4th ESDN Workshop

"New Drive for Sustainable Development Strategies –

The Power of Smart Linkages"

Approaches for integrated governance at national level and their innovative potentials for the EU SDS

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Workshop Background & Discussion Paper

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Thematic outline

The integration of various sectoral policies (horizontal policy integration) lies at the heart of the sustainable development concept. In practice, however, the challenges of integrating and coordinating different sectoral policies are vivid and seem to increase in the context of complex decision structures and established political-administrative cultures. Most government ministries and their related administrations are organised along sectoral policies and cross-sectoral coordination is often difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, horizontal policy integration needs to be comprehensively addressed and mechanisms need to be established if we want to achieve sustainable development on the European and Member States level. In a survey done in preparation of the ESDN Conference 2009, a vast majority of national sustainable development coordinators argued that horizontal policy integration should be more strongly addressed in the future. Moreover, the ESDN Advisory Paper on the further development of the EU SDS argued that "horizontal policy integration is considered as the most crucial challenge to be addressed in the context of the EU SDS". Therefore, this workshop will focus on (i) practical experiences with specific mechanisms aiming at horizontal policy integration in the EU Member States, (ii) how sustainable development is related to other processes, policies and strategies, (iii) existing challenges and shortcomings and how to address them, and (iv) which lessons can be learned to foster horizontal policy integration at the EU and Member States level.

Topics

The workshop will consist of three parts: The first part will deal with inter-ministerial mechanisms at the political level in order to investigate how these institutional mechanisms foster horizontal policy integration by establishing a better coordination for sustainable development between different government ministries. The second part will look into mechanisms that link legislative and executive arenas. By providing an overview of parliamentary committees in selected EU Member States, it will be discussed how legislative mechanisms can support the implementation of sustainable development strategies and policies. The third part of the workshop will focus on auditing and evaluation schemes that focus on how well sustainable development strategies and policies are implemented on the ground. At the end of the workshop, the participants will discuss the implications of the above mechanisms and processes for the governance mechanisms of the EU SDS.

Purpose

The workshop has three main objectives: (a) To discuss innovative governance mechanisms in relation to horizontal policy integration at the national level; (b) to reflect upon the exchange between the European and the national policy level on how to improve horizontal policy integration; and (c) to provide advise for the European Commission on good practices and experiences in the EU Member States with specific governance mechanisms for horizontal policy integration.

Workshop format

The main topics of the workshop will be introduced by keynote presentations of good practice cases in selected EU Member States. This will be followed for each topic by a panel discussion with representatives of EU Member States (or other European countries) that have similar

mechanisms in place, and representatives of the European Commission and other European institutions to reflect upon implications for the governance of the EU SDS. Moreover, each topic will be discussed among the workshop participants and in exchange with the panellists. At the end of the workshop, the workshop participants will discuss innovation potentials to improve the governance of the EU SDS as well as the exchange between the EU and Member States to foster horizontal policy integration.

Workshop results

The discussions during the workshop will be documented by the ESDN Office in a Workshop Report that will be distributed within the ESDN. The results of the workshop could be used and discussed in the SDS Coordinators Group or in the current and forthcoming processes to further develop the EU SDS.
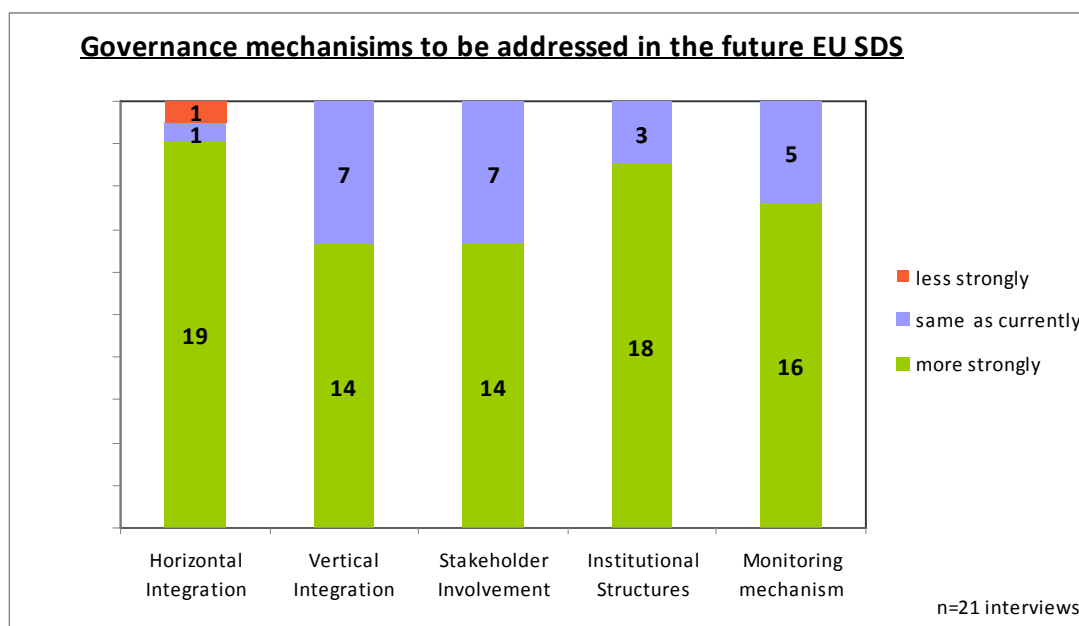
Content

