



# **SDG Indicators and Monitoring: Systems and Processes at the Global, European, and National Level**

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## Introduction

The well-known maxim: ‘If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it’, is not only relevant in the context of business operations, but is also helpful when it comes to global SD governance and the implementation of political priorities, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). Indicators provide an important measuring ability that enables a relation to be made between the current state of affairs, such as how a country is presently doing regarding reaching certain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and where a country would like to go, or be at, in the future. Indicators also allow progress to be tracked over time, which is important in keeping on track to reach targets and goals, as well as to inform the policy-making process as time goes on.

In the context of the SDGs, quality and timely data and metrics are a powerful ‘management tool’ that can help governments, businesses, and civil society identify main challenges and focus their usually limited financial resources accordingly. Going beyond strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation when based on indicators also help improve transparency and accountability, and thus help to ensure the overall success of the SDGs. The development of global, national, or regional indicators, and their regular monitoring, allows countries to evaluate their progress and learn from the successes of others.

In learning from past shortcomings, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the predecessors of the SDGs, which were characterized by long data delays, large gaps, and lack of metrics for important indicators, such pitfalls can be avoided when defining indicators, collecting data in a timely manner, and proactively dealing with gaps. To avoid repeating this mistake, and to ensure political and financial commitment, it is important that governments and the international community establish metrics and monitoring processes as early as possible for measuring progress made towards the SDGs.

This ESDN Quarterly Report (QR) provides a comprehensive, but not exhaustive, overview of the main existing indicator sets and processes for monitoring the SDGs at the global, European Union, and the national level of European countries (Table 1). The structure of this QR will very closely follow the structure in this figure, minus the UNECE region. The figure lists the type of responsible agencies for collection data and monitoring with respect to the SDGs. The figure also shows the types of indicators each level is developing and how they are developing them.

**Table 1: Different Levels of SDG Monitoring**

Level	Reference to be monitored	Main Actors	Indicator set
Global (UN)	Agenda 2030's 17 goals and 169 targets	UNSC, IAEG-SDGs, "Custodian" agencies, ECOSOC & UN GA	Global list of 244 SDG indicators (232 different ones). Includes unavailable indicators
UN region (UNECE)	Developing guidance for member countries but no monitoring carried out		
EU	SDGs in an EU context - focus on EU policies	Eurostat, other Commission services, National statistical offices	EU SDG indicator set. Based on existing indicators
National	National SD strategies, implementation of Agenda 2030 in national policies	National statistical offices and other national agencies	National SD indicator sets (exist in some countries, are being developed in others)

Source: Presentation by Marleen De Smedt, Advisor to the DG European Commission, Eurostat, UNECE Expert meeting 10-12 April 2017, Geneva

Chapter 1 looks at the United Nations (UN) and global level, as the UN has developed a global SDG indicator reference framework, which may help many UN Member States develop their own indicator sets, or provide them with a framework that they can follow and implement at the national level. This chapter also provides the background for the UN indicator framework and discusses more in-depth about the entire SDG indicator process and how indicators for the SDGs were selected and how missing indicators are planning to be developed. In addition, it will also look into data collection and monitoring, which are also vital steps in the indicator process. The chapter finishes by discussing the challenges that the UN indicator framework is encountering.

Chapter 2 will look into the same aspects of SDG indicators and monitoring, but at the European Union level. The chapter examines what the EU is currently doing regarding indicator development and reports that have been published related to the progress the EU has been making on addressing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as well as look into EU organizations that are responsible for indicator development and monitoring. This chapter should, therefore, provide an overview of how the European Union and its various institutions is fairing regarding the challenge of providing data for, and measuring, the SDGs.

Chapter 3 will look even further into the SDG indicator and monitoring processes in Europe by looking into the national level of many European countries. Countries are categorized by when they presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Much of the information regarding SDG indicators, and the process of how indicators would be developed and selected, can be found in the VNRs of many European countries, where these processes are mentioned or outlined. However, as the VNRs of many European countries were written in 2016 and 2017, some of the circumstances regarding SDG indicators in these countries may have changed. Therefore, the information that was gathered from the VNRs and a recent Eurostat meeting in Luxembourg in March 2018, were both used to contact the ESDN's National Focal Points regarding changes and developments that may have happened since the publishing of their VNR, as well as ask clarification questions regarding the SDG indicator development process. Countries from which this Report did not receive feedback will be stated for each individual country and will be marked by a footnote. All other countries without a footnote have received feedback from ESDN NFPs.

Chapter 4 will then analyze the trends in SDG indicator development and monitoring at the global level down to individual countries and how the different levels deal with the SDGs and finding relevant data to measure their progress towards their achievement. This chapter will, therefore, attempt to highlight common themes that countries may find beneficial in their quest to develop and adapt SDG indicators, so that they can best measure progress in their specific national context.

# Chapter 1: SDG Indicators and Monitoring at the UN and Global Level

## UN SDG Indicator and Monitoring System

This chapter will look at what is being done at the global level and within the UN regarding the development of SDG indicators and how those indicators should be monitored. Since the SDG indicators and the process of developing and determining them is vital to developing effective indicator sets and monitoring capabilities, the UN SDG indicator process will be looked at. In addition to the UN providing a global indicator set, it is not the only global organization that has sought to establish SDG indicator sets and develop data collection capabilities to better reinforce the SDGs. Other organizations have already done work regarding SDG indicators and monitoring, such as the OECD and the World Bank, and also serve as “Custodian” agencies, which refer to different organizations that have contributed to the UN SDG indicator framework (see Table 2 below), with respect to the provision and analysis of SDG indicator data. Table 2 lists the number of indicators each organization has contributed, as well as to which of the 3 indicator tiers their indicators belong (for more information on the different SDG indicator tiers, please see page 10). It will be seen in Chapter 3 of this Report how important such data and SDG indicators were for countries beginning to develop their own indicators, as well as to learn in which thematic areas they were strong and weak; the OECD played a very large role in that respect, and will be the area of focus when discussing these “custodian” agencies.

**Table 2: Allocation of global SDG indicators to custodian agencies**

	Total	Allocation type		Allocation by tiers			
		Single	Shared	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III	multi
UNEP	30	18	12	5	4	19	2
WHO	29	20	9	15	9	5	0
World Bank	25	17	8	8	2	13	2
FAO	22	17	5	4	6	12	0
UNESCO	21	16	5	4	5	10	2
OECD	21	9	12	10	3	5	3
... and many others such as UNICEF (16), ILO (14), UNODC (14), UNSD (11), UN-Habitat (10), UNISDR (9), UNCTAD (8), UN-Women (8) etc.							

Source: Presentation by Pieter Everaers, Director for Cooperation in the European Statistical System, International Cooperation and Resources, GCC Statistical Forum, Riyadh, 20-22 March 2017.

However, before looking into the process by which the UN and UN bodies have selected SDG indicators to use in SDG indicator sets, it is important to look at what has been explicitly laid out in the 2030 Agenda regarding indicators, as it helps to inform and shape the entire process by which SDG indicators will be formed: who will form them, and how the entire SDG process will be determined, from indicator selection, to the type of data that will be collected, how that data will be collected, and what countries should be monitoring.

## The 2030 Agenda: Basis for a global set of SDG indicators

As mentioned above, the 2030 Agenda outlines the necessity for the UN to develop a set of global SDG indicators to be used as a global framework that countries can use to monitor and collect data on their progress toward achieving the SDGs. As set out in **paragraph 75 of the 2030 Agenda**, the UN has an obligation to develop a set of global SDG indicators to be used in such a global framework:

*§75 The Goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels which will be developed by Member States, in addition to the outcomes of work undertaken for the development of the baselines for those targets where national and global baseline data does not yet exist. The global indicator framework, to be developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, will be agreed by the Statistical Commission by March 2016 and adopted thereafter by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, in line with existing mandates. This framework will be simple yet robust, address all Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including for means of implementation, and preserve the political balance, integration and ambition contained therein.<sup>1</sup>*

It can therefore be seen that an **indicator framework, capable of aiding countries in measuring progress towards the SDGs and targets**, is an important element of the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda foresees the **establishment of a set of global indicators** to follow-up and measure progress towards the SDGs and their individual targets, but **also allows for flexibility** in that regional and national indicators can also be used to measure progress towards the SDGs.

As stated in Paragraph 75, the **Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)** was tasked with developing this global SDG indicator framework, which marks the beginning of SDG indicator process. This process began at the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016. From this session, the first UN SDG list of indicators was made available titled “[Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators](#)”. A complete list of the proposed UN SDG indicators can be found in [Annex IV](#) of the above-mentioned report. The report provides an overview of the work of the IAEG-SDGs on the development of a global indicator framework for the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. The report also describes the activities undertaken by the Expert Group since its establishment following a decision of the Statistical Commission at its 46<sup>th</sup> session, and also presents a proposal of global indicators for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

In a Resolution, adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017, and entitled “[71/313. Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)”, the UN addressed its commitment to establishing a set of global indicators. In the Resolution in §1, the General Assembly adopted the UN SDG indicator framework that were developed by the IAEG-SDGs and, in §2 and §3 supported the continued work of the Statistical Commission to develop, improve, and refine the UN SDG indicator framework further.

## **Bodies Responsible for Developing the SDG Indicator Framework**

Knowing the institutional set-up and mechanisms behind the 2030 Agenda is important in understanding how the SDG indicator framework will be dealt with. As mentioned above in the 2030 Agenda and the UN General Assembly Resolution from July 2017, there are **many UN institutions that have a role to play in developing the SDG indicator framework**. Knowing what these bodies do, and in which ways they are vital in the development of the SDG indicator framework and the entire SDG process, is important to understanding the entire process that has been established to set up the UN SDG indicator framework.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Paragraph 75, p. 32.

Among the bodies that are tasked with developing the SDG indicator framework are:

- 1) The [United Nations Statistical Commission](#) (UNSC), which is the leading statistical body of the UN, and was mandated to develop a global indicator framework for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international level;
- 2) The [High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(HLG-PCCB\)](#), which was created by the Statistical Commission in March 2015 and forms the second important part of the SDG indicator framework process, as they have been the main drivers in creating an architecture for measurement of progress on the SDGs and sub-targets. The role of the HLG-PCCB is to foster global partnership in the monitoring and reporting of sustainable development indicators. It will also promote capacity-building for the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>2</sup> The group comprises representatives from national statistical offices, civil society and international organizations. In October 2016, the HLG-PCCB drafted [a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data](#)<sup>3</sup> that calls for a ‘full, active and focused commitment of government, policy leaders and the international community to implement the sustainable development agenda’, while also calling for ‘policy leaders to achieve a global pact or alliance that recognizes that funding modernization efforts of National Statistical Offices is essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda’. A Global Consultation on this document was held in November 2016, which will feed into the finalized Global Action Plan to be presented at the [UN World Data Forum](#)<sup>4</sup> and submitted to the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Statistical Commission;<sup>5</sup> and
- 3) The [Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators \(IAEG-SDGs\)](#)<sup>6</sup>, which was established in March 2015 at the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNSC and which presented a series of proposals to the UN Statistical Commission, is arguably the most important of the three bodies, as they deal with the most important and practical aspects of developing the global SDG indicator framework. The group consists of technical experts from national statistical offices and, as observers, representatives from regional and international organizations and agencies.

## Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)

The **UN SDG indicator set**, adopted in 2017, **includes 244 indicators covering all the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda**. The indicator set was agreed upon based on the availability of existing data, both globally and at the national level, the quality of the data, and its relevance to specific targets. The indicators were then categorized into **3 tiers**, depending on their level of methodological development and overall data availability. Following the sixth meeting of the IAEG-SDGs in November 2017, the list of SDG indicators in the global indicator framework was updated on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and the indicator splicing by tier is, see below, is based on this update. For a more detailed breakdown of each

<sup>2</sup> See: Terms of reference for the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for post-2015 monitoring.

<sup>3</sup> High - level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity - Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB). 2016. [Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data](#). Draft, 21 October 2016.

<sup>4</sup> The first United Nations World Data Forum was hosted by Statistics South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa in early January 2017.

<sup>5</sup> The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB) is composed of Member States and includes regional and international agencies as observers. The HLG-PCCB aims to establish a global partnership for sustainable development data. The reports annually to the Statistical Commission.

<sup>6</sup> The IEAG-SDGs was established by the UNSC with the aim of developing a proposal for a global monitoring framework. It consists of technical experts from 27 UN Member States representing all UN regions and, as observers, representatives from regional and international organizations and agencies.



individual SDG indicator in the SDG indicator framework, the IAEG-SDGs has their December update featured as a report, "[Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators](#)".

- **Tier 1 (93 indicators):** Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
- **Tier 2 (66 indicators):** Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
- **Tier 3 (68 indicators):** No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.
- In addition to these, there are **5 indicators** that have multiple tiers (different components of the indicator are classified into different tiers).<sup>7</sup>

It should be noted that the purpose of the established tier system is to assist countries and organizations in the development of global implementation strategies. For tier I and II indicators, the availability of data at the national level may not necessarily align with the global tier classification and countries can create their own tier classification for implementation.<sup>8</sup> This stresses the importance that while the UN and IAEG-SDGs indicator framework can offer guidance on how to measure and monitor the SDGs, countries should still rely on their national contexts to develop, define, measure, and monitor SDG indicators.

In order for the IAEG-SDGs to better able manage its responsibilities towards the SDGs and creating a global SDG indicator Framework, it has to be able to address specific areas relevant to SDG indicator implementation. In an effort to address these responsibilities, the IAEG-SDGs has created 3 working groups: 1) Geospatial Information Working Group; 2) Interlinkages Working Group; and 3) Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) Working Group, whose main objectives, and how they contribute to the SDG indicator framework, are summarized.

## The Role of “Custodian” Organizations in the SDG Indicator Framework

In addition to the three working groups, the **IAEG-SDGs has selected specialized agencies to serve as “custodians” for collecting and processing data on individual indicators** (See Table 2 above). These “custodians” are also tasked with ensuring comparability of country data, computing regional and global aggregates, and providing data in the global SDG indicator database. As specialized agencies with existing mandates in their domains, UN agencies, funds, and programs, as well as international organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank are expected to assume this custodial role to assist with data collection from countries, develop internationally agreed standards and methodologies, and support their adoption at the national level and strengthen national statistical capacities and reporting mechanisms

As one of the “Custodian” organizations, the **OECD** will be looked into more in-depth, as many of the UN Voluntary National Review (VNR) countries from Europe used the indicators the OECD developed to measure their initial progress regarding the SDGs. Therefore, this Report choses to look into this organization, in particular, but should not delegitimize the other “Custodian” organizations, nor the undoubtedly valuable work they have done and contributed in developing, defining, measuring, monitoring, etc. of the SDGs and their indicators.

<sup>7</sup> UNSTATS. Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators. December 2017. p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>

The OECD stands out for the purposes of this Report, because it has produced SDG reports that many countries in Europe have used to determine their starting points with regard to how they are meeting the SDGs. The OECD has published reports in 2016 and 2017 titled, "[Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets: An assessment of where OECD countries stand](#)". This Study uses the latest information on various indicators available in OECD databases to establish countries' distances from individual targets, and presents results for a number of countries. These starting positions are measured in terms of the distance to be travelled by 2030. This requires setting end-values for the targets to be achieved by 2030. The Study uses a flexible approach to target setting, with appropriate consideration being given to values specified either in the 2030 Agenda or in other international commitments, but also using the current range of OECD performance as a rating scale where no such benchmarks have been made. Taking as a reference the global indicator set endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission at its 47<sup>th</sup> session, OECD indicators have been selected based on criteria of relevance, ability to differentiate countries' performance, availability, and statistical quality. Applying these criteria, this document identifies 131 indicators covering 98 targets and spanning all 17 Goals.

## Data collection

As affirmed by IAEG-SDGs, member states have the primary responsibility for monitoring of the SDGs through their national statistical offices. They are expected to compile and provide data for global reporting.

UNDESA Statistics Division (UNSD) maintains the global database of SDG indicators, and produces the annual Progress Report of the Secretary-General, based on the SDG indicator framework, which only has data on Tier 1 and Tier 2 indicators. Typically, UNSD interacts directly with National Statistics Offices (NSOs), sometimes through regional economic commissions, and with agencies directly involved in data collection and survey instruments. A UNSD pilot project is focusing on a few countries to support the development of national SDG indicator frameworks, as well as knowledge sharing and experience exchanges at the regional level.

While UNSD's main mandate and focus is on the global indicators, the ground work of supporting data collection and statistical capacities at national level will fall on resident agencies, in particular those with custodianship responsibilities.

## Monitoring

The Global monitoring of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs started in June 2016 when the UN released a first Report of the Secretary-General on "[Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#)". This was followed by a SDG report, "[The Sustainable Development Goals Report](#)", for the broader public. The latter provides an overview of progress on each of the 17 SDGs based on selected indicators from a global indicator framework. These same reports have also been followed through for 2017: "[Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#)" and for the SDG report, "[The Sustainable Development Goals Report](#)".

The release of the second Sustainable Development Goals Report has been accompanied by the launch of the [Global SDG Indicators Database](#) — a dissemination platform, which provides access to country level data and global and regional aggregates compiled through the UN System and other international organizations.

## Challenge: Data gaps and the need to harness new sources of data

The **availability of quality data** is essential for informed decision-making and the accurate tracking of progress towards the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. However, not all the proposed global indicators are already available, and **data gaps exist not only in developing countries, but also in developed countries. Filling these gaps requires financial resources, knowledge sharing, and investments in human capital.** This data revolution entails, among other things, the use of innovative technologies for the collection and sharing of data to complement existing statistical systems.<sup>9</sup>

For this purpose, in 2014 the UN Secretary General formed an **Independent Expert Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development**. This group presented its recommendations on how to mobilize the data revolution for sustainable development in a report to the Secretary-General called "[A World that Counts](#)".<sup>10</sup> The key recommendations of the group encompass the following aspects:

- Develop a global consensus on principles and standards
- Share technology and innovations for the common good
- New resources for capacity development
- Leadership for coordination and mobilization
- Exploit some quick wins on SDG data.

Relevant input to the discussion on data revolution also comes from the **Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)**, a global and independent network of research centers, universities, and technical institutions. As a contribution to the debate on data revolution, the SDSN proposes a comprehensive framework including 100 Global Reporting Indicators, accompanied by Complementary National Indicators to measure progress towards the SDGs proposed by the OWG. These are presented in a report titled '[Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs](#)'<sup>11</sup>, which was developed in a consultation with experts from the UN organizations, academia, civil society, business, and national statistical offices. In the report, the SDSN envisages four levels of monitoring — national, global, regional, and thematic. The SDSN stresses that the reporting on the SDGs should be primarily conducted at the national level and that countries should be able to choose the indicators that are most appropriate for their context. However, the development of a global monitoring framework is also deemed essential for complementing national efforts. This would require the selection of indicators which are harmonized and universal.

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<sup>9</sup> High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013), A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Independent Experts Advisory Group on the Data Revolution (2014), A World that Counts: Mobilising the data revolution for sustainable development.

<sup>11</sup> Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2015), Indicators and a monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs.

## Chapter 2: SDG Indicators and Monitoring at the EU Level

This chapter will look into what the European Union is doing regarding the development of SDG indicators, indicator sets, and frameworks. As the UN took a more global focus regarding the SDGs, the situation in Europe and Europe's particular regional context is undoubtedly different. This is apparent when looking at the priority areas of the European Union regarding the SDGs, as they are different from other parts of the global community. Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine how the EU is addressing the SDGs in the regional context.

The European Commission plays an important role in shaping the course of the EU when it comes to sustainable development: the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are no exception. Therefore, this chapter will look more in-depth at how the EC has been dealing with the development of SDG indicators.

When discussing SDG indicators, Eurostat also needs to be considered, as this EU body is important in collecting data on EU Member States, it also plays a vital role in determining SDG indicators and how data to measure them can be collected.

### European Commission

In November 2016, the European Commission (EC) released a Communication '[Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability](#)'.<sup>12</sup> This represented the European Union's response to the global agenda for sustainable development. The Communication **maps the alignment of current EU policies with the SDG framework and presents key actions and governance elements that the Commission will use to deliver on it**. The proposed approach encompasses two work streams: The first work stream is to fully integrate the SDGs in the European policy framework and current Commission priorities, assessing where the EC stands and identifying the most relevant sustainability concerns. A second track is related to reflection work on further developing the EC's longer-term vision after 2020 and preparing for the long-term implementation of the SDGs. The Communication also announces a detailed regular monitoring of the SDGs in an EU context from 2017 onwards, and the development of a reference indicator framework for this purpose:

*"A first overview of where the EU and its Member States stand in view of the SDGs can be found in the [Eurostat publication](#) issued in parallel with this Communication. From 2017 onwards, the Commission will carry out more detailed regular monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals in an EU context, developing a reference indicator framework for this purpose ..."*<sup>13</sup>

The Communication was accompanied by a [staff working document](#)<sup>14</sup>, which outlines key European actions and policies in relation to the 17 SDGs.

In June 2017, the Council adopted conclusions on '[A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)'.<sup>15</sup> The Council called upon the Commission to **carry**

<sup>12</sup> European Commission, *Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability*, COM(2016) 739, Brussels, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Commission Staff Working Document. 2016. [Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals](#). SWD(2016) 390 final, Brussels, 2016.

