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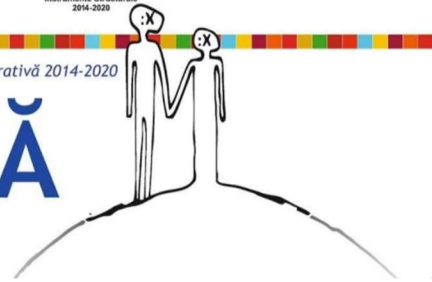


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ROMÂNIA DURABILĂ

Dezvoltarea cadrului strategic și instituțional pentru implementarea
Strategiei Naționale pentru Dezvoltarea Durabilă a României 2030



Administrație publică pentru dezvoltare durabilă

- Program de studii postuniversitare de formare și dezvoltare profesională continuă, înregistrat în Registrul Național al Programelor Postuniversitare cu nr. 338.
- Ocupația/ Grupa de bază din COR pentru care se organizează programul postuniversitar: "expert dezvoltare durabilă", cod COR 242232.
- Organizator: Academia de Studii Economice din București

Dezvoltarea durabilă, o viziune holistică

Modul 1. Management și administrație publică

- Tema 1. **Dezvoltarea durabilă, o viziune holistică - repere teoretice ale dezvoltării durabile; abordarea integrată a dezvoltării durabile: dimensiunile economică, socială și de mediu.**
- Tema 2. **Importanța sectorului public în dezvoltarea durabilă;**

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1. Sustainable development: a policy framework for all policies

1.1 The rise of sustainable development, from “Our common future” (1987) to “Transforming our world” (2015)

Sustainable development (SD) is usually defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. This definition was agreed in the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: “Our common future”, also known as the Brundtland Commission ¹. The insight was that we can only achieve good policy outcomes, also for the long term, when we do this in a ‘sustainable’ balance between economic, environmental and social challenges.

This insight emerged already fifteen years earlier, at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment on 5-16 June 1972 in Stockholm.² This illustrates that bringing together the three dimensions of sustainability is, politically at least, not easy: combining different interests requires making trade-offs and looking for synergies. In June 2022, the 50th anniversary is celebrated with a ‘Stockholm+50’ conference.

Five years after the Brundtland Report, the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro 1992 on ‘Environment and Development’ made reconciling protecting the environment without hampering development more concrete. The key outcome was “Agenda 21”, which triggered the development of sustainable development strategies (“SD strategies” or “SDS”) at all levels: regional, national, local.

Countries in the global South were first to act, followed by a wave in Europe around the time of the “Rio+10” conference in Johannesburg 2002 (“World Summit on Sustainable Development”). This also included the first EU SD strategy adopted in 2001. Quite some further work on governance for SD has taken place since and related policies have been adopted. However, things have slowed down somewhat, among others to the financial crisis of 2008 and beyond, and also the reconciliation of environment and development, i.e. of achieving a development that does not harm the natural resource base, has not come far and has even seen rollbacks. In 2009, the concept of planetary boundaries was published, some of which were already crossed.³

A new push for sustainable development was created in 2012, when the UN Member States gathered at the ‘United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development’, also known as the Rio+20 conference (Kamau at al, 2018).⁴ This was also driven by the fact that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)⁵ were about to expire in 2015. As 2015 was quickly approaching and many countries were falling short of reaching the goals, the Rio+20 summit was able to galvanise momentum to develop a new agenda for a sustainable global development reaching beyond 2015. This new agenda to 2030 was meant to be universal: unlike the MDG, it would be applicable to all countries. The process for getting there was called an “Open Working Group” (OWG) with rotating country representatives. Groups of countries could designate one of them to represent them at the OWG.⁶

¹ United Nations, ‘Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: “Our Common Future” [Brundtland Report]’, 1987, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811/files/A_42_427-EN.pdf.

² United Nations, ‘Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972)’, 1973, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL7/300/05/IMG/NL730005.pdf?OpenElement>.

³ Johan Rockström et al., ‘Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity’, *Ecology and Society* 14, no. 2 (2009).

⁴ Macharia Kamau, Pamela Chasek, and David O’Connor, *Transforming Multilateral Diplomacy: The inside Story of the Sustainable Development Goals* (Routledge, 2018).

⁵ <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

⁶ <https://www.sdg16hub.org/landing-page/open-working-group>



In addition to governments, civil society organisations were also actively involved in shaping the process towards a new sustainable agenda. In 2014, a document containing the summary of the previous years was presented to the General Assembly and ultimately approved in 2015.