Introduction

The concept of sustainable development fundamentally addresses the integration of various policy sectors and the coordination of different policy arenas (Jordan, 2008; Pezzoli, 1997; Sneddon et al, 2006). Horizontal policy integration in the context of sustainable development is commonly understood as balancing economic, social and environmental interests and policies in a way that trade-offs (or negative effects) between them are minimised and synergies (or win-win-win opportunities) are maximised (Berger & Steurer, 2009; Steurer, 2008). Horizontal policy integration is, therefore, one of the guiding principles of sustainable development. It is included in international guidelines on how to develop sustainable development strategies (OECD, 2001; UNDESA, 2002), it is one of the policy guiding principles of the renewed EU SDS (European Council, 2006) and it is addressed in most national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs) of European countries (see country profiles section on the ESDN homepage).

In practice, however, the challenges of integrating and coordinating different policy sectors seems to increase in the context of complex decision structures and established political-administrative cultures. Most government ministries in the EU Member States as well as the Directorates-General of the European Commission are organised along sectoral policies which makes cross-sectoral coordination often difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, horizontal policy integration needs to be addressed and, in fact, improved if we want to achieve sustainable development. Moreover, in a recent survey among national sustainable development coordinators that was undertaken for the ESDN Conference 2009[1], the coordinators considered horizontal policy integration as a major governance mechanism for sustainable development and argued that it should be more strongly addressed in the future EU SDS (Berger et al, 2009):

Graph 1: Governance mechanisms to be addressed in the future EU SDS

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[1] During April and May 2009, the ESDN Office undertook qualitative telephone interviews with sustainable development coordinators from 21 EU Member States on expectations regarding key objectives and topics as well as governance mechanisms & institutional structures for the future EU SDS. The full results of the survey can be found in the Discussion Paper of the ESDN Conference 2009.

The importance and challenge of the topic for the success of sustainable development caused the ESDN Steering Group to organise an ESDN Workshop in order to discuss good practices of horizontal policy integration, to exchange information and experiences and, ultimately, to provide guidance on how to move towards better policy coordination and integration in the governance of sustainable development.

This paper, firstly, discusses general aspects of horizontal policy integration in the governance of sustainable development. Secondly, it provides a short overview of different instruments, processes and institutional mechanisms for horizontal policy integration in the EU Member States and other European countries. Thirdly, it describes important aspects on horizontal policy integration that are included in the ESDN Advisory Paper on the further development of the EU SDS. And finally, it outlines questions that should guide the panel and plenary discussions at the workshop.

Horizontal policy integration & sustainable development

Origins of horizontal policy integration

The quest for a better horizontal integration of sectoral policies is not new. As Peters (1998, 295) argues, "from the time at which governing structures began to be differentiated into departments and ministries there have been complaints that one organization does not know what another is doing, and that their programmes were contradictory, redundant, or both". However, scholars have also acknowledged that the challenges of policy coordination and integration have increased in the last few decades at every level of policy-making (Peters, 1998; Ling, 2002). On the one hand, this is often attributed to the fact that recent public management approaches (such as New Public Management, see below) have further disaggregated the already specialized ministries and departments into service delivery agencies in which incentives to achieve the aims of individual organisations was greater than the incentives to achieve system-wide objectives (Ling, 2002; Scharpf, 1993). On the other hand, issues are becoming increasingly 'cross-cutting' and do not fit specific departmental boxes (Peters, 1998). This applies in particular to environmental and sustainable development policies. In the 1970s and 1980s, environmental policies followed most often a media-specific and/or end-of-pipe approach (e.g. water pollution, waste management, air pollution, forest dieback, etc). For obvious reasons, however, unsustainable trends and related global environmental problems, such as climate change, are not so much sectoral environmental challenges but rather cross-sectoral issues to be addressed in several sectoral policies. Consequently, various concepts have been developed that address policy integration in a comprehensive way, e.g. sustainable development and environmental policy integration.

