

## Planning, implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals



### Regional survey by UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia

Geneva and New York, 2 December 2015

## Purpose

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York (25-27 September 2015), the Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda, including the ambitious and far-reaching 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Entering into force on 1 January 2016, they will guide sustainable development efforts in all countries in the 15-year period until 2030.

In this context, this survey is sent to the Governments of 56 UNECE member States<sup>1</sup> to collect inputs on three crucial topics:

- The plans and approaches of governments to integrate the SDGs and targets in their national strategies and to implement them in their countries.
- The plans of governments to build and conduct monitoring and review at the national level for the SDGs and targets.
- The expectations of governments towards the regional UN system in view of SDG implementation and follow-up.

The survey is jointly conducted by UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia. The information received will be summarized and shared by their secretariats. It will serve to share experiences and to provide a practical overview of the first steps on the path to achieving the SDGs. Once the results are available, it is further envisaged to organize dialogues with and among member States in Geneva and New York in early 2016 to discuss and take forward the results.

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<sup>1</sup> The 56 UNECE member States are listed as follows. They include 17 countries in which the Regional UN Development Group (R-UNDG) works (marked with \*). In addition, the R-UNDG is active in Kosovo (under UN Security Council resolution 1244). Albania\*, Andorra, Armenia\*, Austria, Azerbaijan\*, Belarus\*, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia\*, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan\*, Kyrgyzstan\*, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova\*, Monaco, Montenegro\*, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia\*, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan\*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Turkey\*, Turkmenistan\*, Ukraine\*, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan\*.

## Questionnaire

Please complete

<b>COUNTRY:</b>	ITALY
<b>AUTHORITY:</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea (MATTM)
<b>NAME OF FOCAL POINT:</b>	Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) Directorate General for Sustainable Development (DGSVI)
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<b>REMARKS:*</b>	The questionnaire has been completed in close cooperation by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea.

Please return the completed questionnaire by **MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2016** to:

**UNECE, Sustainable Development and Gender Unit (SDGU)**  
**E-Mail: [sdgu@unece.org](mailto:sdgu@unece.org)**

*The electronic version of the questionnaire is available at:  
[www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/sustainable-development/Regional\\_SDG\\_survey\\_final.docx](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/sustainable-development/Regional_SDG_survey_final.docx)*

\*The completed questionnaires will be posted on the websites of UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia (ECA R-UNDG). Please indicate under "Remarks" above if you prefer your reply not to be posted.

For questions or assistance, please contact:  
*Mr. Michael KUNZ, UNECE secretariat, Geneva*  
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**Note:** At the current stage and shortly after the adoption of the SDGs, there may be no consolidated government position yet on many issues raised in the questionnaire. You are therefore kindly encouraged to share any preliminary thinking or tentative considerations you may have that will help provide an informal insight into the state of planning and debate in your Government.

### Overall planning

Planning is a key step to embark on the path of SDG implementation. This includes the formulation of national (sustainable) development strategies and the integration of the SDGs in policy measures.

#### **Question 1:**

**What are the overall plans of your Government to translate the SDGs and targets into action and measures at the national and subnational level and integrate them in national strategies and other policy interventions? In addition, will new planning tools or processes be developed in support of the SDGs or will existing structures be used?**

At present, following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the national implementation process, including the definition of a strategic framework, a governance structure, relevant tools and measures, is still under consideration.

Given the amplitude of the 2030 Agenda, planning tools and processes will be developed and a strategic framework will be defined to ensure a coherent, balanced and integrated approach to the implementation process.

At national level, Italy, in preparation of the Johannesburg Summit, developed a sustainable development strategy mainly based on the environmental pillar. According to Law 221/2015, this Strategy will be updated in 2016. The sectors involved and the potential governance structure for its implementation within the Italian government are still under consideration. For the time being, we are at the stage of gathering ideas and collecting information also looking at what is being experience by other countries. A necessary, preliminary element of this reflection is what decisions will be taken at the EU level for the internal application of the Agenda.

