

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 States¹ 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.

¹ 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

COUNTRY:	Slovenia
AUTHORITY:	
NAME OF FOCAL POINT:	
FUNCTION:	
TELEPHONE:	
E-MAIL:	
REMARKS:*	

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

UNECE, Sustainable Development and Gender Unit (SDGU)

E-Mail: sdgu@unece.org

*The electronic version of the questionnaire is available at:
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:
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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?

We are developing a national Vision 2050 and based on that a long-term national strategy until 2030. The goals of the 2030 strategy will take into account the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Relevant SDGs indicators will be considered in the national measurement framework which is also under review.

We still have to finalise and agree on the mechanism of coordination of the national implementation of the Agenda 2030. Our goal is to establish an effective and efficient coordination, ensure implementation in a comprehensive and inclusive manner and establish a systematic, open and transparent follow-up and review.

At the global level, Slovenia will continue to contribute to the poverty eradication and sustainable development on the basis of updated legal and strategic documents on International Development Cooperation. A new Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia, which will set out the geographical and sector-specific priorities for Slovenia's international development cooperation until 2030, along with mechanisms for its implementation, will be finalized by the end of 2016. The International Development Cooperation is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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?

Line ministries will first carry out a thorough review of the situation regarding the achievement of SDGs in their areas of work. SDGs will be considered in their

departmental strategies and action plans. It will be necessary to consider establishing a priority list of the SDGs implementation, both within the individual departments (more attention will be given to those goals, where the backlog is relatively larger) and at national level (priority goals will be aligned with national priorities).

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”)?

What we’re discussing now is how to integrate the existing policy actions into a long-term frame and to ensure continuity in the years to come. Furthermore, in parallel we’ll have to make the national goals corresponding to the strategic priorities and coherent with SDGs, but at the same time it needs to be tailored to our situation and to what we need. For this purpose, we’ll set up a measurement framework with concrete goals, targets and outcome indicators and policy indicators that will enable us to track the progress effectively and to benchmark Slovenia compared to other countries.

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?

When the long-term national development strategy is prepared, we will start drafting medium-term action plan which will define concrete measures to achieve goals and will be linked to the budget preparation process. In such way we intend to align the spending policies with the set objectives.

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?

The draft Vision will be used to facilitate wider engagement and public consultation process (engagement workshops, public survey, etc.). After that we will identify strategic priorities which will also be debated with relevant stakeholders and the intention is that with these increase the ownership and understanding of the national priorities which will incorporate also SDGs.

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 region² in assisting with SDG planning and implementation? Please highlight possible areas of improvement as well as any suggestions you may have.

The system that fosters sharing a good practices among UN member states.

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.

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

Question 7:

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

We will set up the measurement framework with concrete goals, targets and outcome indicators and policy indicators that will enable us to track the progress effectively and to benchmark Slovenia compared to other countries.

National institutions are fairly well fit for this purpose, as the key national institutions have already developed a national wellbeing framework upon which we'll build the measurement framework.

However, we are now in the process of straitening of the governmental horizontal coordination mechanism.

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?

As indicated above, Slovenia is in the process of preparing measurement framework for long-term development strategy. This framework will contain the relevant indicators which will help to identify drivers and will provide basis for possible modification of policies necessary to achieve the goals.

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?

All countries should strive to participate in the voluntary, national review process at the global level to present their implementation efforts, possibly twice by 2030. This would entail submitting their written national report ahead of the HLPF session and presenting this report at that session for discussion among UN Member States and other stakeholders. For this reason, countries should be encouraged to produce these reports as far as possible in a common format, informed by specific guidance from the HLPF, to ensure consistency. It is important to strike a balance between regularly reviewing implementation, and ensuring that countries are not overburdened with reporting requirement. Countries should be encouraged to submit information every year on the SDG indicators, in order to prepare the annual SDG report. Peer reviews at regional levels could also be encouraged as an effective means of sharing learning and best practices.

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 region² in SDG follow-up and review?

The HLPF will need to make best use of the regional preparatory processes and existing international review processes, with a view to avoiding duplication and additional costs. The UN regional economic commissions (RECs) could play a coordinating role, and also provide technical assistance, in close collaboration with other regional organisations and processes. Complementarity with the integration segment of ECOSOC and utilisation of the guidance of ECOSOC's functional commissions would be important.

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.³ Earlier, the General Assembly had invited the Regional Commissions to hold annual meetings in preparation of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).⁴

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?

The regional level could provide particularly useful opportunities for peer review and learning, exchange of best practices, as well as contributing to global monitoring and review. The results of this peer learning could be made available at global level so more countries can benefit from it. It would be important to foster transparency and cross-regional learning. This process should not duplicate any reviews at global level, but instead could help streamline the process at global level. Reviews at the regional level could also help to track progress on trans-boundary issues and regionally shared targets.

The UN RECs could provide harmonised reporting guidelines to support regional reviews, and technical assistance at regional level for the statistical needs arising from the follow-up and review framework. Their mandates and capacities should be mobilised to synthesise national inputs, regional trends and challenges in an operational way for assessment at the global level. It will be crucial to build at regional level on existing processes to avoid proliferation of monitoring frameworks and to minimise any potential need for additional resources. The EU has considerable expertise and existing monitoring systems in place, which could contribute to follow-up and reviews at the regional level, taking into account that of the UNECE.

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

⁴ A/RES/67/290, para 13.