Horizontal policy integration and sustainable development: substantive issues

Although sustainable development and environmental policy integration (EPI) are both concerned with horizontal policy integration, the two concepts have developed in parallel rather

than conjointly. EPI is generally understood as a principle that asks for the integration of environmental policy objectives "in all stages of policy making in non-environmental policy sectors" (Lafferty, 2002, 13), an understanding that overlaps with the predominant understanding of sustainable development in the 1990s. At that time, scholars interpreted sustainable development often as guiding model that requires primarily the integration of environmental considerations in other policy fields. Social and economic issues were taken into account only if they were relevant for environmental concerns (Berger & Steurer, 2009).

However, since the late 1990s, the understanding of sustainable development was redefined as balancing the economic, social and environmental 'dimensions' or 'pillars' of sustainable development, ruling out the prioritization of environmental issues. Thus, horizontal policy integration in the context of sustainable development strategies and policies is commonly understood as balancing economic, social and environmental interests and policies in a way that trade-offs (or negative effects) between them are minimised and synergies (or win-win-win opportunities) maximised (Steurer, 2008). Today, this understanding of sustainable development is shared by a wide variety of actors, including international organisations like the UN, the OECD (2002) and the World Bank (2002), the European Commission (2004, 2005), and national governments (Steurer & Martinuzzi, 2005).

Although the balancing of the three dimensions of sustainable development aims to maximise synergies, it is evident that trade-offs cannot be avoided altogether, and that the balancing acts cannot follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Obviously, sustainable development policies often require difficult political choices. While the general meaning of sustainable development is outlined, for instance, in sustainable development strategies, its actual political meaning is subject to constant political negotiations (Steurer, 2008). How horizontal policy integration plays out in sustainable development depends to a large extent on governmental and societal preferences that are influenced, inter alia, by the conditions of the economy, the welfare state and the environment. Therefore, the actual political substance of horizontal policy integration and sustainable development differs not only from country to country, but it also changes over time. This spatial and temporal 'contextuality' of sustainable development requires a constant questioning of what 'balancing the dimensions of sustainable development' and subsequent horizontal policy integration actually means in the light of socio-economic and environmental circumstances.

Horizontal policy integration as guiding principle for sustainable development: governance dimensions

The idea of horizontal policy integration is concerned with both policy substance and adequate governance tools and processes that are required to achieve integrated outcomes, i.e. it is concerned with the 'what' and the 'how' of policy-making (European Commission, 2004; European Commission, 2005; OECD, 2001; OECD, 2002; Sneddon et al, 2006; World Bank, 2002). Horizontal policy integration as well as respective institutional and procedural reforms are emphasised in several key policy documents on sustainable development, including the Brundtland Report, the Agenda 21, the UN and OECD guidelines for SD strategies, and the renewed EU SD strategy from 2006:

One of the key conclusions of the Brundtland Report of 1987 was that solving environmental problems is not a matter of sectoral environmental policies, but that this requires addressing environmental concerns together with economic and/or developmental issues (WCED, 1987). Against this backdrop, it complained that the cross-cutting policy challenges of sustainable development are handled by institutions that tend to be "independent, fragmented and working to relatively narrow mandates with closed decision-making processes" (WCED, 1987, 310). In a similar vein, Agenda 21 of 1992 pointed out that "prevailing systems of decision-making in many countries tend to separate economic, social and environmental factors at the policy, planning and management levels" (UN, 1992, paragraph 8.2.). Consequently, it urged, "governments […] should strengthen national institutional capability and capacity to integrate social, economic, developmental and environmental issues" (UN, 1992, paragraph 8.12).

According to the UN and OECD guidelines (UNDESA, 2002; OECD, 2001), the key purposes of sustainable development strategies are twofold: Firstly, to review existing economic, sectoral and environmental policies, strategies and plans with a long-term policy integration perspective. Secondly, to modify and strengthen national institutional structures, capabilities, capacities and political procedures so that they support the integration of social, economic and environmental issues in decision-making (see also Steurer & Martinuzzi, 2005). Likewise, 'policy integration' is acknowledged as a policy guiding principle in the renewed EU SDS (European Council, 2006, 5), and it links this governance challenge with others as follows, "promote integration of economic, social and environmental considerations so that they are coherent and mutually reinforce each other by making full use of instruments for better regulation, such as balanced impact assessment and stakeholder consultations".

In other words, integration is the key rationale of the sustainable development concept, and horizontal policy integration is its ultimate governance challenge that is underpinned by most other guiding principles of sustainable development (e.g. long-term perspective, reflexivity and assessment, participation, etc). As the next section shows, this applies also to what is commonly known as vertical policy integration.