1.2 The Sustainable Development Goals

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'⁷, along with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. Building upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals, this new development agenda is the international community's primary guide for sustainable development until 2030 (or perhaps beyond). Like never before, the sustainability aspects of development are considered of primary concern at local, national, regional and international levels and the SDGs are to be applied in all countries.

The SDGs connect the big problems of our times and offer a framework for sustainable development worldwide. Therefore, they can be considered to be a policy of policies or 'meta-policy'.⁸ They address, inter alia, poverty, inequality, economic development, infrastructure, climate action and biodiversity. As section 2 will show, the SDGs require effective public administration and governance for their implementation, including a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach.



While the SDGs have become the most visible part, the 2030 Agenda has even more to offer. It has enshrined a set of principles, which clearly guide the implementation of the SDGs. The five core principles underpinning the Agenda are:⁹

- 1) *Universality*: The SDGs are universal and commit all countries, irrespective of their development status or income level. They apply to all countries, in all contexts and at all times.
- 2) *Interconnectedness and indivisibility*: The SDGs are interconnected and indivisible in nature. The implementation of the SDGs should be regarded as a whole and not being approached from an individual or selective point of view.
- 3) *Leaving no one behind*: the Agenda commits to reach out to all people in deprivation and need, wherever they are, aiming to address their specific vulnerabilities.
- 4) *Inclusiveness*: The Agenda includes all segments of society regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or identity.
- 5) *Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships*: The Agenda encourages the establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships for sharing and mobilising knowledge, technology, financial resources, and expertise.

⁷ UNGA, 'Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2015.

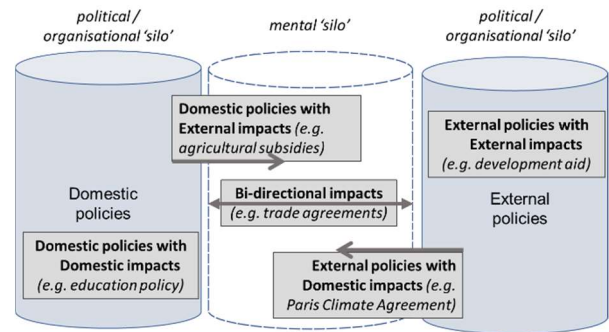
⁸ J. Meadowcroft, 'Sustainable Development', in *The Sage Handbook of Governance* (London: Sage, 2011).

⁹ United Nations, 'UN SDG: LEARN, 2-Page Primer on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', n.d., <https://www.unsdglearn.org/microlearning/2-page-primer-on-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/>.

Because all 17 Goals are interconnected, implementation of the SDGs requires effective collaboration between government departments. That is a large challenge, because ministries tend to work in their isolated ‘silos’. But it is also a huge opportunity: connecting silos can make the work much more effective, faster and cost-efficient. In section 3 we will discuss how this can be done in practice by improving ‘policy coherence for sustainable development’ (which is itself already an SDG target: SDG 17.14).

The divide between those who tackle domestic issues and those who work on external challenges is maybe the largest silo of all (figure, after Niestroy, 2016¹⁰).

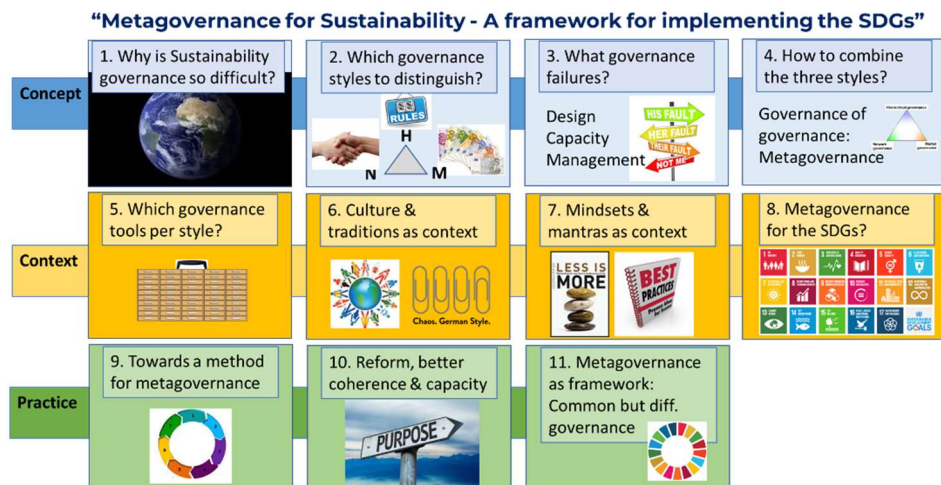
Historically, external (cross-border, transboundary, global) challenges have been the exclusive domain of departments of Foreign Affairs and/or Development Cooperation. Dealing with sustainability was also usually coordinated by Foreign Affairs and/or the Development department, among others inspired by the focus of the Millennium Development Goals on developing countries. The adoption in 2015 of the UN 2030 Agenda made promoting sustainability a universal task, with the coordination shifting away in many countries from Foreign Affairs toward the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Finance or a special Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (or: e.g., Sustainable Transition). Notwithstanding this change, many national civil servants still consider the SDGs as something ‘external’.



