



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ESTONIAN REVIEW ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA 2030



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The Estonian national voluntary review on implementation of the Agenda 2030 gives information on the progress and status of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Estonia. It describes the main measures and plans for implementation of 17 sustainable development goals by government and non-government organizations. The report also presents an overview of the Estonian institutional framework for the coordination of sustainable development issues including the integration of three dimensions of sustainable development, incorporation of the SDGs in national frameworks and creating ownership. A preliminary gap analysis of governments' policies and global sustainable development goals was initiated in spring 2016 and was used as a relevant input for the review.

The review was compiled in cooperation with several ministries and the Estonian Sustainable Development Commission. Estonian review generally follows the common reporting guidelines for Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF, as presented in the annex of the Secretary-General's report on critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level¹.

Strategic framework

Estonia has considerable experience in advancing sustainable development. [The Sustainable Development Act](#) was adopted by Parliament already in 1995. In 2005, the Parliament adopted the [Estonian Sustainable Development Strategy „Sustainable Estonia 21“²](#), which states 4 main goals for sustainable development in Estonia: 1) Viability of Estonian cultural space; 2) Growth of welfare; 3) Coherent society; 4) Ecological balance. The Estonian national sustainable development strategy is implemented by governments' sectoral and thematic strategies and action plans. The national sustainable development strategy is one of the main horizontal strategies that has to be taken into account by designing governments' strategic development plans.

Monitoring mechanism

The implementation of sustainable development goals is monitored through an agreed set of [sustainable development indicators](#). The set of indicators is renewed on a regular basis and covers all the relevant sustainable development related topics. The current set of indicators was agreed upon in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Commission, inter-ministerial sustainable development working group and the statistical Office and Government Office. The last [indicator-based report on Estonian sustainable development](#) was published in March 2015.³

Institutional framework

The Estonian coordination mechanism for sustainable development issues involves government institutions and non-government organizations from all relevant sustainable development spheres. At the central government level, the implementation and monitoring of sustainable development

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/9768Guidelines%20from%20SG%20report.pdf>

² https://riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/estonia_sds_2005.pdf

³ https://riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Failid/saastva_arendu_naitajad_1.pdf

issues is coordinated by the [Government Office Strategy Unit](#), which also coordinates Estonian competitiveness strategy Estonia 2020 and drafts and monitors the Government Action Plan. This helps to maintain the coherence between main horizontal strategies. Estonia also plans to utilize the functioning national coordination mechanism for sustainable development issues in coordinating the implementation of Agenda 2030.

The [Estonian Sustainable Development Commission](#) was formed in 1996. It consists of non-governmental roof-organizations which cover different fields of sustainable development (for example education, environmental protection, culture, children, health, local government, academy, companies, agriculture, etc). The Commission meets 4-5 times per year and has *thematic discussions* on different sustainable development topics, discusses drafts of sustainable development related strategic action plans before they are adopted by the government and publishes *focus reports* with policy recommendations.

Coordination and monitoring also involves the [inter-ministerial working group on sustainable development](#), which is comprised of representatives from all the ministries and the Statistics Estonia. The SD working group works on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, the working group has participated in compiling the set of sustainable development indicators, drafting Estonian positions for SDG negotiations, and compiling the Estonian review on Agenda 2030 implementation for the 2016 HLPF.

[Next steps for the implementation of the Agenda 2030](#)

The first actions connected to the Agenda 2030 were initiated during the compiling process of the national voluntary review. The preliminary [gap analysis](#) of governments' policies and SDGs has been conducted, and its results were used as input for the review.

The Estonian Sustainable Development Commission has launched [a review of the Estonian National sustainable development strategy "Sustainable Estonia21"](#) in the light of Agenda2030 and global trends. The analysis will be completed in autumn 2016. It will give recommendations regarding the renewal of the national sustainable development strategy and its implementation mechanisms.

Estonian Statistics Office has conducted an initial overview of 231 [global sustainable development indicators](#) and approximately 14% of the indicators are measurable right now. The [renewal of sustainable development indicators](#) will be started in 2016. The aim is to include indicators that help to measure achievements in the fields of SDG-s. It will allow the next indicator-based reports on sustainable development to provide information about performance regarding Estonian sustainable development goals and also global SDG-s. A new list of indicators will be composed in cooperation with an inter-ministerial working group, the Estonian Statistics Office and the Estonian Sustainable Development Commission.

Estonia will continue attaching great importance to the development of innovative technological solutions that help to implement the SDGs. As lessons learnt, [promoting of digital technology and e-governance solutions](#) have contributed to Estonia's development in several areas including economic growth and human development.

It is also important to find effective ways to [raise general awareness](#) of the Agenda 2030 and to continue contributing to the implementation of the SDG-s via [international cooperation](#).

Status of implementation of global SDG-s – initial results and main challenges

The gap analysis of Estonian governments' policies and SDG-s, and mapping of policy measures showed that the Estonian government and non-government sector are already implementing measures and taking actions in the fields of all 17 sustainable development goals. Some targets are covered partially or via international cooperation. Gap analysis identified only few targets that are not covered by actions (for example combating desertification and protecting ecosystems in mountains).

The mapping exercise indicated the areas where Estonia has achieved **positive results**. In the overall picture, the rich biodiversity protections, high share of renewables in the heating sector, inclusive regulatory process of the government, quick and extensive access to public services through e-services and high quality and good accessibility of education stand out as Estonia's strengths.

However, the review has also shown areas where the Estonian government needs continued efforts toward contribution to the implementation of SDG-s and Estonia's own targets. The main **challenges** lie in achieving productivity growth, developing an energy- and resource efficient economy, lowering CO2 emissions per capita, an improvement in the subsistence of low income people and tackling the gender pay gap.

Raising the general awareness of Agenda 2030 and creating ownership of SDG-s also need further attention in Estonia. The first conference introducing Agenda 2030 to the wider public was organized already in November 2015, where The Minister of the Environment, Minister for Foreign Affairs and other high-level officials, representatives from companies and civil society explained global sustainable development goals generally, as well as possibilities for implementing the goals using the example of SDG 12 – sustainable production and consumption. Innovative and comprehensive solutions are needed for creating awareness and increasing actions for sustainable development.

Support for other countries

The new **Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016–2020**⁴ is based on general international development agreements and goals, e.g. the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as the development policy decisions and guidelines of the European Union (EU). The priorities of Estonian development cooperation are: 1) supporting the quality of education, 2) supporting the development of health care, 3) guaranteeing peace and stability, 4) supporting the development of democracy, introduction of good governance practices and guaranteeing human rights, 5) promoting economic development, 6) fostering environmentally friendly development, 7) raising the awareness of the Estonian public, particularly younger people, concerning development cooperation and humanitarian aid, as well as global development problems.

Covering all areas, Estonia promotes more extensive application of information and communication (ITC) technologies in the framework of development cooperation. Estonian experience in **digital development, especially in e-governance and respective public-private partnerships** has taught valuable lessons. We are ready to share these lessons with other countries.

⁴ http://vm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/development-cooperation/2016_2020_arengukava_eng_kodulehele_0.pdf