Horizontal and vertical policy integration – 'diagonal policy integration'

Complex policy problems, such as climate change or biodiversity degradation, transcend not only the competencies of ministries within a particular government, but also the vertical levels of different jurisdictions, from supranational institutions like the European Union to national, regional and municipal governments (Berger & Steurer, 2008). Crucially, "the sphere of competence of authorities in charge of environmental protection or environmentally relevant matters does not always match with the boundaries of the affected environment" (Liberatore, 1997, 116). Consequently, the concept of sustainable development and respective guidelines for sustainable development strategies emphasise the need for integrating policies not only horizontally across sectoral ministries, but also vertically across the different levels of government (European Commission, 2004; OECD, 2002; UN, 1992, paragraph 8.12.). Accordingly, the policy guiding principles of the renewed EU SDS (European Council, 2006, 5) also emphasise the need to "promote coherence between all European Union policies and coherence between local, regional, national and global actions in order to enhance their contribution to sustainable development".

Since the integration of policies between different governments should proceed in a cross-sectoral manner, the concepts of horizontal and vertical integration are obviously closely related. When horizontal policy integration occurs not at a single level of government but is carried further across the vertical levels of government, one can speak of 'diagonal policy integration' (for an illustration, see Figure 1 below).
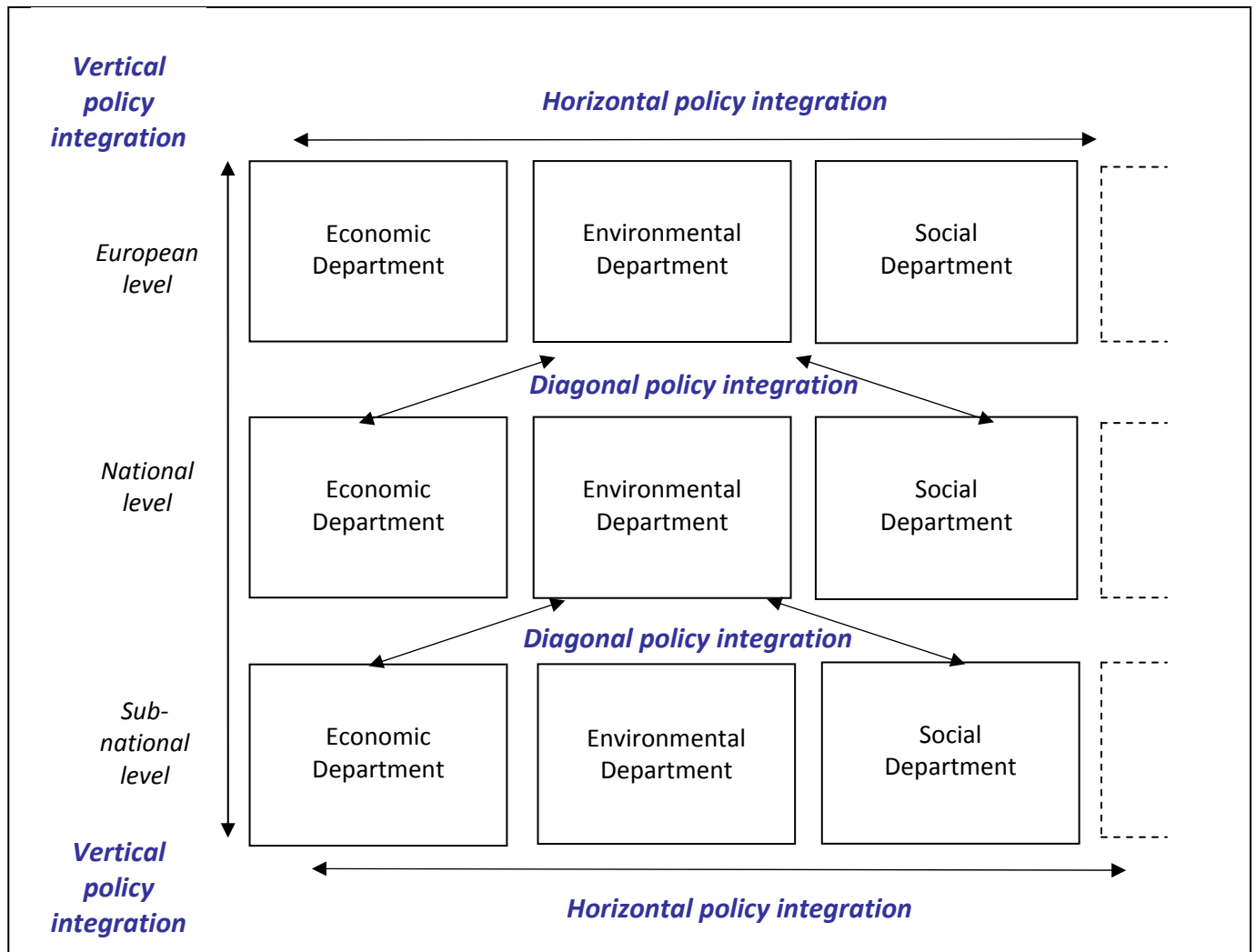

