



# **Methodology for SDG-indicator 17.14.1: Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development**



## Part 1: Context

### *Introduction*

In September 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit adopted a new framework to guide development efforts between 2015 and 2030, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”. The 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), divided into 169 targets, which are informed by 244 Indicators. Sustainable Development Goal 17 covers partnerships and means of implementation to achieve the goals. In this respect, mechanisms for policy coherence are identified as an important aspect of means of implementation with Indicator 17.14.1 measuring the “number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development”.

Promoting policy coherence for sustainable development is important in several ways, including for achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) in a balanced and integrated manner; for ensuring coherence between policies at various levels of government; and for ensuring that policies in different sectors are mutually supportive and do not work against each other. It is also important in addressing the impacts of domestic policy internationally.

Policy coherence aims, as a minimum, to identify trade-offs and mitigate negative impacts between policies and optimize positive impacts. 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. Policy coherence should also aim to ensure that trade-offs are minimized both in terms of national and transboundary impacts.

### *Types of mechanisms and areas of coherence measured*

The methodology attempts to capture various aspects of policy coherence, including: between different levels of government (local to national and vice versa); across key government ministries, departments and agencies and across sectors and themes; between national and international policy and across national boundaries; with respect to the diversity of perspectives and concerns that policies need to take into account, and in terms of promoting a long-term vision and coherence beyond political mandates.

Mechanisms to enhance policy coherence in these areas can vary greatly from country to country and can take different forms. However, based on existing practice, it is possible to identify a range of mechanisms which are likely to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, and therefore the presence of a combination of these mechanisms in a given country would indicate progress toward meeting this indicator.

This methodology attempts to capture these mechanisms, so that countries may assess and report on their progress toward the indicator and at the same time identify areas for improvement to further enhance their policy coherence for sustainable development. The current indicator framework is composed of 8 domains (listed below). More details can be found in the subsequent chapters.



1. Institutionalization of Political Commitment	3. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination	5. Policy linkages	7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence
The country has institutionalized its commitment towards policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest political level.	The country has an institutional mechanism in place that periodically brings together relevant ministries and governmental entities to enhance coherence across sustainable development related policies including sectoral policies.	The country has mechanisms in place that allow relevant public institutions systematically assess the policy effects and cross-sectoral linkages throughout the policy and planning processes in the spirit of the integrated approach of the SDGs.	The country has mechanisms in place to systematically monitor and evaluate the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development as well as cross-sectoral impacts, and to report and inform adaptive action.
2. Long-term considerations in decision-making	4. Participatory processes	6. Alignment across government levels	8. Financing for policy coherence
The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that long-term considerations are integrated into decision-making, policy development and planning.	The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that laws, policies, plans, programmes, and major development projects at different levels of government and including at the overarching/general, sectoral and local level are developed through participatory processes that involve relevant stakeholders.	The country has mechanisms in place for aligning priorities, policies and plans adopted at various levels of government.	The country has mechanisms in place to promote the alignment of private and public finance to policy coherence objectives and to track related expenditures

***Scope of “Sustainable Development”***

For the purpose of this methodology ‘policy coherence of sustainable development’ has been interpreted as the coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development, rather than adopting a narrower definition of mechanisms put in place to support the coherent implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, so as to promote coherent policy for sustainable development well beyond the current agenda’s timeframe. The policy coherence mechanisms set out in this methodology may therefore include mechanisms already in place before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, and any mechanisms established during the next decade leading up to 2030 should aim to continue well beyond that timeframe. However, given the role of Agenda 2030 and the individual goals in defining the specific parameters of sustainable development, it is likely that governments will focus, in implementing this methodology, on bringing coherence in their policy approaches to implement the goals.

***The concept of Policy Coherence:***

The textual formulation of the indicator covers “policy coherence”. In order to make the indicator universally applicable and adaptable to various national contexts, the mechanisms measured by the methodology cover a wide range of mechanisms that, although aiming to achieve the same objective, use slightly different language. In order to properly assess and report on this indicator similar concepts such as “whole of government approach” or “integrated approach” will be interpreted in the same spirit as the concept of “policy coherence”. However, it is important that the used concept considers policies that cover the various dimensions of sustainable development. Hence, a mechanism focusing solely on the concept of policy coherence for development (which is often limited to



coherence between Official Development Assistance (ODA) and other policies, in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals) will not be considered by this framework.