As for the external dimension of the application of the Agenda (i.e. development cooperation with partner countries) we have started to review the Document of Triennial Planning for Development Cooperation in order to incorporate both the integrated vision and the innovative sectors of the Agenda. We expect that the new Document will be adopted by the first semester of 2016.

### Prioritization

One distinctive feature of the SDGs is their universality, i.e. the entire SDG agenda should be implemented by all countries of the world. Nevertheless, particular topics and targets will be of higher priority than others given a country's specific circumstances.

**Question 2:**

**What is your Government's approach to identify SDGs and targets that have priority for your particular country context?**

Given that arrangements for the implementation process are still under consideration, there are no definite answers to this question.

At this stage we think that, even if it has a prevalent developmental approach, the 2030 Agenda in its entirety and each SDG can serve internally to ensure greater coherence to the government action and guarantee the Italian contribution to provide global solutions to global challenges.

Italy will seek to consider the SDGs in their integrated and indivisible nature. Rather than identifying priority areas for action, we will concentrate our efforts in defining a strategic framework capable of including most goals and targets, while dealing effectively and coherently with interlinkages and crosscutting issues.

In doing so, Italy will adopt an integrated and balanced approach, the only one capable of ensuring greater coherency among different policies and an effective implementation process.

Adaptation

When devising national and local policies, experience suggests that global goals and targets may be adapted to national circumstances and that objectives, targets and indicators are developed and chosen that are in addition or complementary to the global agenda.

**Question 3:**

**How does your Government foresee to transform global SDGs and targets into local objectives, targets and indicators ("localization" or "nationalization")?**

No doubt that the Agenda will need to be adapted to national circumstances and levels of development.

Italy will work towards translating the global commitments into local objectives and targets. Ownership and participation will be crucial to ensure an effective implementation process. The active involvement of regional and local authorities and the mobilization of relevant stakeholders will provide a further contribution in this sense.

### Governance and budgeting

The SDGs are widely seen as an integrated agenda that encourages holistic policy-making and cross-sectoral cooperation. As such, they may have an impact on institutional and governance structures as well as on processes for resource allocation.

#### **Question 4:**

**Does your Government envisage any changes in the budgeting processes and governance structures due to the SDGs, and which institution in your Government will oversee SDG implementation in your country?**

As said in answer to question n.1, no decision has been taken yet in this regard.

### Stakeholder involvement

SDG implementation will require forging partnerships and collaboration between a range of actors. This will also have a bearing on the work of governments with other stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia.

#### **Question 5:**

**How does your Government envisage to strengthen existing and build new partnerships with other stakeholders for the purpose of SDG implementation?**

Given that arrangements for the implementation process at national level are still under consideration, there are no definite answers to this question. Italy will, nonetheless, seek the active involvement of civil society, local communities, private sector, academia and research institutions, and, most of all, citizens. Italy will aim to promote ownership, to develop effective policies collectively, allowing all stakeholders to be key actors in accelerating the transition from commitment to action.

As for the external dimension of the application of the Agenda, non-governmental stakeholders already contribute in the elaboration of the Document of Triennial Planning of Development Cooperation, through the National Council on Development Cooperation (CNCS) that includes representatives of NGOs, the private sector, academia, local authorities and other actors. A similar scheme might be conceived also for the domestic application.

### UN role in planning and implementation

As recognized in inter-governmental fora, the UN will play a critical role in support of SDG planning and implementation. Some key UN functions and services include providing fora

for policy dialogue and exchange; international legal instruments, norms, regulations and standards; policy advice and expertise; capacity-building and technical cooperation. Based on the feedback from its member States, the UN system at the regional level will work towards strengthening and improving regional UN structures and processes and inter-agency cooperation to provide the most 'fit for purpose' SDG-related services.

**Question 6:**

**What are the expectations and needs of your Government regarding the role of the UN system in the region<sup>2</sup> in assisting with SDG planning and implementation? Please highlight possible areas of improvement as well as any suggestions you may have.**

For the time being, we are of the opinion that the institutions of the UN System for Development already operating in the UNECE region could assist countries in putting into practice the integrated vision the Agenda implementation requires. In order to do that, they should first adopt an horizontal approach themselves and be “more fit for purpose”.