Figure 1: Horizontal, vertical and diagonal policy integration (Steurer, 2008)

Addressing horizontal policy integration: three administrative narratives

The challenge of horizontal policy integration is pressing and the difficulties in actually delivering integrated policies are daunting. This applies in particular to sustainable development policy-making, a policy field that is sometimes dominated by administrative practices rather than high-profile political decisions (Steurer, 2008). Against this background, this section explores the functioning of three major administrative narratives that largely define how the public sector works (Jann, 2003; Salamon, 2002): Bureaucracy, New Public Management and New Governance. Since public administration practices differ strongly from country to country (Araújo, 2001; Christensen et al, 2002), it is important to note that this section briefly characterises the three narratives in very general terms. It does not describe their particularities for different countries and times; instead, it raises awareness for governance challenges of

horizontal policy integration. For a short, comparative overview of the three administrative narratives, please go to Table 1 below (page 11-12).

Bureaucracy

A bureaucracy is described best as unambiguous structure of departments, each headed by a minister who is responsible for all actions of the departmental sub-units. 'Bureaus' are designated to fulfil very specific and clearly defined tasks in a rule-bound way: "The idea was to create a system that was at the highest possible level of technical efficiency" (Hughes, 2003, 24). Overall, bureaucracies imply sectoral specialisation (or 'departmentalisation') rather than policy integration. Although the introduction of professionalism and specialisation in the public sector was a major achievement, it ultimately turned the public sector into a compilation of 'administrative silos' which are constructed around policy sectors. Although the peak popularity of bureaucracy is past, sectoral administrative silos are still a factor that needs to be taken into account when dealing with sustainable development strategies and policies (Peters, 2000).

New Public Management

Over the years, bureaucracies were criticised as inefficient from a managerial point of view: this criticism became known as New Public Management (NPM) around the 1980s. Since then, NPM became the synonym for a reform movement that brought 'managerialism' into 'bureaucratism' (Bevir et al, 2003; Gray & Jenkins, 1995). While bureaucracies are mainly concerned with state accountability and maintaining public order through a hierarchical mode of governance, the key concern of NPM is to "focus on management, not policy, and on performance appraisal and efficiency" (Bevir et al, 2003; Jann, 2003). It thus favours the governance mode of markets to the one of hierarchies (Jackson, 2001). Typical policy instruments of NPM are the 'marketisation' (or outsourcing) of services provided by the public sector, the privatisation of state-owned firms and the establishment of departmental structures in which each is responsible for a clearly specified agenda (Bevir et al, 2003; Hood, 1995). Therefore, NPM rather enhances the 'silo-character' of public administrations by further disaggregating them into specific service agencies ('agencification'). Due to its focus on intra-organisational management, it tends to challenge inter-organisational collaboration across sectors (Hughes, 2003).

New Governance

This trend of disaggregation is frequently stated as one of the driving forces behind another administrative reform, away from the hierarchical and market modes of governance towards networks often referred to as New Governance (Peters, 2000; Rhodes, 1997; Salamon, 2002). According to Jervis and Richards (1997, 13), networks are "patterns of long-term relationships between mutually interdependent actors, formed around policy issues or clusters of resources". The guiding principle of New Governance is not efficiency but effectiveness (Jackson, 2001; Salamon, 2002). Regarding the challenge of policy integration, the network mode of governance is often assumed to deal effectively with complex and cross-sectoral issues, such as sustainable development, because of the following reasons:

(a) Since networks involve a broad variety of societal actors, they may help to identify widely accepted solutions and to share information and better understanding of complex problems (Jackson, 2001).

(b) Networks provide stronger inter-organisational capacities which imply that they serve cross-sectoral issues better than narratives with a strong intra-organisational focus (Williams, 2002, p. 105).

(c) Collaboration is assumed to facilitate effectiveness because networks provide or generate valuable resources such as actor-specific knowledge and experience, ownership and commitment (Jackson, 2001; World Bank, 2002).

The question remains, however, whether the rise of New Governance implies a transition from sectoral silos and task-oriented organisations towards a web of inter-organisational and cross-sectoral networks? While most networks are inter-organisational in character, network theories (Peters, 2000) as well as ESDN networking experience suggest that the scope of most networks is still limited to specific issues within a policy field or a sector.