### Calculating progress

A value system, or scoring mechanism was developed to define country progress. This system will enable countries to measure their progress and to accurately report on it. At national level, each country will be assigned a value for each sub-indicator, within a 0-10 range that will enable the reporting country to assess the “strength” of its mechanism (0 meaning no mechanism is in place, 10 indicating that the strongest version of the mechanism is in place). Based on the individual values per sub indicator, a total number out between 0 and 80 will be assigned to each reporting country, which will be translated into a percent value. This is particularly important to enable countries to establish their baseline and measure progress on this indicator and each sub indicator over time, in line with the ambition of the 2030 Agenda to use disaggregated data. The ultimate objective of the proposed indicator is not to rank countries, but to help countries assess where they are and what they can do better to enhance their policy coherence for sustainable development, with a clear trajectory towards 2030.

#### Text box 1. Guyana example

In the context of a broader effort to support Guyana to enhance their capacity to mainstream environmental sustainability into their national policies and strategies, the methodology for Indicator 17.14.1 was pilot tested in Guyana. The objective of the pilot testing was to: receive general feedback on the indicator framework as a whole as well as specific feedback on the different sub indicators; identify the various policy coherence mechanisms that exist nationally, and how/whether they fit into the list of 8 types of mechanisms identified by the International Expert Group; assess whether any types of policy coherence mechanisms are missing from the methodology, or whether the methodology is unable to account for existing policy coherence mechanisms; apply the value system in practice and determine its suitability and usefulness to member states; examine the usefulness of the guidance notes; and identify any challenges for member states in applying the methodology.

In the case of Guyana the value system was scored as follows:

Theme	Score
1. Institutionalized political commitment	5
2. Long-term considerations	5
3. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination	0
4. Participatory processes	8
5. Integration of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development, assessment of policy effects and linkages	0
6. Consultation and coordination across government levels	5
7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence	0
8. Financial resources and tools	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>
<b><i>Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (%)</i></b>	<b>35%</b>

## Part 2: Methodology

The indicator framework includes 8 sub indicators. This section elaborates each sub-indicator. The first two parts describe the mechanisms that the sub-indicator aims to assess (Summary & Description). The following section is the Rationale which gives more guidance on the sub indicator by laying out the reasons why this mechanisms



have been included in the indicator framework through the sub-indicator and how the mechanisms should enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. The last part of the sub-indicator gives countries guidance on how to exactly assess each sub indicators and how the points are awarded. This last part consists of either the different types of mechanisms that fall under the different sub-indicators or elaborate on the elements that could strengthen the given mechanism.

The below table provides a summary, a full methodology is included throughout this chapter. Although UNEP is the custodian agency for this SDG-indicator, the reporting on the sub-indicator will be done by each country through an automated online survey. UNEP will not validate the data reported, but rather make a reporting platform available and aggregate the data by region and globally. It is recommended that Governments convene a stakeholder group for self-scoring. The below table can be used for scoring.