As last part of this section, during the course all seventeen SDGs will be introduced, with a few typical governance challenges and linkages.

2. The key role of public governance and public administration in sustainable development

This section follows the structure of the book “Metagovernance for Sustainability: A framework for implementing the SDGs”.¹¹



¹⁰ Ingeborg Niestroy, *How Are We Getting Ready? The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the EU and Its Member States: Analysis and Action so Far* (Discussion Paper 9/2016, German Development Institute (DIE), 2016).

¹¹ Louis Meuleman, *Metagovernance for Sustainability: A Framework for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals* (Routledge, 2018).



1. The problem with sustainability governance

Although the 2030 Agenda clearly states that governments cannot implement the SDGs on their own, government organisations and – sometimes on more distance – other public sector organisations such as government agencies, are indispensable for achieving the 17 Goals by 2030. Since the Covid-19 pandemic and other disaster (some of which were triggered by climate change), the need for a strong state has become stronger than in the decades before, when the ‘New Public Management’ movement advocated small government and reducing regulatory burden for private companies.

In the context of sustainable development, ‘governance’ must be defined in a broad way, because it has to cover a wide range of challenges. Simply said, if policy is about *what and when* (the goals, targets, milestones), then governance is about *how* (which tools, instruments, processes) and *who* (actors, stakeholders).¹² The rationale behind this is that if a policymaker defines governance only as involving stakeholders, or as promoting accountability, or as focusing on cost-efficiency, she or he would limit the range of options. Therefore, only if governance covers all these perspectives, well-reflected choices are possible and governance frameworks can be designed which are contextualised. A broad governance definition which is ‘fit for SD’ is: “Governance is the totality of interactions in which government, other public bodies, private sector and civil society participate (in one way or another), aimed at solving public challenges or creating public opportunities”.¹³

2. Three governance styles and their hybrids

In reality, three typical governance styles can be distinguished, with culturally different mixtures across countries. Many EU countries, for example, tend to prefer hierarchical governance (with legal solutions and centralist steering); others prefer network governance (with informal arrangements and partnerships), and others prefer market governance (with financial incentives, contracts and privatisation).

3. Governance failures and their causes

Three types of governance failure will be introduced: design failure, capacity failure and management failure.

4. Introducing metagovernance

Governance for the SDGs should be contextualised: there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and different governance styles need to be combined into frameworks that are effective in a specific situation, time and place. This is emphasised in many UNDESA and UNCEPA reports and in the OECD Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance*. All three governance styles have strengths and weaknesses, and for SDG governance we will need to find the best mixture in each country/situation. That is also necessary to prevent a ‘governance mess’ when the focus is only on diversity. Designing and managing such mixtures is called ‘metagovernance’.¹⁴

5. Fifty shades of metagovernance

To understand the full (meta)governance toolbox, we need to understand the differences between hierarchical, network and market governance. At least 50 differences can be found, where the three styles have different views or operational forms.

¹² Louis Meuleman, ‘Public Administration and Governance for the SDGs: Navigating between Change and Stability’, *Sustainability* 13, no. 11 (2021): 5914.

¹³ Louis Meuleman, *Public Management and the Metagovernance of Hierarchies, Networks and Markets: The Feasibility of Designing and Managing Governance Style Combinations* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2008).

¹⁴ Louis Meuleman, *Metagovernance for Sustainability: A Framework for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*.





6. How values, traditions and geography shape the feasibility of governance approaches

Governance styles are expressions of (national) cultures and traditions. They are normative. Understanding this normative dimension is important when we want to improve the effectiveness of governance.