<sup>15</sup> [A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — Council conclusions \(20 June 2017\)](#), Brussels.

**out detailed regular monitoring of the SDGs at EU level**, including, where relevant, the context of the European Semester, and to **develop a reference indicator framework** for this purpose, drawing on existing indicators and data provided by the Member States, institutions and international organizations, and accompanied by a qualitative assessment of the progress made. It also called on the Commission and, where appropriate, Member States to use this indicator framework to assess progress and trends and to inform evidence-based decision-making.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the Council underlined the need to ensure that EU and individual Member State progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is reported in the context of the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF) at regular intervals. The Council invited the Commission to prepare for the first EU report on the internal and external implementation of the 2030 Agenda by the EU at the High Level Political Forum by 2019.<sup>17</sup>

## Eurostat

**In 2017, a reference EU SDG indicator set was developed by Eurostat to monitor progress regarding the SDGs in an EU context.** The indicator set was developed in close cooperation with other European Commission services and with Eurostat's partners in the European Statistical System. The selection of indicators was a result of a broad consultative process, involving Council Committees, the European Statistical Advisory Committee (ESAC), European agencies (e.g. the European Environment Agency), academia, and various international and non-governmental organizations.

Although it has been aligned as far as appropriate with the UN list of global indicators, the **EU SDG indicator set does not intend to cover all aspects of the SDGs or to fully reproduce the UN global list.** The EU monitoring rather **focuses on EU policies contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.** SDG targets that are more relevant in a developing country context are not considered. The selected indicators also do not intend to represent the importance of particular targets in the 2030 Agenda, as all of them are equally important. In addition, the EU SDG indicators do not cover the 'means of implementation' elements under each SDG, as their measurement is normally outside the scope of official statistics. Exception is SDG 17, which is solely focused on means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development.

The main criteria applied when selecting the indicators include 'policy relevance from an EU perspective, availability, country coverage, data freshness and quality'. Most of the indicators stem from already existing EU indicator sets, such as the EU Sustainable Development Indicators, the Europe 2020 headline indicators, [Circular Economy Package](#), the impact indicators for Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (10 Commission priorities), or other policies and initiatives reported in the staff working document '[Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development](#)'.<sup>18</sup>

The **EU SDG indicator set** is comprised of 100 indicators, including 41 'multi-purpose indicators', which are used to track two or more targets across goals. Multi-purpose indicators allow to strengthen the links across goals and encourage cross-sectoral monitoring, and also help reduce the total number of indicators. Progress in each SDG is measured through a set of five to six indicators (without considering the multipurpose indicators), which are linked to its broad objective and ambition. A dedicated section on the Eurostat website allows easy access to most recent data on the [EU SDG indicator set](#).

In 2016, Eurostat released its first publication related to the SDGs: '[Sustainable development in the European Union — A statistical glance from the viewpoint of the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)'.

<sup>16</sup> Council conclusions, paragraph 39.

<sup>17</sup> Council conclusions, paragraph 37.

<sup>18</sup> Commission Staff Working Document. 2016. [Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals](#). SWD(2016) 390 final, Brussels, 2016.



The publication is based on an ad hoc indicator set, including limited number of indicators, which aimed at capturing the broader ambition of each SDG. The report was also accompanied by a citizen's guide '[Figures for the Future - sustainable development in our everyday life](#)', which is a statistical guide to the EU sustainable development indicators in the context of the SDGs. It communicates statistical figures as seen through the eyes of a fictional 21-year-old student, Anne.

In November 2017, Eurostat published the first edition of the annual EU SDG monitoring report '[Sustainable development in the European Union — Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context](#)', based on the approved EU SDG indicators. The publication was accompanied by a short [brochure](#) providing a visual summary of the main findings of the full report. These four publications are shown in Figure 1. Eurostat's website also hosts a renewed [dedicated section](#) on measuring sustainable development in the EU and presents the results of the monitoring report in a series of [Statistics Explained articles](#).

**Figure 1: Eurostat SDG dedicated publications**



Similar to the list of global SDG indicators at the UN level, the EU SDG indicator set is open to regular reviews to account for future policy developments and consider new indicators as methodologies, technologies, and data sources evolve over time. A first review of the EU SDG indicator set from 2017 took place in early 2018, resulting in a few amendments in the indicator list. The updated indicator set is described in a Eurostat paper from April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, titled "[EU SDG Indicator Set 2018 – Result of the Review in Preparation of the 2018 Edition of the EU SDG Monitoring Report](#)".

During these consultation sessions, which are an important part of the EU's process of identifying SDG indicators, including the most recent, Eurostat typically invites comments on the EU SDG indicators used in the previous report. As of now, the EU has 100 SDG indicators and 18 that have been put on hold for further consideration. During the last consultation, 20 new indicator proposals were made. The draft set of EU SDG indicators 2018 was discussed with Commission services at the ISSG-WG on SDG reporting meeting on 7 March and with Member States at Eurostat's Sustainable development and Europe 2020 indicators working group meeting on 13-14 March 2018. Furthermore, the draft set was presented to the sub-group on monitoring, assessing and reporting of the Management Committee of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on SDGs in the EU on 22 March 2018. Comments from these meetings were incorporated into the final set of EU SDG indicators 2018. The final outcomes of the review process were:

1. A refined EU SDG indicator set, to be used for the 2018 EU SDG monitoring report; and

2. An improved list of “on hold” indicators to be considered for future reviews.<sup>19</sup>

More concretely, the review process was able to: 1) propose the replacement of 6 indicators; 2) propose the adjustment of 9 indicators; 3) put 18 indicator proposals “on hold” for possible future consideration; and 4) discuss the alignment of the EU SDG indicator framework with the UN SDG indicator framework.<sup>20</sup> The new indicators agreed for inclusion, as well as the modification of existing EU SDG Indicators, will be implemented on Eurostat’s website together with the release of the 2018 EU SDG monitoring report. At the same date, the indicators agreed for replacement will be removed from the EU SDG indicator set.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding the EU SDG indicator framework’s alignment with the UN SDG indicator framework, the EU SDG indicator set is aligned as far as appropriate with the UN list of global indicators, but stresses the fact, as mentioned above, that the UN indicator framework is designed for reporting at the global level, which must take into account the contexts of all UN Member States, and that some of those contexts are not necessarily shared by the EU and are irrelevant in the EU SDG indicator framework. However, this does not mean that the EU indicator framework does not wish to have further alignment along indicators, as alignment is, indeed, desirable.<sup>22</sup>

However, further alignment would only be considered for those UN SDG indicators that are already available, meaning Tier 1 indicators. In addition, when it comes to the potential replacement of EU SDG indicators, indicators would only be replaced with UN SDG indicators if the UN SDG indicator would improve the measurement of progress towards the SDGs and their sub-targets with respect to the EU’s particular context. This 2018 review of the EU SDG indicator set did not improve the overall alignment with the UN list; currently 55 EU SDG indicators are identical or similar to UN SDG indicators.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Eurostat. “EU SDG Indicator Set 2018 – Result of the Review in Preparation of the 2018 Edition of the EU SDG Monitoring Report”. p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

## Chapter 3: SDG Indicators at the National Level

This chapter will look in-depth at how **different European countries are dealing with the development and implementation of SDG indicators at the national level**. It looks firstly at European countries that have written and presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in order to see how countries were planning to address SDG indicators, or how they were already addressing certain indicators with national indicators that had already been developed to measure sustainable development. The VNRs were then scanned for relevant SDG indicator based information. Some of the information that was gathered from the VNR scans was then used to provide a background and basis to be able to ask questions regarding the current state of SDG indicators within European countries. Many VNRs outlined timelines by which countries would go through review processes regarding SDG indicator development and adaptation. As some of the VNRs were conducted in 2016 and 2017, many countries would have gone through these indicator development and adaptation processes by this point in time. Therefore, questions were then posed to the ESDN National Focal Points<sup>24</sup> based on the information presented in the VNRs, where they were asked to explain certain aspects of the SDG indicator process, as well as for updates regarding the current situation at the national level with respect to SDG indicators. Countries that are marked with an \* have completed their VNRs, but no feedback from an ESDN National Focal Points was received (i.e. Cyprus, Portugal, and Slovenia).

### VNR 2016 Countries

#### Estonia



According to Estonia's VNR, the implementation of the SDGs is monitored through an agreed set of sustainable development indicators. The set of indicators is renewed on a regular basis and covers all relevant sustainable development related topics. The current set of indicators was agreed upon in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Commission, the Inter-ministerial Sustainable Development Working Group, the Statistical Office, and the Government Office. The last indicator-based report on sustainable development in Estonia was published in March 2015.

The process by which Estonia coordinates, monitors, and develops the implementation of sustainable development, including the SDGs and their indicators, involves the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Sustainable Development, which is comprised of representatives from all the line ministries and Statistics Estonia. The 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.

**Estonian Statistics Office conducted an initial overview of 231 global sustainable development indicators, and found that approximately 14% of the indicators were measurable at the time of the VNR in 2016.** According to Statistics Estonia, out of the 231 indicators that had been developed for the monitoring of Agenda 2030, **32 were measurable in Estonia in 2016**. Gathering information on the rest of the indicators needs extra work and is a challenge for the statistics system. The renewal of sustainable development indicators was scheduled to be started in 2016, with the aim to include indicators that help to measure achievements in the fields of the SDGs.

<sup>24</sup> ESDN National Focal Points (NFPs) are civil servant representatives of ministries responsible for sustainable development within their countries. Written feedback from the NFPs was received during March and April 2018.



**In order to monitor the implementation of the SDGs in Estonia, the relevant line ministries, Statistics Office and relevant interest groups have agreed on the indicators of sustainable development.** Based on these indicators, reports are prepared on a regular basis, providing information about the state of reaching these goals and the main measures for fulfilling them. It was foreseen that this would allow the next indicator-based reports on sustainable development to provide information about performance regarding Estonian sustainable development goals and the SDGs. At the time, a new list of indicators was to be composed, in cooperation with an inter-ministerial working group, the Estonian Statistics Office, and the Estonian Sustainable Development Commission.

**The new list of indicators was adopted by the Estonian Sustainable Development Commission in November 2017.** The new set reflects both Estonian sustainable development goals and the SDGs. The indicator set was agreed upon in cooperation with the Sustainable Development Commission, the Inter-ministerial Sustainable Development Working Group, the Statistical Office, and the Government Office. **The Statistics Office, together with all relevant ministries, is currently working on the next indicator based sustainable development report. It is planned to be published by the end of 2018.**

**The new indicator list was developed through a process, which took place in 2017, and that involved a joint seminar of stakeholders (Sustainable Development Commission) and officials from the ministries (Sustainable Development Working Group), the Government Office, and the Statistics Office.** This seminar was able to define the topics among Estonian Sustainable Development and the Global SDGs that are relevant to Estonia and that should be covered in the sustainable development monitoring system, i.e. the sustainable development indicator set. Based on that list of topics, the Statistics Office, together with the Government Office, put together the first draft proposal for the indicator set. This draft was then sent to the Inter-ministerial Sustainable Development working group and to the Sustainable Development Commission for amendment proposals. This part of the process was mainly done via e-mails, but also some organizations preferred separate meetings, in which their proposals could be negotiated.