Therefore, it remains open to debate which administrative narrative, institutional mechanisms and policy processes may foster horizontal policy integration for sustainable development. The specific experiences and background of the workshop participants will hopefully shed some more light on this debate. As mentioned above, Table 1 below summarises the key characteristics of the three administrative narratives outlined above in a comparative way:

	Bureaucracy	*New Public Management*	*New Governance*
Peak of popularity	1920s - 1970s	1980s - 1990s	Mid 1990s – today
Overall approach	Bureaucratism	Managerialism	Governance
State narrative	Regulatory state	Lean (neo-liberal) state	Relational/enabling state
Key challenge(s)	Maintain public order, legality and accountability	Overcome inefficiencies with economic incentives	Solve complex problems by reducing segregation of policies and actors
Governance leitmotiv	'Law and order'	'Getting prices right'	'Getting institutions right' and 'finding common solutions'
Guiding principle	Accountability	Efficiency	(Sectoral) Effectiveness
Governance mode	Hierarchy	Market	Network
Governance mechanism	Command & control (authority)	Competition	Co-operation
Preferred policy instrument	Mandatory legal instruments (i.e. 'hard law', directives, regulations, etc.)	Financial instruments (i.e. taxes, tax breaks, subsidies, etc.) and contracts	Partnering instruments (i.e. partnerships, agreements, etc.)
Enforcement through	Control and sanctions	Monitoring, naming & shaming, self interest	Ownership, involvement and joint decisions
Organisational scope	Intra-departmental focus ('Departmentalisation')	Focus on service delivery Agencies ('Agencification')	Inter-organisational focus within sectors/policy coalitions
Pattern of strategy making	Policy planning	Ad-hoc problem solving, combined with elements of strategic management	Strategic Management, emphasising policy learning and adaptation
Skills required	Compliance and control skills	Management skills such as organising, financing, controlling, marketing etc.	'Enablement skills' such as activating and orchestrating actors and processes

Table 1: Key characteristics of Bureaucracy, New Public Management and New Governance

In the next section, we present a short overview of different instruments, processes and institutional mechanisms for horizontal integration that exist in the EU Member States and other European countries.

Instruments, processes and institutional mechanisms for horizontal policy integration

Various EU Member States and other European countries have developed instruments, processes and institutional mechanisms that aim to foster horizontal policy integration for sustainable development. The examples we present below are a selection to provide an overview of what is currently applied and are not meant to be exhaustive. For a comprehensive overview on mechanisms for horizontal policy integration and other sustainable development processes, please visit the country profiles section of the ESDN homepage.

Policy instruments and processes

One of the most prominent instruments are **sustainable development strategies**. These strategies – which exist at the European, national and sub-national levels – generally include topics and objectives which require horizontal policy coordination. The sustainable development strategy documents outline how the various topics/objectives should be approached in order to achieve horizontal policy integration. In most cases, these strategies also define the institutions responsible for implementing the strategy objectives and for fostering horizontal policy integration. An overview of the NSDSs of EU Member States and other European countries can also be found in the country profiles section of the ESDN homepage.

On the basis of their NSDSs, several national governments have initiated **departmental sustainable development action plans, reports or work programmes**. These action plans either translate the general objectives of sustainable development strategies into concrete measures and actions for implementation for the whole government and its public administration (e.g. the two Work Programmes of the Austrian NSDS which defined about 250 measures to be implemented by the different government departments at the national and sub-national level), or they can be developed by individual government departments to identify their contributions to delivering the NSDS. Examples of the latter are the sustainable development action plans in the UK (the UK NSDS requires each department to publish an Sustainable Development Action Plan that sets out the contribution made by the respective department to meeting the UK's sustainable development objectives and to report annually on progress) and the departmental sustainable development reports in Germany (individual government ministries have voluntarily agreed to publish departmental reports on their contribution to sustainable development objectives in general and to the objectives of the German NSDS in particular).

Other policy strategies can also foster horizontal policy integration when they address sustainable development issues. On the European level, the renewed Lisbon Strategy of 2005 includes several sustainable development topics and, therefore, complements the renewed EU SDS (for more information, please go to the ESDN Quarterly Report of December 2008). On the national level, the Lisbon Strategy objectives are addressed by the National Reform Programmes

(NRPs) are developed in the Member States. Moreover, the EU and many EU Member States have developed sectoral policy strategies that are related to sustainable development, like climate change strategies (an overview of climate change strategies can be found in the ESDN Quarterly Report of September 2007), transport policy strategies, sustainable production and consumptions strategies, regional development strategies, etc.