Theme	Domain	Points	Score
1. Institutionalized political commitment	Political commitment expressed/endorsed by the highest level	5	
	Additional specific commitments (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives;</li> <li>• A dedicated budget;</li> <li>• Defined roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>• Regular reporting mechanism;</li> <li>• Explicit consideration of international commitments;</li> <li>• Other nationally relevant commitment.</li> </ul>	5	
2. Long-term considerations	Long-term objectives going beyond the current electoral cycle included in national strategies	5	
	Additional specific mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commissioner, council or ombudsperson for future generations;</li> <li>• Other mechanisms of scrutiny or oversight on possible future effects;</li> <li>• Mechanisms for regular appraisal of policies;</li> <li>• Impact assessment mechanisms; and</li> <li>• Other nationally relevant factors.</li> </ul>	5	
3. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination	National mechanism for regular coordination	5	
	Additional elements (scored as follows): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mandate to make decisions regarding trade-offs (2 points);</li> <li>• Coordination body is convened by a centralized government body (1 point);</li> <li>• Coordination at both political level and technical level (1 point);</li> <li>• Mandate for aligning internal and external policies (1 point).</li> </ul>	5	
4. Participatory processes	Relevant stakeholders are consulted at the early stages of development of laws, policies, plans, etc.	5	
	Additional elements (scored as follows): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle (1 point);</li> <li>• Institutions disclose the rationale for not including inputs from consultations (2 points);</li> <li>• An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention (2 points).</li> </ul>	5	
5. Policy Linkages: Assessment of policy effects and linkages	A mechanism for assessing and embedding the contribution of a policy (new or existing) to broader sustainable development, including transboundary elements.	5	
	Additional mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government;</li> <li>• An indicator framework for tracking policy effectiveness towards sustainable development;</li> <li>• A cost-benefit analysis of policy impacts across all sectors;</li> <li>• The identification of measures to mitigate negative effects and to optimize;</li> <li>• The specific consideration of international spill-overs, such as cross-border and international impacts</li> <li>• Other nationally relevant mechanisms.</li> </ul>	5	
6. Consultation and coordination across government levels and to enhance horizontal coherence across sub-national bodies	Any of following mechanisms (5 points each, 10 points total – two mechanisms is enough for 10 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms to systematically collect the inputs of sub-national government entities and share them among those entities and entities at different levels;</li> <li>• Arrangements for regular formal exchange between central government and subnational levels and among sub-national levels;</li> <li>• Mechanisms to ensure enhance substantive coherence (templates &amp; checklists);</li> <li>• Planning cycle timeframes that facilitate alignment; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination between national level focal points and focal points for international negotiations on given issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	10	
7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence	Monitoring and evaluation framework for policy coherence for sustainable development.	5	
	Aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into SDG related reporting processes.	2	
	Data and information management system for sustainable development data.	3	
8. Financial resources and tools	Any of following (5 points each, 10 points total): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-lists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect policy coherence for sustainable development;</li> <li>• Integrated financial information systems.</li> <li>• Mechanisms to ensure that cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and priorities.</li> </ul>	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>		80	<b>Sum</b>
<b>Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (%)</b>			<b>100*</b> <b>Sum/80</b>



## 1. Institutionalization of political commitment

### Summary

The country has institutionalized its commitment towards policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest political central/federal level.

### Description

The institutionalization of political commitment towards policy coherence for sustainable development at the highest political central/federal level (e.g. Presidency, Office of the Prime minister, Chancellery, etc.) can be expressed through a written explicit commitment towards enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development in the public institutions and their working modalities contained in a legal framework or official policy, strategy, vision or action plan or other government.

### Rationale

Institutionalized political commitment is likely to promote policy coherence for sustainable development by instilling a culture of policy coherence and guiding action towards it at all levels of government. Political commitment at the highest political level, as an initial step, is likely to trigger the establishment and/or the enhancement of other mechanisms that enhance policy coherence for sustainable development, including those reflected in this indicator framework. It is important to note that this sub indicator assesses the political commitment towards policy coherence for sustainable development and not only political commitment to sustainable development, Agenda 2030 or the SDGs.

### Source/Mean of verification

National law or strategy or other official document endorsed by the government.

### Computing the value

If there is a political commitment towards policy coherence for sustainable development expressed by the highest level of the central/federal government at national level applying to the whole government this is worth 5 points.

Additional points relate to the presence of elements contributing to the effectiveness of the mechanism. A stronger degree of commitment could be demonstrated if this political commitment was complemented by:

- Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives (1 point);
- A dedicated budget (1 point);
- Defined roles and responsibilities (1 point);
- A requirement for a regular reporting mechanism on policy coherence for sustainable development (1 point);
- Explicit consideration of international commitments and/or transboundary effects (1 point);
- Other nationally relevant mechanism (1 point).

## 2. Long-term considerations in decision-making



## Summary

The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that long-term considerations are integrated in policies, plans, programmes and projects. decision-making, policy development and planning.

## Description

This sub-indicator identifies whether the country has mechanisms in place to ensure that decision-making, policy development and planning follow objectives that are long-term, i.e. span beyond the current electoral cycle, and consider the interests of future generations.