The set was then amended and finally negotiated in a joint seminar (members from the Sustainable Development Working Group, i.e. ministries, the Sustainable Development Commission, the Statistics Office, and the Government Office in December 2017. **The Estonian Sustainable Development Commission approved the new SD indicator set in written procedure in December 2017.**

**The new set of indicators is presented in 17+1 structure, which covers Estonian culture in addition to the 17 SDGs.** In developing Estonia's indicators, the UN SDG indicators and Eurostat sustainable development indicators were used as much as possible if: 1) the indicators were relevant for Estonia; and 2) if Estonia has the data. Most sustainable development indicators remained the same as in previous sets, but they are presented in the new "17+1" structure, which helps to explain how Estonia is doing in different SDG areas.

**Finland**



**Indicators have been one of Finland's key integration tools in the monitoring and assessment of sustainable development in general over the years.** The first national collection of indicators, "Signs of Sustainability", was published in 2000. Thereafter, indicators for sustainable development have been jointly updated and published by the national network of indicators. Representing various line ministries, research institutions and Statistics Finland, **the indicator network** has produced national sets of indicators and concise indicator analyses for thematic meetings of the National Commission on Sustainable Development. These indicators seek to provide a balanced picture of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

**The indicator network will update the national sustainable development indicators approved in 2014 as part of the national implementation plan for 2030 Agenda.** It will also act as the national support group in international SDG indicator work. The network aims to ensure that information generated by high-standard, broad-based indicator work feeds into policy-making in Finland. In addition to statistics authorities, ministries and various research institutions, a range of other organizations will be invited to participate more extensively in the indicator network and the updating of national indicators. The network meets about 8-10 times per year to discuss and review Finland's national indicators.

When it comes to the UN SDG indicator framework, Finland recognizes that the proposed UN SDG indicators involve a large number of open questions related to the information base and methodology involved, are likely to take several years to complete. In addition, many of them are far from ideal for describing developments that occur at the national level. For this reason, other sources of information are required when forming a picture of the national key areas of sustainable development. Statistics Finland currently estimates that they have the information for 1/3 of global indicators, and for another third the information can be collected with reasonable effort. Regarding the last third, there is no established methodology at the global level or the information is not collected in Finland at the moment.

However, Statistics Finland has an ongoing project that should be finished by the end of 2018. In the project they create an infrastructure for collection of national data on all global indicators. They will also create an open platform where this data will be stored and updated annually. This platform that consists the Finnish data on global indicators will supplement our national indicators and national follow-up system.

When it comes to national indicators, **Finland has developed 44 national indicators to measure progress towards achieving the SDGs.** Many of these 44 indicators are very similar to many of the UN SDG indicators. In many cases, there is a UN SDG indicator that is presented at a more general level than some national indicators in Finland. For example, UN SDG indicator 6.3.2, which focuses on the proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality, is handled differently in Finland. Finland does indeed measure the proportion of bodies of water with ambient water quality, but it does not qualify as a national SDG indicator. Instead, Finland monitors and measures the phosphorus and nitrogen emissions and the effects it has on bodies of water, as both of these emissions are usually the cause of water quality issues in Finland, and counts this among the 44 national indicators. These **44 'Findicators'** are listed within the [Findicator service](#), which is maintained by Statistics Finland.

## Follow-up and review of sustainable development in Finland

The Secretariat of the National Commission on Sustainable Development recently published a report, **"[Follow-up and review of sustainable development in Finland](#)", which discusses the current state of sustainable development, including the national SDG indicators and the processes that will continue to surround their further development.**

**In the national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda, "Sustainable Development in Finland – Long term, Coherent and Inclusive Action",** the government has decided to reinforce national indicator-based discussion on the state of sustainable development by establishing a follow-up and review system that enables shared learning, increased understanding and multi-voiced interpretation of indicator data. The task to develop this new follow-up and review system was given to the national sustainable development indicator and follow-up network, which is composed of Finnish experts on sustainable development representing the administration, civil society, private sector, and research and academic community. The work was conducted during the winter 2017.

**The national sustainable development indicator and follow-up network completed its work in May 2017, when the follow-up system was presented to the National Commission on Sustainable Development.** The follow-up system aims to: a) produce systematically collected and objective indicator data on matters that are relevant for the objectives of “[Society’s Commitment to Sustainable Development](#)”; b) create multi-voiced dialogue on the interpretations of changes in the indicator values from the perspective of sustainable development; and c) produce data and views on the linkages between policies and sustainable development issues that are relevant from the perspective of political decision-making.

The national follow-up and review system is anchored in the eight objectives of “Society’s Commitment”. As the objectives of the Commitment are distant in time and very abstract in parts, it is difficult to use them directly to derive indicators that would support everyday policy-making.

In the follow-up system, everyday policy-making is linked to the eight objectives of the Commitment via **10 indicator baskets**. All indicator baskets, each composed of 4-5 indicators, are connected to more than one objective. The baskets draw attention to entities that are relevant in terms of political decision-making. The baskets also serve as the framework for discussions on interpretations.

The indicators in each basket will be updated once a year. At the time of indicator update, also an initial interpretation will be made by relevant authorities. The purpose of this initial interpretation is to give an idea of the significance of the change in the indicator value from the perspective of sustainable development.

After the indicator update and initial interpretation, **a public dialogue will be launched where anyone can present interpretations of their own on the significance of the change in the indicator value**, as well as introduce new supplementary information that could contribute to the discussion. The aim is an open and multi-voiced discussion on interpretations based on the indicator data. The aim is to create inputs for political decision-making.

The discussion on interpretations takes place on the **monitoring platform to be made available at the sustainable development website of the [Prime Minister’s Office](#)**. The discussion takes place on a rolling basis so that each month (except for the summer months) a discussion is launched on a certain basket. Thus, all baskets will be updated once each year.

- Once a year, after the update of all baskets, an **annual event on the state and future of sustainable development will be organized by the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Prime Minister’s Office**. The purpose of the annual event is both to review the progress of sustainable development in the light of the indicator data and interpretations, and to reflect on the outlook for the future through the national foresight work. The event is held at the same time when the Parliament discusses the Government’s Annual Report to the Parliament.
- Besides the annual monitoring based on the indicators, **a report on the state of sustainable development in Finland is drawn up every four years**. This report gives a more long-term picture with a broader perspective of how Finland is proceeding with the implementation of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.
- **Every four years an external and independent evaluation is conducted on the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.**

The use of the indicators and the interpretation platform will start in autumn 2017. The interpretation platform is available at the [sustainable development website](#), which is maintained by the Prime Minister's Office.

The updating and development of the indicators takes place within the baskets, and the indicators included in each basket may also be changed. The need for updates observed in the first year will be discussed at the meeting of the National Commission on Sustainable Development in spring 2018. The functioning of the monitoring system will be evaluated in 2019 as part of the evaluation of the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## France



According to France's VNR, France is **underway to develop indicators to monitor the implementation of the SDGs**. However, even before the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, **France had been organizing consultations with citizens regarding the development of new wealth indicators**.

Defined after a citizen consultation organized in spring 2015, **10 new wealth indicators** were chosen to describe employment, investment, national debt, health, inequality, education, environmental protection, and perceived well-being. The French government submits an annual report to the French parliament on previous trends in these new wealth indicators to assess the impact of key reforms implemented in the previous year and the current year and those planned for the next year.

These 10 new wealth indicators are good candidates to integrate the French list of SGD indicators. Since the development of these new wealth indicators and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, France has been able to move forward with respect to SDG indicator development. For example, the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Research (INSEE) conducted a [feasibility study on the production of SDG indicators](#). This study led to the publication of around 100 indicators that have an exact or approximate relation to the UN SDG indicators.

In addition to this publication, **a national working group** has been initiated, under the aegis of the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS, Conseil National de l'Information Statistique), **to transpose the UN SDG indicators nationally**. The work of the working group consists of:

- Identifying the available and relevant SDG indicators for national monitoring;
- Completing them with alternative or complementary indicators to allow following specificities in the French context.

Civil society, private actors, administrative and governmental actors are involved in this work. One hundred actors are working together within the CNIS working group. **France will soon be able to publish its national list of indicators to measure its progress towards achieving the SDGs**.

In the meantime, France is **working on the publication of a governmental website dedicated to the SDGs**.

## Germany



**On 11 January 2017, the Federal Government approved a new version of its Sustainable Development Strategy**, the most extensive enhancement of the Strategy since its first adoption in 2002. The German Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) outlines the importance of sustainable development for the Federal Government's policies and defines concrete targets and measures over the entire range of political issues. It thus provides a benchmark for the required long-term perspective. All federal institutions are called upon to contribute to achieving the targets with activities

in their own fields. **The SDS has included national sustainability goals and indicators since the very outset in 2002.** They allow for a regular measurement of progress and help to identify any wrong turns in policy. **Every two years, the Federal Statistical Office publishes an independent Indicator Report with information about progress towards meeting goals.**

**With respect to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, there are two different reports that Germany compiles:** 1) A report on the **implementation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, which reports on the monitoring of targets and indicators** as laid out in the German SDS and are [published twice a year](#). (The current 2017 Report is also available and another report will be ready before the HLPF 2018.); and 2) A [report to the UN regarding the UN's SDG indicators](#). Both reports are prepared by the Germany Federal Statistics Office. It should be noted, however, that the report to the UN does not have a direct link to the German SDS, but looks at the SDG targets and indicators as defined in the 2030 Agenda: it is updated annually by the Federal Statistics Office. Regarding the report on the implementation of the German SDS, the SDS itself has been updated to reflect the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the SDG targets, meaning Germany's national reports are also aligned along the SDGs.

As a controlling instrument, **the German SDS includes indicators and targets that together depict the status of sustainable development in Germany and form the basis of the management of the SDS.** The previously 38, and **now 63 indicators** with their associated targets allow an objective check of the status of development. When updating the indicators and targets for the new version of the SDS, the Federal Government was guided, among other things, by the following principles:

- Greater international orientation of the Strategy, embracing the impetus of the 2030 Agenda;
- Reflecting political priorities for an ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda and enhancement of sustainability policy while the number of indicators and targets remains limited;
- Balance between desirable continuity of targets and indicators and meaningful enhancement; and
- Preservation of controllability and communicability.