Several **evaluation processes** are applied in the EU Member States and other European countries that measure how well sustainable development in general and the objectives of NSDSs in particular have been implement. Among these processes are *impact assessments, policy evaluations and sustainability auditing*. Within the EU, the Cardiff Process in 1998 established the requirement for a better integration of environmental considerations in all policy sectors. Moreover, the renewed EU SDS suggests that all EU institutions (and EU Member States) "should ensure that major policy decisions are based on proposals that have undergone high quality impact assessment" (European Council, 2006, para 11). In the EU, the European Commission's impact assessment system was launched in 2002 (European Commission, 2002). Since the update of the impact assessment in 2005 (European Commission, 2005), a formal impact assessment is required for items in the Commission's Work Programme. This means that all regulatory proposals, Whiter Papers, expenditure programmes and negotiating guidelines for international agreements are subject to an impact assessment. The guiding principle of impact assessments is to consider the economic, social and environmental dimensions of Commission policy proposals. Moreover, several European countries have applied or are in the process of applying sustainability impact assessment (SIA), e.g. Switzerland and Belgium. Recently, the Finnish National Commission on SD started to conceptualise an impact assessment of its NSDS of 2006. This process was launched with an international workshop in Helsinki in February 2009.

In Belgium, policy evaluations on sustainable development are carried out on a regular basis. The evaluation results are published in federal reports on sustainable development and based on a sustainable development model and related indicators. The policy evaluation approach in Belgium will be discussed at the workshop (panel discussion in Topic 3). In Austria, the Court of Auditors undertakes a sustainability auditing that has the aim to measure how sustainable development is approached and implemented at the national and sub-national level. It addresses strategic and operational issues and aims at including sustainable development at all ministries and their related administrations. The Austrian sustainability auditing will be presented at the workshop in a keynote presentation (Topic 3).

Institutional mechanisms

Various EU Member States and other European countries have developed institutional mechanisms to better coordinate the work of sectoral government ministries with the aim to achieve horizontal policy integration. The most common are inter-ministerial bodies at the political and administrative level, parliamentary committees as well as national sustainable development councils that also involve different stakeholder groups.

Inter-ministerial bodies exist at the political and administrative level. Examples for inter-ministerial bodies at the political level can be found in Germany and Norway. In Germany, the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development is the most important body for sustainable development policy-making of the government. It consists of the highest level civil

servants of each government ministry (state secretaries in Germany can be compared to deputy ministers in other countries) and has the objective to implement, further develop and evaluate the NSDS. In Norway, the Committee on Sustainable Development and Climate is composed of the deputy ministers of the various government ministries. It aims at coordinating the sectoral ministries in order to achieve integrated sustainable development and climate policies. Both of these inter-ministerial bodies will be presented at the workshop (one in a keynote and one in the panel discussion, Topic 1).

There exist several inter-ministerial bodies at the administrative level in Europe. Examples are the Inter-departmental Sustainable Development Committee in Switzerland, the Sustainable Development Programme Board in the UK, the Inter-ministerial Committee for Sustainable Development in France or the Inter-departmental Commission for Sustainable Development in Belgium. They all have in common to foster a better coordination between the public administrators of different government ministries and to contribute to the implementation of the NSDSs. More detailed information on the individual bodies can be found in the country profiles sections of the ESDN homepage.

Some EU Member States have also established **parliamentary committees on sustainable development**. These committees link legislative and executive arenas and aim to support the implementation of sustainable development strategies and policies. The Environmental Audit Committee in the UK Parliament has the aim to consider to which extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development. It evaluates the departments' performances against targets set by the ministries and issues reports to the UK Parliament (e.g. on greening government, reducing CO_2 emissions, halting biodiversity loss, etc.). The German Parliamentary Committee on Sustainable Development has the objective to support the implementation of the NSDS, to issue opinions on legislative bills and to foster coordination with other European parliaments on sustainable development issues. It also issues reports on selected sustainable development topics. Both parliamentary committees will be presented and discussed in the workshop (Topic 2).

A large number of EU Member States has established **national sustainable development councils**. These councils consist of politicians and/or public administrators as well as of representatives of various stakeholder groups (e.g. business sector, trade unions, NGOs, research, etc). These councils aim to foster a better coordination among the various government ministries, to support the implementation of the NSDSs and to include the expertise and capacities of societal stakeholders. Examples are the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Czech Government Council for Sustainable Development, the Irish Sustainable Development Council Comhar or the Swedish Commission on Sustainable Development. For more information on national sustainable development councils, please visit the website of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC) or the country profiles section of the ESDN homepage.