This can be expressed through a combination of having long-term goals and the interests of future generations embedded in national frameworks<sup>1</sup> that apply to the whole of government, with assessment and oversight mechanisms that aim to ensure that these goals and interests are considered in decision making and planning.<sup>2</sup>

## Rationale

The aim of the mechanism is to ensure that decision-making, policy-making and policy implementation are informed by the consideration of long-term effects , rather than only focusing on short terms gains or problems and take into account the interests of future generations<sup>3</sup>.

## Source/Mean of verification

National law or strategy endorsed by the government appearing in official Gazette / Bulletin / Journal or other government recognized official source.

## Computing the value

The existence of a long-term objectives going beyond the current electoral cycle, and the interests of future generations embedded in the national sustainable development strategy or policy framework (5 points).

Additional points relate to the presence of mechanisms that could further instill a culture of long termism and intergenerational equity in decision-making. These could include the following (non-exhaustive list) (5 points for one or a combination of the following):

- A commissioner, council, fund or ombudsperson for future generations;
- Other mechanisms of scrutiny or oversight over the possible effects on future generations of policies or legislation (e.g. auditing mechanisms);
- Mechanisms for regular appraisal of policies to ensure that unanticipated effects are integrated over time;
- Impact assessment mechanisms that take into account intergenerational effects of major infrastructural developments (not limited to an environmental perspective)
- Other nationally relevant mechanism

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<sup>1</sup> Policy, legal, strategic frameworks etc.

<sup>2</sup> These should not be limited to impact assessments focused on the environment

<sup>3</sup> Future generations is in this context not limited to Youth but include future (unborn) generations



### 3. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination

#### Summary

The country has an institutional mechanism in place that periodically brings together relevant ministries and governmental entities to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

#### Description

This sub-indicator aims to assess whether the country has in place a mechanism to facilitate inter-sectoral/inter-ministerial dialogue to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development by:

- bringing together ministries (and other governmental entities) that are the most relevant to sustainable development at national level on a regular basis; or
- having a specific central coordination body of focal points in different ministries in charge of enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development.

#### Rationale

The aim of the mechanism is to facilitate inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral dialogue which in turn should foster coherence across the three dimensions of sustainable development in all policy-making and planning. This mechanism should also enable the government to periodically address and mitigate the impact of policies in one sector on another sector to the extent possible and address the trade-offs examined. It should enable the government to align existing development strategies, plans or roadmaps with the Sustainable Development Goals

#### Source/Mean of verification

Official document establishing the mechanism appearing in official Gazette/Bulleting/Journal or other government recognized official source.

#### Computing the value

Mechanism for regular coordination established at the national level and bringing together ministries (and other governmental entities) to facilitate information sharing and consultation among different ministries/sectors most relevant to sustainable development (5 points).

Elements that would strengthen the mechanism by contributing to its effectiveness:

- A mandate to make decisions regarding trade-offs and other unintended negative impacts on (2 points);
- Convened by a centralized government body such as the Office of the Prime Minister or President or other central national governmental entity (ex. Ministry of Planning)<sup>4</sup>. (1 point);
- Representation and coordination at both political/strategic level and technical level, to ensure political commitment as well as its translation into action and alignment between the two levels (1 point);
- Explicit mandate to consider transboundary issues and enhance coherence of internal and external policies including through the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (or equivalent bodies) (1 point);
- Other nationally relevant mechanism (1 point).

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<sup>4</sup> If the mechanism would be spearheaded by for example the Ministry of Environment this additional point would not apply



## 4. Participatory Processes

### Summary

The country has mechanisms in place to ensure that laws, policies, plans, programmes and major development projects at different levels of government are developed through participatory processes that engage relevant stakeholders in a comprehensive manner.

### Description

This sub-indicator aims to assess whether the country has in place mechanisms for the engagement and the integration of the concerns expressed by the stakeholders potentially affected by or having an interest in a law, policy, plan, programme or major development project at different levels of government.

The mechanism can take various forms, but as a minimum it should be institutionalized through a formal requirement that stakeholders are consulted. The way in which consultations are to take place may vary, and could include (non-exhaustive list): the early publishing and invitation for written feedback; public hearings; poll/public opinion surveys, etc.