The new version of the SDS reformulates outdated objectives with reference to the year 2030 and defines new targets in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. **For every SDG, at least one indicator-backed political target is listed**, which identifies relevant need for action in the area without describing it comprehensively. Instead of being overly prescriptive, the indicators are like keys: they open up the topic area and reveal its relevance for the further development of German policy. They are linked to considerably more extensive and detailed indicator systems or data collections on the website of the Federal Statistical Office or data collections on the website of the Federal Statistical Office.

Not all important subject areas on which national goals could reasonably be included in the German Sustainable Development Strategy currently have suitable indicators. For this reason, **the development of new indicators and the definition of targets for 2030 are currently being reviewed for the following areas central to sustainability policy:**

- Avoidable food losses in Germany
- Germany's contribution to ending hunger and malnutrition worldwide and realizing the right to food
- Consideration of sustainability criteria in public procurement
- Education for sustainable development
- Effect of research investments
- Soil protection

**The Federal Government will continuously update the indicators and goals.** The next step is already scheduled for 2018, when the goals set are to be reviewed and decisions are to be made about adding new indicators and adapting the management rules. An update of the Strategy will take account of progress made in the development of new indicators and goals. The table in Annex I of the German SDS summarizes the targets and indicators.<sup>25</sup> The latest analysis by the [Federal Statistical Office \(2016\)](#) shows that 27 indicators with a more positive status or trend are offset by 29 indicators with a more negative status or trend; for seven indicators, no status/trend can be identified at present. Even if many targets have positive trends, there are still areas with little or no progress. An explanation of the evaluation procedure used by the Federal Statistical Office can be found at the Statistical Office's [website](#).

**When elaborating the objectives and indicators for the German SDS, every ministry analyzed the areas in which action will need to be taken with respect to the SDGs.** The integrated nature of the SDGs means that responsibility for each individual SDG cannot be vested in any one ministry, but that all ministries affected by an SDG must work together, and produce joint proposals on ways of achieving the goal. Looking at the new objectives and indicators as a whole, the German Government is taking care to ensure that implementation is ambitious both domestically and in light of Germany's international responsibility.

An important function regarding the supervision of the development of sustainability indicators and goals is performed by an **Interdepartmental Working Group (IMA)**, which has been led since the beginning of the SDS by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), that **prepares specialized advice on questions regarding sustainability indicators and draws on all ministries.**

The targets illustrated by indicators are not limited to the ones that are achievable only through measures by the Federal Government or even politicians. Sustainable development is a shared task, many aspects of which require the long-term, joint engagement of all stakeholders – alongside the Federal Government, the Federal States (*Länder*), local authorities, business, science, and civil society. Sustainable development also does not stop at national borders. Parts of the indicator set also reflect Germany's international responsibility.

As Germany is a highly federalized country, in which the *Länder* have a great deal of autonomy, the *Länder* and local authorities play a crucial role in the implementation of the German sustainability targets and the 2030 Agenda. In Germany's federal structure, the powers to enact and enforce legislation on important areas of sustainable development lie with the *Länder*. By virtue of their proximity to the public, businesses and varied local initiatives, they can better support sustainable development in various areas of life according to local conditions. **The Head of the Federal Chancellery and the Heads of the State and Senate Chancelleries of the *Länder* (CdS) have agreed in January 2018 to strive to develop a common set of indicators and assessment factors, wherever possible.** This is to improve the compatibility of sustainable development strategies at the *Länder* and national levels. To this end, the exchange between the national level and the *Länder*, including also the Federal Statistical office, is to be intensified.

In addition to the indicator report, which reports about the implementation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, Germany regularly supplies data on the set of global indicators as part of the UN's international data survey. For Germany, an initial compilation of the data available for all 17 SDGs has been provided by the [Federal Statistical Office](#) since July 2016. The development of the global indicators is not yet complete, <http://www.destatis.de>, but progress can be viewed at

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<sup>25</sup> German Federal Government. German Sustainable Development Strategy. 2016. p. 239-242.



<http://www.destatis.de/SDGDE>. The data will be updated annually, each year before the high-level political forum.

## Montenegro



In Montenegro, the country's recently adopted (2016) 2030 National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) sets the strategic framework for the sustainable development of society, which is based on context of broader connectivity with the 2030 Agenda. **When developing SDG indicators, Montenegro considered the specificity of national development, problems and needs that have been crystallized from 2007 until the present.** The NSSD, therefore, introduces a set of relevant national indicators for the monitoring of sustainability of national development where there is a connection between national indicators and the UN's SDG indicators. The NSSD introduces these indicators into the reporting system on implementation of the sustainable development policy also available national indicators that were estimated as possible indicators for the monitoring of sustainable development of Montenegro.

**UN SDG indicators are linked to the national indicators**, where it has been estimated they are able to contribute, to a certain extent, **to a more complete national reporting in reference to the requirements of the UN SDG indicators.** Because of this, national indicators do not represent an alternative, with respect to their contents and measurements, to the UN SDG indicators. Some of the national indicators have been suggested as new indicators that should be introduced in the monitoring system on the basis of expert estimation that existing circumstances enable their relatively simple introduction. Therefore, defined authorities need to plan measures for their introduction into the monitoring system.

The key phase for success of the implementation of the NSSD, and therefore for achieving sustainable development of Montenegro, is monitoring and reporting on the results of its implementation. In order to enable the implementation of the NSSD, **the reporting and integrated system for the monitoring of the sustainable development trends of Montenegro has been proposed in the NSSD and consists of:** 1) UN SDG indicators; 2) national indicators; 3) international indicators; and 4) complex indicators. Currently, Montenegro is in the process of establishing the functional information system and data base which will enable simultaneous data collection by subjects responsible for monitoring of certain sustainable development indicators.

At the time the NSSD was drafted, Montenegro conducted an analysis of the existing UN SDG indicators, which numbered 241. **Out of the 241 UN SDG indicators, 49 are fully monitored in Montenegro (20.3% of total number), with 34 more being monitored partially (adding an additional 14.1% to total number).** It is necessary that official and administrative producers of statistical data introduce 54 more UN SDG indicators by 2018 in their working programs to keep in line with meeting the UN indicator targets. This would then allow Montenegro to report on 56.8% of total number of UN SDG indicators. In the period 2018-2020, it is necessary to introduce 32 more UN SDG indicators to increase total coverage to 70.1%, and in the period 2020-2022, it is necessary for Montenegro to introduce 24 more indicators more, which would extend coverage to 80.1%. Finally, the adoption of an additional 27 indicators in the period 2022-2024 would create the conditions for Montenegro to be able to monitor 91.3% of the UN's SDG indicators.

The establishment of a **functional information system and database** represents the basis for successful measurement of progress in the regarding the implementation of the NSSD. During the design and construction of this database, it is necessary to enable this system to be user friendly and to facilitate the entering, viewing, and analyzing of data, and not to become a burden and bottle-neck for the implementation of the NSSD's monitoring system. Such an organized, functional information system should enable not only simultaneous data collection by subjects responsible for monitoring of

certain sustainable development indicators, or the NSSD measures, but also the archiving and further processing of efficient national and international reporting. There are more possibilities to organize and develop an information system: One of them is to use the existing online reporting system, IRIS (Indicator Reporting Information System). This system is co-developed by UNEP and the Abu Dhabi Global Environmental Data Initiative (AGEDI) and enables data sharing among different subjects having authorization. The project supporting the revision of the analysis of the UN SDG indicators conducted during the preparation of the NSSD and the development of the information system for monitoring and reporting on NSSD implementation is ongoing (July 2017 – July 2018). With respect to the ongoing project supporting the revision of the analysis of the UN SDG indicators, the process of the introduction of indicators by all identified responsible institutions is ongoing and currently there is no available information. Information will be available in the report on the implementation of the NSSD for 2017 and 2018, which is planned to be published in 2019.

Regarding national SDG indicators, the Action Plan of the NSSD establishes a set of measures and their sub-measures that are grouped into Montenegro's priority areas: improvement of the state of human resources and strengthening social inclusion, support to values, norms and behavior patterns which are important for the sustainability of the society, natural capital preservation and green economy introduction, governance for sustainable development, financing for sustainable development. Strategic goals and measures, with detailed elaboration through sub-measures and targets, have been established as Montenegro's answer to overcome problems, weaknesses, and disadvantages of the existing state of development and governance system by 2030. At the same time, priority themes, strategic goals, measures, and sub-measures of sustainable development represent the Montenegro's answers to challenges in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Since the NSSD represents the strategic framework for the transposition of the SDGs and the UN SDG indicators into the national context, strategic goals are defined by taking into consideration national circumstances, but by taking care about national commitments in the context of the 2030 Agenda's implementation. The main challenge is the actual implementation of the Action Plan of the NSSD, including the process of monitoring and reporting according to the indicators.

**The NSSD, therefore, ultimately represents a strategic framework for translating global goals and indicators of sustainable development in the national context.** Priority topics, strategic goals and targets of sustainable development until 2030 represent at the same time the response of Montenegro to the challenges and responsibilities related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A coherent set of measures and sub-measures in the NSSD sets the platform for translating global targets and indicators of sustainable development in the national framework, in order to link, to the extent possible, the monitoring of progress in the implementation of the NSSD Action Plan with the 2030 Agenda. The complexity of global sustainable development goals and the high number of associated targets and indicators resulted in the need for a comprehensive analysis of a complex institutional system in the country, in order to introduce a stable and functional system of monitoring and reporting on the implementation of sustainable development policies in the long run.

Norway



The SDGs and the 2030 Agenda can be seen as a new paradigm, and further work is required to identify measures in various policy areas, and interlinkages between areas. Additional work is also required to develop indicators, both at national and global level. Statistics Norway is closely monitoring the ongoing UN process of developing indicators.

Reliable data is vital for monitoring successes and setbacks in the implementation of the SDGs. There is a need to improve collection, analysis, and dissemination of high quality, reliable and timely data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, disability and other relevant variables. **Statistics Norway plays an active role at the national level, and participates in the process of developing indicators for the SDG**



**targets.** Statistics Norway will, together with the respective Ministry, work on eventual gaps in indicators. The Study on indicators done by Statistics Norway forms the basis for this dialogue. The study maps all the global indicators and places them into a Norwegian context. **Each Ministry will be responsible for locating “their” indicators among the many, and if need be, suggest contextual indicators, in consultations with Statistics Norway. This process started in 2018 and will hopefully be displayed in the coming annual report, to be issued by the end of June 2018.**

Because the 2030 Agenda requires robust and unbiased mechanisms for follow-up, the SDG indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs are considered a good starting point for Norway. However, the number of **indicators that are relevant to Norway may differ from those UN SDG indicators that may be relevant to other countries.**

The development of a high-quality indicator framework is work that will need to continue over time. Norway will be part of this process, and will start to adapt the indicators that are most relevant for Norway to the national context. This, however, is still a process in the making for Norway, as Norway has a number of Sustainable development indicators already. The challenge now is how to apply the UN SDG indicators to the Norwegian context to secure comparability in reporting. The report (mostly in Norwegian) from Statistics Norway is an open document that provides a good perspective on how this will be done.

