that elect councillors for community representation on the local councils; the local councils coordinate implementation of the SDGs at the district level; and the regional planning offices coordinate the activities of the local councils (Sierra Leone 2019).

8.2 Integrated financial information systems, including the use of budget codes to facilitate tracking, reporting and informed decision-making on resource allocation at all levels of government or public expenditure reviews that are tagged to the various dimensions of sustainable development

Brazil has created two open-source public information systems regarding the country's budget. They allow easy access to government databases containing information on public plans and budgets through a single online query tool. One system, SIGA Brasil, is run by the Federal Senate and the other, Fiscalize, is run by the Chamber of Deputies.

8.3 A mechanism to ensure that cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and the priorities of both donors and recipients

Over the past decade, the Government of Rwanda has compiled a list of national accounts that includes all aid that has reached the government sector, whether it was administered by the government, by donors or by third parties. This exercise exposes the underreporting of aid in the budget and discrepancies in relation to aid databases. It enables the Government to look more closely at the integration of aid into the budget cycle for all types of aid to the government sector, regardless of whether it was administered through government (UNDP 2018).

Case study 8
The fiscal strategy of Iceland

Iceland is a Nordic island country in the north Atlantic Ocean. It has a surface area of 102,775 km2 and a population of only 369,000. Iceland is characterized by its geological and volcanic activity. It is a representative democracy and a parliamentary republic. The Head of Government is the Prime Minister who, together with the Cabinet, is responsible for executive government. The President has a mainly ceremonial function.

Iceland was an active participant in the negotiation of the SDGs, placing emphasis on issues such as gender equality, fisheries and sustainable energy. The country's first step towards implementing the Goals was to establish an interministerial working group that included the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and was tasked with the analysis, implementation and promotion of the SDGs.

The five-year fiscal strategy

In 2015, the Icelandic Parliament passed the Organic Budget Law, a new public finance bill laying out a medium-term fiscal strategy of five years. Priority was given to integrating the SDGs into the fiscal strategy, given that "linking [the] targets to specific government policy objectives offers an opportunity to map the means of implementation of specific targets, estimate funding allocation for the [Goals] at any given time and anticipate potential synergies and trade-offs" (Iceland 2019).

Moreover, Article 20 of the Organic Budget Law stipulates that "each minister shall formulate and submit a five-year strategy plan for expenditure areas (34) and expenditure functions (100) for which that minister is responsible" (Iceland 2015), making it legally binding for each ministry to outline targets for the five-year fiscal strategy.

The fiscal strategy not only determines the five-year targets of Iceland, it also elaborates on them, further expanding on the goals of the State's financial policy and defining the strategy for and means of achieving them from one year to the next. This in turn enables effective implementation and monitoring processes in relation to the SDGs.

The act of connecting the targets of the Goals with the country's areas of operation clearly outlines the process of implementing specific targets, enables the estimation of how much funding is needed and simplifies the evaluation and adaptation process. It thus permits anticipation of "the compromises which may be needed in policy formulation for the Goals" (Iceland 2019).

In 2018, Iceland published a status report outlining the Government's main duties, projects and challenges in relation to each Goal. The task force laid out "65 targets as a priority, out of the total 169 targets" in order to simplify and lead the implementation of those Goals in the coming years. The SDGs were connected to several policies and governmental programmes, such as a new educational policy, a new policy for development cooperation, the country's Climate Action Plan and its Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2019.

Keeping track of the Goals

Iceland has developed a tailor-made information system for keeping track of all the SDGs, built on an old budget system. It allows the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to associate the targets defined by the Government with the SDGs. The success of the system lies in the fact that all ministries and the parliament use the same system; they enter targets for each area of expenditure hand/or function and then link them to the Goals. In the information system, it is mandatory for each expenditure target to be linked with all of the country's priority SDGs. If this is not done, the system will automatically identify the mistake and display a red flag near the expenditure target.

Two countries (Iceland and Finland) are already engaging in comprehensive integration of the SDGs within their national budgets. Instead of aligning all of the 17 SDGs and the budget, they align government programme objectives and the budget. In Iceland, there are over 180 goals relating to expenditure to which the SDGs could be linked. The linking of the Goals to government objectives is helpful in gaining support for the alignment of the budget and the Goals (Mulholland and Berger 2019).