### Rationale

Participatory processes allow for inputs from all stakeholders which in turn ensure that various angles, interests and concerns are taken into consideration early in the decision making, planning and policy making cycles, which in turn is likely to prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts and to foster a balanced consideration of all dimensions of sustainable development.

Participatory processes provide an opportunity to promote buy-in and support from key stakeholders and partners, which is likely to enhance implementation and compliance and can foster better coherence and synergies.

### Source/Mean of verification

Official document establishing the mechanism (e.g. law, decree, guidance documents, etc.), appearing in official Gazette/Bulletin/Journal or other government recognized source

### Computing the value

Requirement that relevant stakeholders are consulted at the early stages of development of laws, policies, plans, programmes and major development projects at different levels of government, accompanied with the requirement for a reasonable timeframe for information and participation of relevant stakeholders and other procedural standards to make participation effective (5 points).

Elements that would strengthen the mechanism:

- 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 at implementation, evaluation, and revision stages (1 point);
- Institutions are required to disclose the rationale for taking or not taking into account inputs from consultations (2 points);
- An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention by citizens such as petitioning and subsequent review of policies (2 points).



## 5. Policy Linkages: Assessment of policy effects and cross-sectoral linkages

### Summary

The country has mechanisms in place that allow relevant public institutions systematically assess the policy effects and cross-sectoral linkages throughout the policy and planning processes in the spirit of the integrated approach of the SDGs.

### Description

Mechanisms could include specific legal provisions, guidelines, mandates, assessment tools and coordination mechanisms to assess policy linkages and cross-sectoral impacts ensuring coherent implementation of the sustainable development agenda. These mechanisms should apply to policy and planning at both national and subnational levels and should address domestic as well as transboundary effects and international linkages.

A mechanism for assessing cross-sectoral effects and policy linkages of a policy (new or existing), including transboundary elements (5 points).

More ambitious mechanisms would include (1 point each, maximum of 5 points):

- The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government (i.e. national and subnational);
- An indicator framework for tracking policy effectiveness towards sustainable development;
- A cost-benefit analysis of policy impacts across all sectors;
- The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and to optimize synergies as part of policy and planning;
- The specific consideration of international spill-overs, such as cross-border and international impacts in the basic component of this sub-indicator; and
- Other nationally relevant mechanisms.

### Rationale

The aim of the mechanism is to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a balanced way so that: trade-offs are understood and inform decision-making; potentially negative impacts are identified and mitigated to the extent possible; and positive linkages are optimized.

Policies, plans, programmes and projects are often developed in silos. This can lead to a policy in one sector negatively impacting a policy in another sector, policies in different sectors inadvertently competing over the same natural resources, or policies or plans that primarily address a problem of an economic, or social or environmental nature and do not consider the other dimensions.

Mechanisms for assessing policy effects and cross-sectoral linkages should allow that potential negative impacts are prevented and mitigated, and potential positive synergies optimized, and thus that policies in different sectors are coherent amongst themselves. Conversely, without adequate collaboration, opportunities to harness positive cross-sectoral linkages may be missed. Further, such mechanisms would ensure that cross-cutting issues, such as gender or health, are mainstreamed into all sectoral policies

### Source/Mean of verification

Policy and planning guidelines, templates or checklists or official documents establishing formal cross-sectoral policy/planning task force or collaboration mechanisms.



## Computing the value

A mechanism for assessing cross-sectoral effects and policy linkages of a policy (new or existing), including transboundary elements (5 points).

More ambitious mechanisms would include (1 point each, maximum of 5 points):

- The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government (i.e. national and subnational);
- An indicator framework for tracking policy effectiveness towards sustainable development;
- A cost-benefit analysis of policy impacts across all sectors;
- The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and to optimize synergies as part of policy and planning;
- The specific consideration of international spill-overs, such as cross-border and international impacts in the basic component of this sub-indicator; and
- Other nationally relevant mechanisms.

## 6. Alignment across government levels

### Summary

The country has mechanisms in place for aligning priorities, policies and plans between various levels of government.