Norway will also define other indicators of its own, as required, to ensure comprehensive follow-up. Each Ministry will be responsible for tuning existing indicators to the new set. If need be, new indicators will be developed. The responsible Ministries are working on this matter at present. Norway already has systems in place for reporting on national targets and environmental indicators. These systems are closely linked to ongoing international initiatives and standards established under international and regional organizations such as UNEP, the UN Statistical Commission, the OECD, the EU/EEA, and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## Switzerland



Within a **“transition phase” from 2016 to 2017**, a comprehensive program of work is being put into practice. This work is managed by a temporary inter-ministerial working group with the aim to ensure adequate monitoring and reporting by **expanding the Swiss system of sustainable development indicators as appropriate.** Federal offices are required to include sustainable development in their own periodic reports on items of business or areas covered by their sectoral policies. In order to **measure and report on contributions to the SDGs, Switzerland uses its comprehensive sustainable development monitoring system (MONET) in place since 2003.** With its approximately 75 regularly updated indicators, it is observed whether, as well as in what context and areas, Switzerland is on the path to sustainable development. **The MONET system’s reference framework was amended in order to be ready to take into account the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs,** thus laying the foundation for both national and international reporting. **Apart from the 73 existing MONET indicators, Switzerland identified 59 new indicators necessary for measuring progress towards the SDGs.** The statistical office has identified these indicators, together with the responsible offices, during the baseline-assessment. The new indicators were identified in the first half of 2017. **From the 59 new indicators, 36 are from the IAEG-SDGs’ system.** The UN SDG indicators were often not applicable to Switzerland, either because they did not reflect national circumstances or because there was a lack of data. Therefore, Switzerland often tries to identify similar indicators that work for Switzerland’s specific context.

A first attempt was conducted to link the MONET indicators with the SDGs and whenever possible with the relating indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs. This analysis is not aimed at proposing a monitoring system for the SDGs in Switzerland, but only at showing how an existing instrument (the revised MONET-system) could be used for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This transition phase is

over and Switzerland is now in the implementation phase. The link between the MONET system and the SDGs has been conducted and is available on the [Federal Statistics Office's website](#) (in French and German). The MONET system takes a holistic approach, measuring the quality of life of the present generation as well as fairness of distribution both geographically and over time. It observes whether and in what areas Switzerland is on the path to sustainable development. MONET is an evolving system, in which indicators are revised as new focal points and framework conditions for sustainable development emerge.

## VNR 2017 Countries

### Belgium



At the federal level, the **Long-term Vision for Sustainable Development (2013), with 55 long-term objectives and 2050 time horizon, has a proposed set of sustainable development indicators**. Since 2009, the Task Force on Sustainable Development, from the Federal Planning Bureau, publishes annual assessments of the progress of Belgium's sustainable development indicators towards their objectives. These assessments are available on the [Federal Planning Bureau's website](#). **An update will be published in the spring 2019 at the latest.** It should be noted that this website also includes about 60 "beyond GDP" indicators. **The entire website will be restructured according to the SDG framework in spring 2019 at the latest.**

When it comes to **monitoring Belgium's progress towards achieving the SDGs, the Inter-Federal Statistical Institute is responsible**, and has set up a specific working group to that end. **Its review of the UN list of 232 SDG indicators found that about 100 of them are readily available for Belgium.** These will be progressively incorporated into a comprehensive inter-federal SDG follow-up and review mechanism. Some indicators will be adapted to better reflect the Belgian context.

When it comes to embedding SDGs in policy planning processes, the SDGs play a threefold role: 1) as a compass, bringing conceptual coherence throughout the different strands of activities; 2) as a coordination platform, a common toolkit between the various Belgian actors active in the field; and 3) as one of the instruments that can guide Belgium's measuring of results. Examples of this integration of SDGs into day-to-day toolkits involves the addition of an SDG target footnote system to every thematic strategy note which is currently in use in the federal development cooperation administration, or the intended tagging of bilateral cooperation programs with global and SDG targets of the partner country, wherever available.

### Cyprus\*



Cyprus' institutional mechanism for the **implementation of Agenda 2030** is comprised mainly of Ministries and other governmental services, such as the **Statistical Service, under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A relevant line ministry has been assigned as coordinator for each one of the 17 SDGs.** A **mapping exercise was initiated at the end of 2016**, aiming to define stakeholders, national or EU strategies and indicators, if applicable, for each of the targets. Meanwhile, the Cypriot Statistical Service gathered all indicators available. Priorities were set based on the government priorities as well as on horizontal focal areas, such as youth.

The statistical Annex of Cyprus' VNR includes a preliminary selection of statistical indicators that can be used to depict the current position of Cyprus with respect to each of the 17 SDGs. The selection was done by the Statistical Service of Cyprus and largely draws on the EU SDG indicator set. It therefore looks primarily at EU policies contributing to the fulfillment of the SDGs, rather than directly at the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on which the UN indicators for global monitoring focus. This approach had the advantage that the data was readily available and no

significant new data collections needed to be introduced or methodologically developed. As a consequence, the exercise did not entail any significant additional burden on the statistical system and had no substantial financial implications.

Next steps for Cyprus include the **assignment of a coordinator for the implementation of Agenda 2030 at domestic level**, with the competency to overview future strategies and effectively incorporate the SDGs. Remaining indicators will be selected in collaboration with the Statistical Service, and benchmarks and targets will be set by the competent authorities. In the meantime, Cyprus will continue to participate in defining and implementing the future EU 2030 agenda, as well as in relevant international events.

However, Cyprus notes in its VNR that the above-mentioned information should be regarded as a first attempt to produce a set of SDG indicators at the national level. It does not aim at proposing a comprehensive monitoring system for the SDGs in Cyprus, but only at demonstrating how existing data can be utilized to show how the country currently performs. This preliminary set of SDG indicators is yet to be discussed and agreed with the various stakeholders involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the national SDG policy. More consultations need to be undertaken in order to refine the indicator set and define appropriate baselines and targets for each one of them. The role of the competent ministries remains instrumental in the final selection of the national SDG indicators set.

## Czech Republic



The adoption of Czech Republic 2030, the Czech Republic's National Sustainable Development Strategy, is followed by the preparation of its implementation plan. **The Czech Republic 2030 document and its implantation plan established the adequate mechanisms that ensure compliance between the strategic and specific goals of Czech Republic 2030 and the objectives of other sectoral strategies, concepts, programs and measures.** Its task is to set the measures to fulfilling specific goals, especially with the regard to the existing policy gaps, which will be included in relevant public policies. **The main tool for tracking the compatibility of the goals at different levels will be the regularly updated national Database of Strategies, which is an online platform linking goals and targets of various strategies and which will be also linked with data sources of indicators.** While it has not yet been decided, the Czech Republic 2030 document will be updated every 2-3 years and indicators that are relevant to monitoring specific goals should be used.

The Czech approach to the 2030 Agenda implementation builds on two important concepts: sustainable development and wellbeing. In order to consider development beyond the scope of GDP and economic growth, progress in the implementation of **the Czech Republic 2030 strategic framework will be measured using indicators related to its 97 specific goals and 192 indicators**, focusing on different aspects of quality of life and wellbeing. These 192 indicators operationalize the Czech Republic's 97 specific goals. Apart from these 192 indicators, the Czech Republic has currently finalized a set of indicators regarding quality of life, which has resulted in another 160 indicators being developed.

## Denmark



Denmark considers it a necessity to make the SDGs concrete and actionable. The **government's Action Plan** accomplishes this through its focus on the 5 Ps: Prosperity, People, Planet, Peace, and Partnerships. For each of these, except partnerships, which are cross cutting, the **government has formulated a number of targets (37 in total) that, in most cases, integrate and cut across several SDGs.** They reflect the government's ambition to prioritize based on Denmark's specific country

context. Each target has one or two national indicators, which are in large part measurable and quantifiable.

To these ends, the government has tasked the national statistical bureau, Statistics Denmark, with providing the UN with an annual statistical report on the UN's SDG indicator set. **At present, Statistics Denmark does not have data on all UN SDG indicators, and estimates that 32% of the indicators are in Tier 1, 13% are in Tier II, and 15% Tier III.** In addition to using the UN's indicator tier system, it became evident to Denmark that it is was necessary to add some additional categories in order to reflect the Danish situation regarding SDG indicators. Thus, Denmark added 3 categories to their SDG indicator identification system:

- Not clarified: clarifying the Tier category for the indicator would require further investigation and coordination between governmental agencies;
- Non-statistical: indicators for which follow-up is not within the domain of Statistics Denmark;
- Not relevant for Denmark: indicators that do not apply to Denmark.

From this extended indicator list, Denmark was able to determine that 23% of indicators fell in the "not clarified" category, 14% in the non-statistical category, meaning indicators would have to be collected from other sources, and 4% fell in the "not relevant to Denmark" category.

**While Denmark is making progress in developing and identifying SDG indicators, they still have challenges,** and are able to encapsulate what the challenges are in most European countries when it comes to the SDG indicators. Denmark mentions in their VNR that complete statistical coverage of all the indicators supporting the SDGs is an extensive and long-term task. There are many factors influencing this situation, both at the international and national levels. Internationally, many of the indicators still lack a clear definition and many others call for further clarity on the exact way of measuring them (i.e. UN SDG Tier 3 indicators). Furthermore, a crucial problem that was being worked on at the time of the VNR is the model for data flows between the national and global level.

Even at the national level, the sheer number of indicators necessitates a substantial effort in order to provide satisfactory coverage of the SDGs, address the existing data gaps, as well as a far-reaching coordinative work among governmental agencies and other data providers. The government, in 2017, apportion funds for Statistics Denmark to strengthen their work on these particular areas. This is unique to Denmark, as many other European countries have not been able to secure additional funds for their statistical offices.

**The next concrete step will be finalizing the SDG data-mapping exercise.** In parallel, Statistics Denmark will analyze the data currently available and evaluate what data is best suited for an accurate follow-up on the indicators. In this process, further data and new data sources will be examined. An important aspect of this process will be an evaluation of data not coming from official data providers. Here a dialogue will be established in order to ensure, how Statistics Denmark and other data providers can jointly ensure the best contribution to the statistical aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

Besides a dialogue on data, a dialogue ensuring a clear national workflow and transparent data flows will be established with relevant ministries and other data providers.