7. Mind-sets and mental silos

New Public Management has influenced how we think about government. It brought slogans such as 'best practices', 'less is more' and 'break down the silos'. But we should think critically about such concepts, although they have brought positive change on efficiency, especially where this was deteriorating effectiveness. In this part we also discuss the difference between project management and process management: two management approaches that should be used in a good balance.

8. Metagovernance challenges for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

All SDGs have specific governance targets (numbers with letters a, b, c...), but two Goals are designed as enablers of all the other Goals. SDGs 16 and 17 are often called the governance goals, with SDG 16 focusing on rule of law and quality of institutions, and SDG 17 on means of implementation, including finance, technology, digitalisation, and last but not least: policy coherence for sustainable development.

9. Metagovernance: sketching a method

Metagovernance thinking for sustainability can be integrated in a normal policy development cycle, but requires more focus on the 'governance environment' and other contextual factors.

10. Metagovernance, public sector reform, coherence promotion and capacity building

This introduces different ways of public sector reform, and policy coherence for sustainable development (which is also the main topic of the 3rd part of this training).

11. Conclusions: metagovernance as framework for SDG implementation

This is among others about the feasibility of applying metagovernance for the SDGs.

3. Towards an action agenda: Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

3.1 Introduction

This part will make use of various OECD studies and guidance, including material prepared in preparation of a future PCSD observatory.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is "the coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development". The focus is on effective, accountable, and inclusive governance, facilitating the attainment of the SDGs. It covers many important governance mechanisms and processes, including horizontal and 'vertical' coordination, stakeholder engagement, progress monitoring, evaluation, and review.

A fundamental premise of policy coherence is that there are interlinkages and mutual dependencies in the 2030 Agenda and that interactions take place between the Agenda's different policy domains. Achieving, or making progress on, one target can either boost progress on another target ("synergy") or make it more difficult to achieve another target ("trade-off"). Recognising these interdependencies and interactions is a key first step to ensure that public policies are coherent with one another and will achieve their intended results. Coherence can be pursued, and assessed, at all stages of policymaking, from agenda framing and goal setting,





to the process of policy instrument design, implementation on the ground and follow-up and evaluation (UNDESA, 2021)¹⁵.

The eight principles or building blocks of OECD's PCSD framework are compatible with the eight domains of the PCSD UN Indicator 17.14.1 (UNEP, 2020)¹⁶, and overlap with the seven key governance themes distinguished in a comparative study on institutionalisation of the SDGs in the EU Member States.¹⁷

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for enhancing PCSD, as each country must determine its own institutional mechanisms and sequencing of actions according to its legal, administrative and political context. Nevertheless, the eight PCSD building blocks are broad enablers that can be applied to different countries despite their different administrative cultures and political contexts, albeit in different ways.

I. A strategic vision for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in an integrated and coherent manner.

1. Political Commitment and Leadership - Mobilise whole-of-government action and orient policy development towards sustainable development.
2. Strategic Long-term Vision - Support present needs and those of future generations in a balanced manner.
3. Policy Integration - Capitalise on synergies and address trade-offs between economic, social and environmental policies, in addition to specific areas such as security policy and human rights.

II. Effective and inclusive institutional and governance mechanisms to address policy interactions.

4. Whole-of-Government Coordination - Resolve divergences between policies, including between domestic and external policies.
5. Subnational Engagement - Align priorities and promote coordinated action at different levels of government.
6. Stakeholder Engagement - Engage all relevant actors to identify challenges, set priorities, align actions and mobilise resources.

III. A set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address impacts of policies.

7. Policy and Financing Impacts - Systematically consider the effects of policies on people's well-being "here and now", "elsewhere" and "later".
8. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation - Inform decision-making, and adjust policies in light of potential negative effects.

¹⁵ UNDESA (2021). *CEPA Strategy Guidance Note on Promotion of Coherent Policymaking*.

<https://publicadministration.un.org/Portals/1/Strategy%20note%20coherent%20policymaking%20Mar%202021.pdf> .

¹⁶ As published by UNSTATS: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/SDG-indicator-metadata.zip>

¹⁷ Niestroy, I. et al. 2019. *Europe's Approach to Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: Good Practices and the Way Forward*. Brussels: European Parliament.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU\(2019\)603473](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EXPO_STU(2019)603473) .