### Description

These mechanisms could take various forms, including one or a combination of the following:

- Consultation and coordination mechanisms to systematically collect the inputs of sub-national government entities and the consideration of their priorities in national policy and strategy formulation and planning processes and to integrate national priorities into the subnational policies, plans and programmes;
- Contractual or other institutional arrangements for regular formal exchange between central government and subnational levels of government for systematic consultation, collaboration, and alignment of efforts;
- Tools to enhance substantive coherence such as policy or planning and budgeting templates or checklists that require demonstration of alignment between sub-national and national level policies before validation and budget allocation;
- Planning cycle timeframes that facilitate the alignment of national and sub-national plans, or systems that allow for the regular review of plans, policies, regulations and programmes to facilitate such alignment.

### Rationale

The aim of this mechanism is to ensure that policies, plans, and programmes at all levels of government (national and sub-national) are aligned and mutually supportive. In the absence of such alignment, key aspects of national strategies or plans may not be adequately implemented at the sub-national or local levels. On the other hand, the absence of such alignment may not take into account the reality and priorities at a lower governmental level.



### Source/Means of verification

Constitutional provision, national law or decree establishing one of the mechanisms above appearing in official Gazette / Bulletin / Journal or other government recognized official source and government endorsed planning guidelines, templates or checklists.

### Computing the value

Either of the following mechanism (5 points) or a combination of them (10 points):

- Consultation and coordination mechanisms to systematically collect the inputs of sub-national government entities and the consideration of their priorities in national policy, strategy formulation and planning processes and to integrate national priorities into the subnational policies, plans and programmes;
- Contractual or other institutional arrangements for regular formal exchange between central government and subnational levels of government for systematic consultation, collaboration, and alignment of efforts;
- Tools to enhance substantive coherence such as policy or planning and budgeting templates or checklists that require demonstration of alignment between sub-national and national level policies before validation and budget allocation;
- Planning cycle timeframes that facilitate the alignment of national and sub-national 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

### Summary

The country has mechanisms in place to systematically monitor and evaluate the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development and cross-sectoral impacts, and to report and inform adaptive action.

### Description

This mechanism could be expressed through a requirement that the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development and cross-sectoral impacts are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis using specific indicators and that the findings are used to inform adaptive action to ensure that such action is coherent. Such a mechanism would be strengthened by the requirement that aspects of policy coherence are integrated into reporting of government entities.

Further, policy coherence would be strengthened if decision making was informed by sets of coherent data, and therefore an accompanying mechanism could be the existence of tools and information management systems that facilitate availability, accessibility and comparability of centralized and harmonized data on the various dimensions of sustainable development, as well as harmonized data within each dimension.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> for example harmonized environmental data that allow for comparing information on climate and biodiversity and chemicals, or for comparing information on various aspects of biodiversity, would inform more coherent decisions



## Rationale

The aim of the mechanism is to allow policy makers to track progress, through specific indicators, in terms of coherence of existing policies, and to enable corrective action to enhance better coherence. Progress towards policy coherence for sustainable development may be assessed in a variety of ways, including through balancing the contribution of policies to the three dimensions of sustainable development; and coherence between sectoral policies.

## Source/Mean of verification

Law or other government endorsed official document establishing the requirement to monitor and evaluate /report on policy coherence aspects into report, appearing in official Gazette / Bulletin / Journal or other government recognized official source and evidence of existence and use of information management systems

## Computing the value

The following scoring will be used:

- An institutional or regulatory framework ensuring that the effects of policies on the various dimensions of sustainable development and cross-sectoral impacts are monitored and evaluated on a regular basis using specific indicators and that the findings are used to inform adaptive action to ensure that such action is coherent (5 points);
- Requirement that aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into reporting of government entities (2 points);
- Existence and usage of tools and information management systems that facilitate availability, accessibility and comparability of centralized and harmonized data on sustainable development (3 points).

## 8. Financing for policy coherence

### Summary

The country has mechanisms in place to promote the alignment of finance to policy coherence objectives and to track related expenditures.

### Description

Mechanisms may take several forms, including:

- Check-lists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development before validation and budget allocation, at all government levels;
- Integrated financial information systems<sup>6</sup> to facilitate tracking, reporting and informed decisions on resource allocation at all levels of government or public expenditure reviews that are tagged to the various dimensions of sustainable development;
- A requirement that international cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and priorities of both donors and recipients.