Dissemination of data is another aspect to be looked into. This includes the possibility of a national reporting platform, contacts with the UN and other data producing organizations regarding the data flows, and the general follow-up on the Danish progress towards the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

## Italy



The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) is analyzing the indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs and has started an inter-institutional comparative work, both within and beyond the SISTAN (the National Statistical System) limits, which will enable the **completion of a methodologically consistent, integrated and shared mapping of available data and the evaluation of the overall availability of indicators for the SDGs**. The roadmap will continue to define and implement the indicators provided by the 2030 Agenda. It will also contribute to developing those necessary indicators, but currently not available, by promoting the follow-up, the sharing of information, and the necessary and profitable synergies.

Periodically, ISTAT presents an update and an improvement of the disaggregation of the indicators useful for measuring sustainable development and monitoring of its objectives, which occurred in December 2016 and May and December 2017. The next release is expected by June 2018.

**In December 2017, ISTAT published 109 measures on the SDGs and 201 indicators.** For 69 indicators that were already released in May 2017, the time-series were updated or disaggregation was increased: 74 indicators correspond to those defined internationally, 78 are similar or partially similar, in which not all data is available or not all of it has the required specificity. Sometimes, in 49 cases, it was considered appropriate to integrate the indicators with other “context indicators”, to provide additional useful elements to understand and monitor the target<sup>26</sup>.

In the next editions (in 2018 and 2019) the updating and improving of ISTAT indicators will continue along with an integrated analysis that will also be useful for reporting and monitoring activities.

The National Statistical System is also progressively releasing sets of indicators widely based on the BES project, launched in 2011 to measure equitable and sustainable well-being apart from economic conditions. It considers economic parameters alone as inadequate to evaluate the progress of societies and views them to be complemented by social and environmental information as well as by measures of inequality and sustainability. For the first time, in 2017, four BES indicators have been introduced within the Economy and Financial Document, following national legislation promoting the integration of BES within economic programming (L.163/2016). The chosen indicators for 2017 exercise are: trend of average income available, income inequality, and lack of participation in the labor market, CO2 emissions, and other climate-altering gasses. The DEF sets programmatic objectives for each variable.

Starting from 2018, 12 indicators will be integrated into the DEF, two of which relate to the environmental dimension (CO2 emissions and index of unauthorized buildings). There are 30 National Indicators for Equitable and Sustainable Welfare (BES) reported among the SDGs indicators.

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD), approved by CIPE (Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2017, foresees an annual monitoring of its implementation status also based on the indicators provided by the National Institute of Statistics and by institutions belonging to SISTAN.

## Luxembourg



Along with the preparation of the report on implementation of the Agenda 2030 in and by Luxembourg, a **working group bringing together technical and statistical experts was set up under the supervision of the Interministerial Commission on Sustainable Development (CIDD)**. In the

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.istat.it/it/benessere-e-sostenibilit%C3%A0/obiettivi-di-sviluppo-sostenibil/gli-indicatori-istat-per-lo-svil>

context of the international and regional observation dynamics to be set up in order to meet the SDGs, Luxembourg has initiated a process of selecting indicators to monitor the progress of the SDGs.

**The SDGs were the non-debatable basis for structuring the national list of indicators**, but there has been a discussion by CIDD members on the national relevance of the targets. **126 of 169 targets have been validated as relevant to Luxembourg**. The selection process was done in two steps:

1. Pre-selection of indicators on the basis of their conceptual relevance: i.e. acceptance of the indicator as representative of the target;
2. Definitive selection on the basis of statistical considerations: robustness of the method of calculation, and availability of data.

Also, the selection process was done on the basis of the following criteria:

- *First priority* selection of a relevant indicator based on existing data and various indicator lists in Luxembourg (SDI, competitiveness dashboard, well-being indicators)
- *Second priority* selection of relevant indicators based on the official lists of indicators at the international level (EUROSTAT, OECD, UN)
- *Third-priority* selection of a relevant indicator based on the existing indicator lists in other countries
- 33 targets have been selected as “to be developed” and need further analyses and aggregation in order to define new indicators.

During consultation of the CIDD, 118 indicators were submitted for approval to the CIDD. After discussion with CIDD members and their in-house experts, 130 indicators were retained for the next work step. A technical evaluation (methodological soundness, data availability, relevance, etc.) has been done by the working group. **A final selection of 110 indicators has been set up for a national list, among these, 30 indicators were defined as key indicators.**

## Portugal\*



The Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas (INE, or National Statistical Institute), in its capacity as the central institution for the production and dissemination of official statistics, responsible for the co-ordination of all activities of production and dissemination of official statistical information of its competence, has been in close coordination with the statistical departments of various ministries, and other national authorities, involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, the INE has been monitoring the international and European initiatives within the scope of the SDGs, in particular in the framework of cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and Eurostat, in developments towards the stabilization of global indicators, noting in this context the differentiated situation in terms of methodological stabilization and availability of indicators according to the classification system defined by the IAEG-SDG.

**This process has enabled national and international mapping of available information and identified the most appropriate sources of indicators for the monitoring of the 17 SDGs in Portugal**, given that official statistics available do not cover all indicators. From an initial list of the UN SDG indicators, which were agreed at the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission, came a conclusion regarding the availability of indicators: i) the majority is available (with information identical, similar or partial); ii) a quarter of the indicators is out of the national scope (indicators to measure the specific circumstances of developing countries or which are clearly outside the statistical field); and iii) the remaining are not available or are under consideration.



In an attempt to assemble all the existing statistical information on a single platform, the INE has made available on its [portal](#), a file on the “Sustainable Development Goals”, which is being continuously updated to allow all interested users an easy overview of SDG indicators.

**In addition to Portugal having done a mapping of UN SDG indicators, they have also published at the end of March 2018 their first national SDG indicators.**

Portugal also plans to improve their statistics portal, where they are aiming to have a larger number of indicators developed.

## Slovenia\*



The final and probably most important exercise in creating ownership of the 2030 Agenda has been done through the **primary gap analysis of all the policies and measurements that Slovenia already has in place and that are contributing to the SDG and their targets**. All the ministries have been asked to closely look and analyze their existing strategies and action plans and all the measurements or programs they are already exercising through the lens of the 2030 Agenda, through the goals, targets, and the indicators. **A comprehensive analysis provided important inputs for which indicators Slovenia is already measuring, and what concrete actions are already being taken towards achieving the SDGs.**

Due to the decision that **Slovenia will localize the SDGs through the newly emerging Development Strategy of Slovenia**, which is directly linked and intertwined with the goals of sustainable development (on a goal as well as on a target level), this national document is vital for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda in Slovenia. Specifically, because by pursuing its own national goals, Slovenia will simultaneously also achieve the SDGs. On the basis of expert analyses, strategic foresight tools and several rounds of coordination between ministerial departments, the draft strategy with five strategic orientations and twelve goals and national priority indicators, is planned to enter public coordination with all stakeholders at the end of July 2017.

For the future, Slovenia will strive to increase the share of available Agenda indicators. The VNR revealed that Slovenia will need to coordinate future efforts that focus primarily on the construction of a mechanism for the systematic collection of data by all institutions that, in addition to the Statistical Office, have relevant databases.

## Sweden



Commissioned by the Government, Statistics Sweden (SCB), in cooperation with a number of other Swedish authorities, has prepared a comprehensive report that on the basis of existing data and statistics provides a first preliminary and systematic assessment per goal and target of how Sweden is currently living up to the 2030 Agenda. SCB presents **more than 120 indicators, of which around 100 have exact, partial, or approximate correspondences to the global indicators**. Of all the global indicators, SCB assesses that **49 indicators, or 20% of the total number, have already been met by Sweden**. A [first report](#), covering the 17 SDGs, 169 targets, and 232 unique indicators in the light of existing data and statistics for Sweden was published in 2017. The report provides a picture of how Sweden is living up to the different goals and targets around year 2015 and of the important challenges that lie ahead. The report points to the need for continued work to produce statistical data for a number of indicators that currently lack data and to also determine which proxy indicators may be needed. Also remaining is a more precise quantitative and/or qualitative determination of Sweden's ambitions and goals/values for the Agenda's goals and targets so that the annual follow-up of the implementation will be valuable and provide a solid foundation of knowledge on which to stand. Only

in this way can objective public debate and considerations of measures be developed to promote further implementation.

## The Netherlands



The Netherlands was **one of the first countries to conduct a baseline survey of national efforts to achieve the SDGs**. The report “Measuring the SDGs: An Initial Picture for the Netherlands”, compiled by Statistics Netherlands, was published in November 2016. At that time, **data was available for about 37% of the SDG indicators. The second annual statistical report on the implementation of the SDGs was issued on March 7, 2018**. In this report, Statistics Netherlands has been able to **measure 51% of all indicators**. In order to achieve the higher percentage, it has conducted a broad consultation among 30 institutions and ministries, gathering much more relevant data, as well as suggestions on how to improve its report and measurements. The English version of report will be published in May 2018. The next such report will be published in March 2019.

While the starting position of the Netherlands is promising, statistical bureaus across the country (besides the Statistical Bureau in The Hague there are also the bureaus in the Dutch Caribbean) also identified certain gaps in terms of SDG achievement. In general, the Netherlands needs to accelerate progress in areas where it is still underperforming, like renewable energy, climate action, gender equality, and biodiversity. Some stakeholders believe that, in implementing the SDGs, more attention should be given to the effects of current national policies on future generations and on communities in other parts of the world. The reports of the statistics bureaus of (the Dutch Caribbean islands) Curaçao and Aruba underscore the need for more clarity about the indicators, and about the assistance that both countries and their organizations must provide in order to further build SDG infrastructure and fine tune the indicators.

## SDG Indicators from Non-Voluntary National Review Countries

This sub-chapter provides information on the status of SDG-related indicators in countries that have not yet presented or published a VNR at any of the HLPFs. Most of the information provided under each country was obtained from a recent Eurostat Working Group Meeting held in Luxembourg in March 2018. The information collected at the Working Group Meeting was then, when possible, sent to ESDN National Focal Points from national ministries that are dealing with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs for feedback and elaboration on the provided information and questions posed.

## Austria



When it comes to the national indicator system in Austria, Statistik Austria is responsible. In December 2017, Statistik Austria published their first set of SDG indicators in an indicator table on their [website](#). The selected indicators **follow the UN SDG indicators as closely as possible, but, at the same time, are also aligned with the guidelines of the European Statistical System (ESS)**. In addition to the UN SDG indicators and the guidelines from the ESS, there are only some indicators included that serve as key indicators from the indicator set on Statistik Austria’s website, “[Wie geht’s Österreich?](#)” (only available in German). Austria’s Interministerial Working Group was informed in advance of the draft of this set, and any feedback received was largely incorporated.