ESDN Advisory Paper: aspects of horizontal policy integration

On the basis of the presentations, working group results and discussions at the ESDN Conference 2009, the ESDN compiled an Advisory Paper on the further development of the EU SDS in July 2009 that was forwarded to the Swedish EU Presidency and the Secretariat-General of the European Commission. Below, we present the parts of the Advisory Paper that are related to horizontal policy integration:

Governance mechanisms & institutional structures:

- Cross-sectoral or horizontal policy integration is considered as the most crucial challenge to be addressed in the context of the EU SDS. In order to foster cross-sectoral policy integration, a stronger coordination between sectoral DGs at the European level and government ministries at the national level is very important. One way of overcoming the current departmentalisation could be to establish structures that foster more cross-sectoral coordination, like inter-departmental committees. Another way could be to establish a high-level sustainable development contact person in each DG ('SD champion') who is responsible for fostering the inclusion of sustainable development in the respective policy sector and also for reporting on progress achieved.

- The challenge to integrate sustainable development in all policy sectors and to achieve meaningful impacts calls for strong institutional structures. For the future EU SDS, it will be necessary either to establish new institutional structures at the EU level (e.g. Sustainable Development Task Force with all Commissioners, high-level Sustainable Development Committee) or to strengthen the existing ones (e.g. SDS Coordinators Group).

Coherence of strategies & the challenge of policy integration:

- As regards cross-sectoral or horizontal policy integration, a stronger coordination between policy sectors is crucial. In this context, it seems particularly important to create a better coordination between the post-2010 EU strategy on growth and jobs (i.e. post-Lisbon Strategy) and the EU SDS and to establish a stronger coherence between the objectives of these two major EU policy strategies. This would also help the EU Member States to coordinate the two strategy processes on the national and sub-national level. Moreover, the EU SDS should be the guiding document for all sectoral policies and strategies with the ultimate aim to include sustainable development in all policy areas. This calls for adjusting the objectives of all policy strategies with the objectives of the EU SDS.

- As regards vertical policy integration, a much stronger coherence of topics and objectives of the EU SDS and the national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs) of the EU Member States is necessary. Therefore, the SD strategy objectives on the EU and Member States level need to be made more consistent in order to achieve a successful implementation of the EU SDS. Additionally, a stronger cooperation between the different political levels regarding the development and implementation of the EU SDS would be beneficial.

Key challenges and topics for the future EU SDS:

- The seven key challenges and two cross-cutting issues included in the renewed EU SDS of 2006 cover the major issues of sustainable development. It would be important, however, to better specify the cross-sectoral character of each key challenge and to exemplify how the balancing of economic, environmental and social issues could be achieved in practice.

- It is crucial for the implementation of the future EU SDS to specify for each key challenge the necessary measures and actions to be undertaken in the various policy sectors and on the political levels. On the one hand, it would be necessary to achieve stronger coherence between the EU SDS and sectoral policy strategies (…) On the other hand, it could be considered to develop Action Plans that set out specific measures and targets for the implementation of the EU SDS objectives.

Discussion questions

In this section, we present discussion questions that should guide the panel and plenary discussions at the workshop.

Topic 1: Inter-ministerial mechanisms at the political level

- What are important practical experiences of inter-ministerial mechanisms at the political level in fostering horizontal policy integration for sustainable development? What has been achieved in practice?
- How are relationships to other processes, policies and strategies (e.g. climate change) dealt with when implementing sustainable development strategies and policies?
- Which lessons can be learned and which preconditions would be necessary to establish such mechanisms in other countries or on the EU level?
- Which implications can be drawn for the governance mechanism of the future EU SDS?

Topic 2: Mechanisms that link legislative and executive arenas

- What is the specific role of parliaments to foster horizontal policy integration for sustainable development?
- How can legislative and executive arenas be linked best to improve horizontal policy integration?
- How are relationships to other processes, policies and strategies (e.g. climate change) dealt with when implementing sustainable development strategies and policies?
- Which lessons can be learned and which preconditions would be necessary to establish such mechanisms in other countries or on the EU level?
- Which implications can be drawn for the governance mechanism of the future EU SDS?

Topic 3: Auditing and evaluation schemes

- What are the specific (political) implications of sustainability auditing by Courts of Auditors with regard to horizontal policy integration?
- What are the specific contributions of evaluation schemes to foster horizontal policy integration for sustainable development? What has been achieved in practice?
- How are relationships to other processes, policies and strategies (e.g. climate change) dealt with when implementing sustainable development strategies and policies?
- Which lessons can be learned and which preconditions would be necessary to establish sustainability auditing in other countries or on the EU level?
- Which implications can be drawn for the governance mechanism of the future EU SDS?

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