At the same time, it is important for the UNECE region to take stalk of the potential contribution to the implementation of the SDGs of the existing regional strategies, tools and action plans and eventually work towards promoting a coherent and effective regional approach to the 2030 Agenda.

Data and Monitoring

While the development of statistical indicators for the SDGs is ongoing, there are many calls for a “data revolution” to ensure that high-quality data will be available to monitor progress under the SDGs. This may involve more and better data, disaggregated data, new data sources, and building and strengthening statistical capacities on the ground.

**Question 7:**

**How does your Government envisage to address the need for data, to strengthen statistical capacities and to monitor SDG progress?**

Italy agrees with the recommendations made by the Independent Expert Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development appointed by the UN Secretary General. Italy has joined the partnership for sustainable data and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation – Directorate General for Development Cooperation - has developed a systematic collaboration with the Academia and the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT). ISTAT is already developing innovating approaches like the elaboration of a “well-being indicator”.

At national level the National Statistics Institute is and will continue to be fully involved in the ongoing process of identifying appropriate tools for monitoring and

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<sup>2</sup> UNECE, R-UNDG, regional or subregional offices or units of UN entities, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, UN Country Teams active in the region.

review of the 2030 Agenda. The Ministry for the Environment is in the process of renewing a framework agreement with the Institute for the next three years aimed also at providing support to ensure an effective monitoring and review process.

### Assessment of progress

Based on a solid data foundation, it will be crucial to identify the reasons for SDG progress and shortcomings as well as to derive appropriate policy interventions and corrections.

#### **Question 8:**

**How does your Government envisage to identify the drivers of satisfactory or unsatisfactory SDG progress and to draw the related policy conclusions?**

It is too early to answer to this question. It will depend on the decision the government will take on the internal application of the Agenda referred to in the answer to question n. 1.

### Reporting

National reports are recognized as important cornerstones in the future SDG follow-up process. Typically, they will be government-led and involve a range of other stakeholders. The format and content of national reports is expected to depend on data availability and other constraints. Sharing national reports for discussion and mutual learning could be beneficial for all stakeholders, including at the subregional and regional levels.

#### **Question 9:**

**What is the current (even preliminary) thinking of your Government regarding possible modalities for reporting on SDG progress at the national level in your country, what are the constraints, and what should be the channels used to share these national reports internationally?**

In general, Italy agrees with the indications on this issue contained in the Report of the UN Secretary-General on Critical milestones towards, coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review of the Agenda 2030.

### UN role in follow-up and review

In addition to providing a possible regional platform (see question 11), the role of the UN in SDG follow-up and review could include statistical support, synthesis of national reports, preparation of thematic reports and other services.

**Question 10:**

**What are the expectations and needs of your Government regarding the role and services of the UN system in the region<sup>2</sup> in SDG follow-up and review?**

The UNECE region already has a high degree of homogeneity and collaboration in the statistical and other sectors that are relevant for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. The UNECE might be of further help in the creation of standard guidelines and templates for national reports and elaboration of regional thematic reports.

Regional preparatory meetings will represent a valuable contribution to the preparation of the HLPF sessions. It will, thus, be important to ensure a timely and coherent planning of these processes at regional level to allow for a broad and effective participation of the UNECE Member States.

**Regional platform**

The 2030 Agenda highlights the opportunities of follow-up and review at the regional level for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. Regional reviews should draw on national-level reviews and build on existing review mechanisms. Member States are encouraged to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, supported by the Regional Commissions.<sup>3</sup> Earlier, the General Assembly had invited the Regional Commissions to hold annual meetings in preparation of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).<sup>4</sup>

**Question 11:**

**How could a regional platform for follow-up and review be designed that integrates national experiences and existing review mechanisms and channels the findings to the global level in a coherent manner?**

Presumably, in the future the EU Member States might have their own follow-up and review mechanism and procedure. The UNECE might offer the opportunity for peer-to-peer exchange of experiences and mutual learning between EU Member States and other countries of the UNECE Region.

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<sup>3</sup> See outcome document of UN Sustainable Development Summit “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, paras 80 and 81.

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/67/290, para 13.