It should be noted that the national targets refer to the UN SDG indicators that exist, as there are, at the present time, no nationally defined indicators or targets for Austria. This is due to the fact that these indicators and targets can only be set out by national policy decisions.



## Greece

Regarding SDG indicators in Greece, the General Secretariat of the Government, which is responsible for coordinating national efforts and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group, and line Ministries are working very closely with the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) to define indicators in line with the UN SDG indicator framework to measure Greece's starting point and progress in implementing the SDGs. Presently, it seems very likely that Greece, in the Statistical Annex of the VNR it is currently compiling for the HLPF 2018, **Greece will use the 100 indicators selected by Eurostat**, and included in their [2017 report](#), to measure progress in the EU. **Once Greece's National Implementation Action Plan for the SDGs is completed in 2019, it will then most likely be coupled with indicators, which will most probably be the same or slightly different.**

In parallel, Greece has asked the OECD Statistical Directorate to produce a brief overview of a country's current position on individual SDGs' targets entitled "Measuring the distance". The OECD Study "[Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets](#)" was undertaken in response. In the case of Greece, available data cover 82 out of the 169 targets, of which 98 targets are included in the OECD Study. Based on the available data, Greece has reached 9 of the 82 targets measured. On average, Greece is closest to reaching the goals relating to the Planet category, such as oceans, water, biodiversity, and climate (Figure 2, SDGs 14, 6, 15, and 13). However, it is further away from reaching other goals, most notably on the economy, education, gender equality, and institutions (SDGs 8, 4, 5, and 16). Relative to the OECD average, Greece outperforms on goals such as water, energy, oceans, and gender equality (SDGs 6, 7, 14, and 5). However, on poverty, education, health, infrastructure, and most notably on economy, performance is significantly below the OECD average (SDGs 4, 1, and 8).

When it comes to the monitoring of the SDGs and indicators, **apart from "quantitative" monitoring across indicators, Greece is also considering a more "qualitative" monitoring processes.** Currently, the General Secretariat of the Government is working with the Parliament regarding the specifics of the involvement of a Parliamentary Committee, where all political parties are represented, in which the discussion on SDGs will be taking place on a regular basis, in order to contribute to, and guide, implementation at the national level, and to "monitor" national performance from a more "qualitative" perspective. It is envisaged that a progress report on the implementation of the National Action Plan on the SDGs, which is scheduled to be elaborated in 2019, and its reviews will be submitted by the General Secretariat of the Government to the Parliament at regular intervals for its review and political guidance. Therefore, it is expected, that in terms of follow-up and review of the implementation of the SDGs that the Hellenic Parliament will undertake an important role.

## Hungary

Hungary has a **renewed Sustainable Development Framework Strategy, which was published in 2013.** It should be noted that this Strategy has a different logic than the UN SDGs, as it is more science and economics based. However, irrespective of the different logics both the Hungarian Strategy and the 2030 Agenda have, the Hungarian Strategy is still in line with the 2030 Agenda. Hungary has examined this very topic, the results of which can be found in Annex 2 of the First Progress Report to the Sustainable Development Framework Strategy, which was released in 2015. The result was that the national strategy is the best way to contribute to the SDGs, as Hungary sees the Strategy as an implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda.

**Regarding sustainable development indicators, the indicators are based on the Framework strategy,** which has two sets of indicators: 1) big dataset with a lot of indicators, published in every second year by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH), the national statistical agency. The [last report](#) came out in September 2017 (only available in Hungarian); 2) the second indicator set is a smaller one, called 'key indicators'. These 16 indicators are used in Hungary's progress reports. The [sustainable](#)

[development progress report](#) is also a biennial product, written by Hungary's Council, the last of which was (the second one) published in December 2017; 3) while not part of Hungary's two nationally developed indicator sets, the UN SDG indicators will also be used and will be managed by the KSH.

## Poland



In Poland the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is coordinated by the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology. The Ministry is dealing with the SDG implementation process at the political level, while Statistics Poland is responsible for the coordination of SDG monitoring and serves as a statistics focal point. As Statistics Poland serves as the coordination role, Statistics Poland is able to organize the whole monitoring process in a more efficient way by reaching relevant data-producers to ensure the availability of indicators, use existing data flows to avoid duplication of reporting, take care of consistency between national and global data, exchange knowledge and good practices with other countries, as well as promote the SDGs and communicate to society about this initiative. Due to this clear division of responsibilities during the elaboration of the national SDG set, Poland was able to focus all their efforts on the selection of indicators. Close cooperation with the Ministries allowed us to reflect the national priorities in the Polish SDG set to the greatest possible extent.

To that end, the **Strategy for Responsible Development (SRD)**, which was adopted in February 2017, serves as the general reference to the SDGs in Poland's national policy. The Strategy is monitored by a set of about 80 indicators, which was elaborated with close cooperation between the ministry responsible for economic development and Statistics Poland, in consultation with other ministries. **About 9% of the SRD's indicators meet UN SDG indicators.** Additionally, **the National Sustainable Development Indicator Set is currently being adjusted based on the new strategy, which was done by a team of ministries, statistics, and civil society.** Poland believes this approach is very beneficial, as it allows Poland to better capture their specific country context with regards to the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, the new indicator set has been adjusted based on this new strategy and the SDGs.

**The next stage for Poland, however, was to expand the indicators to include more specific national priorities in the context of the 2030 Agenda.** These priorities were elaborated at the political level and based on the goals set out in the SRD. After setting detailed national priorities, **the national set of 65 sustainable development indicators for Poland was elaborated based on the indicators in the SRD and 2030 Agenda. Currently, approximately 25% of these indicators now meet the UN SDG indicators.**

Interesting to mention in the case of Poland is that **Poland is planning to develop 4 sets of SDG indicators.** The first set is the UN SDG indicators, which has been developed and is continuously being updated, the second set is the national SDG indicators, which is very similar to many other countries, and thirdly and fourthly, Poland is planning to develop regional and local indicator sets. At first, Poland focused on launching the global set of indicators on their [National Reporting Platform \(NRP\)](#), which required both methodological and IT preparations. The NRP contains global SDG indicators with data for Poland. **Currently, Poland is working on including the national set of SDG indicators to the NRP, which still reflect the SDGs,** as well as on making the tool more user-friendly. **The completion of the work is planned for the end of July 2018.** The Regional and local set of SDG indicators will be launched as soon as possible. The national indicators will be the basis for the regional and local levels, but it should be taken into account that not all of the national indicators will be available at lower territorial levels. Poland, however, envisages using different indicators to measure the SDGs at these levels, but notes that these indicators will still align with national priorities.

## Slovakia



The national strategy of Slovakia, which is currently under preparation by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, will be aligned with, and reflect, the 2030 Agenda. **It has been proposed that the monitoring mechanism that would support SDG implementation would use SDG indicators and possible complementary national indicators.** This coordination will be handled by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic. The Statistical Office of the Slovak republic in December 20016 published "[The Slovak republic and the Goals of Sustainable Development](#)" (Only available in Slovakian).

**An expert group for monitoring and indicators has been set up and they are currently developing the indicator set. Slovakia is currently in the process of defining its national priorities with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a stakeholder participation process. After this stage it is planned to develop measurable goals and national indicators to each priority area. This process should take place approximately in the second half of 2018 and the first half of 2019.** The Statistical Office will take a lead in defining indicators in cooperation with line ministries.

## Interesting Trends in SDG Indicator Development in Europe

As it can be seen from the information provided above, the EU is following an approach of “translating” the 2030 Agenda and the UN global SDG indicator set to the EU context, meaning that the EU SDG indicators are aligned with the UN indicators in areas where that makes the most sense. When looking at the EU as a region, it makes sense that it would align its own SDG indicators with the needs of the EU and EU policies and programs that are already in place.

The way in which the European Commission and Eurostat wish to continuously improve the EU SDG indicator framework leaves room for improvements to be made; indicators can be removed if they are obsolete or better ones are found; indicators can be adapted and changed to better reflect data availability or measuring criteria; and indicators can be developed and saved for incorporating later, as more information becomes available. This shows that the entire SDG indicator development process, at the global and EU level, are very similar in that feedback and constant improvement is essential in being able to find adequate indicators so that countries are equipped with the best tools to achieve the SDGs.

Overall, across the EU, both the European Commission, as well as many Member States, are developing SDG indicator sets. By doing so they do not simply use the UN global indicators, but develop their own sets for their respective policy contexts. The approaches, however, are slightly different between the European Commission and the EU Member States, as the latter also need to report to the UN on their progress towards the SDGs. The European Commission, on the other hand, does not have this reporting obligation. The approach for the EU SDG indicator set was, therefore, more focused on the EU policy context (i.e. the 2030 Agenda was interpreted more “freely” in the EU context (e.g. SDG 2 is about “hunger”, but the EU SDG indicator set does not contain any indicator on “hunger”).

Regarding the SDG indicator approaches in European countries, it is a bit more difficult for them to report, since countries not only have to consider their national context, but also reporting to the UN level. Therefore, it is likely that the EU SDG indicator set does not meet their national purposes, and that they will have to develop their own indicator sets, which is already being seen throughout Europe. Nevertheless, some common patterns exist:

- All European countries are constantly looking for ways to further develop their national indicators to reflect and match the UN SDG indicators that are relevant for their country context. Even countries that are far ahead in terms of national SDG indicator work are continuously evolving and adapting indicators to be more in line with the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs.
- Many European Countries have already looked at the UN SDG indicators and established which indicators they can already cover based on their national statistical capabilities and which, in their view, provides a framework and basis for their national monitoring process. The amount of UN SDG indicator coverage varies from country to country, ranging from 66% in Finland for indicators that have good or partial coverage, Denmark with around 45% of Tier 1 and Tier 2 indicators being met, to The Netherlands with 37% coverage, to Poland with 25% coverage, and Sweden with about 100 indicators having total, partial, or corresponding data available, etc. However, the process by which indicators are selected remains mostly the same throughout Europe; national contexts play a huge role in determining which UN SDG indicators are covered.

- Countries have also been able to establish which UN SDG indicators are not relevant for their national contexts, which will allow them to focus on establishing indicators for more relevant SDGs.
- The first statistical reports from many countries show that they have made progress towards the SDGs, detailing the degree of their country's alignment with the SDGs and the UN SDG indicators, which shows that there is still work that needs to be done if all European countries hope to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
- Many countries have also identified the same challenges when it comes to data collection:
  - Many UN SDG indicators are still undefined or have undefined methods for data collection, which hinder how countries can collect this type of data;
  - Countries do not produce all types of data that correspond to the UN's SDG indicators
  - Many countries also do not necessarily have the necessary resources to develop their national statistical offices to be able to collect all the diverse data the SDGs would require for their accurate measurement.