The approach of Iceland to official development assistance

In terms of official development assistance, Iceland stands out among international donors for its strong commitment to the world's poorest countries. Official development assistance in Iceland is also managed through the aforementioned target-setting and fiscal strategy. Using this system enables Iceland to keep track of its priority areas and provides more predictability for its partners.

In 2015, an amendment to the Development Act pertained to ensuring clear oversight by the Icelandic parliament and a more joined-up approach in relation to the results of development. This has led to greater commitment to the SDGs and the introduction of a new single budget line specifically for development and cooperation. Such a single budget line makes funding allocations much more transparent and enables Iceland to have a clear overview of its national policies and international priorities.

In the past, Iceland has commissioned evaluations to gather information about the impact of its policies on official development assistance. They have mostly shown sustainable and positive results. In case of negative effects, the country's pragmatic and transparent tracking system has enabled it quickly to change course, realigning the action with both the SDGs and nationally defined goals (Iceland 2019).

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Annex I

Self-assessment tool for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 17.14.1

Indicator 17.14.1: Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development

					Full Metadata
Theme	Domain	Yes/No	Points	Score	Explanation
1. Institutionalized political commitment	Political commitment expressed/				
	endorsed by the highest level	No	5	0	
	Additional specific commitments (1 point each, maximum of 5 points):				
	• Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives;	No			
	• A dedicated budget;	No			
	• Defined roles and responsibilities;	No	5	0	
	• Regular reporting mechanism;	No			
	• Explicit consideration of international commitments;	No			
	• Other nationally relevant commitment.	No			
2. Long-term considerations	Long-term objectives going beyond the current electoral cycle included in national strategies	No	5	0	
	Additional specific mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points):				
	• A commissioner, council or ombudsperson for future generations;	No			
	• Other mechanisms of scrutiny or oversight on possible future effects;	No	5	0	
	• Mechanisms for regular appraisal of policies;	No			
	• Impact assessment mechanisms; and	No			
	• Other nationally relevant factors.	No			

Theme	Domain	Yes/No	Points	Score	Explanation
3. Interministerial and cross-sectoral coordination	National mechanism for regular coordination	No	5	0	
	Additional elements (scored as follows):				
	• A mandate to make decisions regarding trade-offs (2 points);	No			
	• Coordination body is convened by a centralized government body (1 point);	No	5	0	
	• Coordination at both political level and technical level (1 point);	No			
	• Mandate for aligning internal and external policies (1 point).	No			
4. Participatory processes	Relevant stakeholders are consulted at the early stages of development of laws, policies, plans, etc.	No	5	0	
	Additional elements (scored as follows):				
	• Consultations take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle (1 point);	No			
	• Institutions disclose the rationale for not including inputs from consultations (2 points);	No	5	0	
	• An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention (2 points).	No			

Theme	Domain	Yes/No	Points	Score	Explanation
5. Integration of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development, assessment of policy effects and linkages	A mechanism for assessing and addressing issues in terms of the contribution of a policy (new or existing) to broader sustainable development, including transboundary elements.	No	5	0	
	Additional mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points):				
	• The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government;	No			
	• An indicator framework for tracking policy effectiveness towards sustainable development;	No			
	• Cost-benefit analysis of policy impacts across all sectors;	No	5	0	
	• The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and to optimize synergies as part of policy and planning;	No			
	• The consideration of international spill-overs, such as cross-border and international impacts; and	No			
	• Other nationally relevant mechanisms.	No			

Theme	Domain	Yes/No	Points	Score	Explanation
6. Consultation and coordination across government levels	Any of following mechanisms (5 points each, 10 points total – two mechanisms is enough for 10 points):				
	• Mechanisms to systematically collect the inputs of sub-national government entities;	No			
	• Arrangements for regular formal exchange between central government and subnational levels;	No	10	0	
	• Mechanisms to ensure enhance substantive coherence (templates & checklists);	No			
	• Planning cycle timeframes that facilitate alignment.	No			
7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence	Monitoring and evaluation framework for policy coherence for sustainable development.	No	5	0	
	Aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into reporting processes.	No	2	0	
	Data and information management system for sustainable development data.	No	3	0	
8. Financial resources and tools	Any of following (5 points each, 10 points total):				
	• Checklists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect policy coherence for sustainable development;				
	• Integrated financial information systems.		10	0	
	• Mechanisms to ensure that cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and priorities.				
TOTAL			**80**	**0**	
Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (%)				**0**	

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