### Rationale

The aim of this mechanism is to track allocations and expenditure promoting policy coherence, such as contributions to all dimensions of sustainable development, consideration of cross-sectoral impacts and the alignment across

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<sup>6</sup> Ex. use of budget codes



government levels. It also aims to ensure that funds from different sources are coherent with national policies and priorities.

### Source/Mean of verification

Planning and budgeting check-lists; public expenditure review systems; financial information management systems; national cooperation/funding strategies; and official documents setting up centralized funds.

### Computing the value

One or a combination of the following (5 points):

- Check-lists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development before validation and budget allocation, at all government levels;
- Integrated financial information systems to facilitate tracking, reporting and informed decisions on resource allocation at all levels of government or public expenditure reviews that are tagged to the various dimensions of sustainable development.

Additional points for mechanisms that could promote alignment between internal and external policy coherence:

- Mechanisms to ensure that international cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and priorities of both donors and recipients.

### Example: Using the data collection template

Theme	Domain	Yes/No	Points	Score
1. Institutionalized political commitment	Political commitment expressed/endorsed by the highest level	Yes	5	5
	Additional specific commitments (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): • Set timelines for the achievement of policy coherence objectives; • A dedicated budget; • Defined roles and responsibilities; • Regular reporting mechanism; • Explicit consideration of international commitments; • Other nationally relevant commitment.	Yes No No No No No	5	1
2. Long-term considerations	Long-term objectives going beyond the current electoral cycle included in national strategies	Yes	5	5
	Additional specific mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): • A commissioner, council or ombudsperson for future generations; • Other mechanisms of scrutiny or oversight on possible future effects; • Mechanisms for regular appraisal of policies; • Impact assessment mechanisms; and • Other nationally relevant factors.	No No No No Yes	5	1
3. Inter-ministerial 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); • Coordination body is convened by a centralized government body (1 point); • Coordination at both political level and technical level (1 point); • Mandate for aligning internal and external policies (1 point).	No No No No	5	0
4. Participatory processes	Relevant stakeholders are consulted at the early stages of development of laws, policies, plans, etc.	Yes	5	5
	Additional elements (scored as follows): • Consultations take place in a comprehensive manner at various stages of the policy cycle (1 point); • Institutions disclose the rationale for not including inputs from consultations (2 points); • An accountability mechanism that allows public intervention (2 points).	Yes Yes Yes	5	5
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 (5 points).	No	5	0
	Additional mechanisms (1 point each, maximum of 5 points): • The application of the above mechanisms at all levels of government; • An indicator framework for tracking policy effectiveness towards sustainable development; • Cost-benefit analysis of policy impacts across all sectors;	No Yes No	5	1



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The identification of measures to mitigate potentially negative effects and to optimize synergies as part of policy and planning;</li> <li>• The consideration of international spill-overs, such as cross-border and international impacts; and</li> <li>• Other nationally relevant mechanisms.</li> </ul>	No		
		No		
		No		
6. Consultation and coordination across government levels	Any of following mechanisms (5 points each, 10 points total – two mechanisms 10 points): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mechanisms to systematically collect the inputs of sub-national government entities;</li> <li>• Arrangements for regular formal exchange between central government and subnational levels;</li> <li>• Mechanisms to ensure enhance substantive coherence (templates &amp; checklists);</li> <li>• Planning cycle timeframes that facilitate alignment.</li> </ul>	Yes	10	10
		Yes		
		Yes		
7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence	Monitoring and evaluation framework for policy coherence for sustainable development.	Yes	5	5
	Aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development are integrated into reporting processes.	No	2	0
	Data and information management system for sustainable development data.	Yes	3	3
8. Financial resources and tools	Any of following (5 points each, 10 points total): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-lists to ensure that plans and budgets reflect policy coherence for sustainable development;</li> <li>• Integrated financial information systems.</li> <li>• Mechanisms to ensure that cooperation funds are aligned with national policies and priorities.</li> </ul>	Yes	10	5
		No		
		No		
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>80</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (%)</b>				<b>57.5</b>

### Part 3: Conclusion

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