

THE SDGS AS A LEVER FOR CHANGE IN POLICY PRACTICES

Final report

Study commissioned by the Federal Council for
Sustainable Development

Dr. Kris Bachus
Ignace Pollet
Dr. Thérèse Steenberghen
Dr. Huib Huyse

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Contact: Kris.Bachus@kuleuven.be

KU Leuven
HIVA RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR WORK AND SOCIETY
Parkstraat 47 box 5300, 3000 LEUVEN, Belgium
hiva@kuleuven.be
www.hiva.be

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Abbreviations

Brulocalis	Association of Brussels Municipalities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
FIDO	Federaal Instituut Duurzame Ontwikkeling (Federal Institute Sustainable Development)
FCSD	(Belgian) Federal Council for Sustainable Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
LA21	Local Agenda 21
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
SD	Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UVCW	Union des Villes et Communes Wallonnes (Walloon Association of Cities and Communities)
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VVSG	Vlaamse Vereniging van Steden en Gemeenten (Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities)
WHO	World Health Organization

Summary

Introduction

This comparative study provides an overview of good policy practices implementing the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on changes in the institutional architecture that may inspire the Belgian federal and subnational governments in implementing the SDGs.

Next to policy practices from abroad, Belgian policy practices are highlighted, to signal bottlenecks for the 2030 implementation in Belgium, as well as to detect synergies and mutual learning potential between the various governments and stakeholders. Making recommendations to the Belgian or other governments is not in the scope of this study.

Next to the Belgian case, six cases were selected from a longlist of 41 international policy practices and subject to a more in-depth analysis.

Six international policy practice case studies

1. *Germany: Externalities or international spillover impacts*

Externalities or international spillover effects are *adverse sustainability impacts that are imposed by the actions or the development pattern of a country to another country*.

Germany stepped up as a leading country in taking spillovers seriously, by integrating explicit details on its initiatives regarding externalities in its 2016 *Voluntary National Review* for each single SDG. Although Germany's scores on the nine spillover-related indicators are not straightforwardly positive, the explicit inclusion in the VNR is innovative and shows a commitment to improve.

2. *The Netherlands: Involving local authorities in the implementation of the 2030 agenda*

Based on the decentralized governance system in the Netherlands, the primary responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 2030 was laid on the shoulders of the decentral governments, being the 388 municipalities, the provinces, and the water authorities. Although it is too early for conclusions, studies indicate that leaving the SDG-campaigning to local stakeholders may be insufficient to get the SDGs into the hearts and the minds of the population, and that a national strategy may be necessary to make a difference.

3. *Finland: Stakeholder participation*

In 2013, after longish consultations with the National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Prime Minister presented the vision text 'The Finland we want by 2050'. In 2016, the

commitments were aligned with the 17 SDGs. Thanks to its deeply rooted tradition of participation, Finland has designed its Agenda 2030 governance with important contributions by the Finnish civil society and business community.

4. Switzerland: Indicators and monitoring for Agenda 2030

The monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in and by Switzerland is based on the Swiss sustainable development monitoring system (MONET), which has been in place since 2003. In May 2016, the system was amended to include the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Of the 73 regularly updated indicators published on the website by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), a selection of 36 is used for monitoring progress of the implementation of the SDGs 2016–2019.

5. Czech Republic: Domestication or mainstreaming

Domestication or mainstreaming refers to the degree to which sustainable development and the SDGs permeate into the heart of policy-making.

The Czech sustainable development agenda is coordinated at the national level by the Government Council on Sustainable Development (GCSO), chaired by the Prime Minister. The preparation of the 2030 Agenda involved discussion in both chambers of Parliament. New laws on public finance and public procurement were passed which provided a basis for sustainability efforts such as the Healthy Cities project of the Czech Republic.

6. Germany: SDG implementation in a federal country

In Germany, the federal Chancellery is the main responsible for both the coordination of the SDG implementation and the relations between the federation and the Länder. Within the context of the 2016 National Sustainable Development Strategy, several Regional Dialogue Conferences were held, and the Länder have made their own contribution to the strategy. Other inter-federal cooperation initiatives, such as the Federal-Länder Association for Sustainable Development and the annual consultation regarding sustainable development between the Federal Government and the Länder may further induce the inter-federal cooperation regarding Agenda 2030.

The Belgian Agenda 2030 governance model

Looking at the six topics of the case studies, we have learned that Belgium has not taken up the topic of international spillovers yet. Local authorities play a role, but coordination of these efforts is dispersed over the three regional municipal umbrella organizations.

Numerous stakeholder participation bodies and efforts have ensured that civil society has participated in the Belgian SDG strategy making and implementation, but the fragmentation resulting from the Belgian division of powers reduces the efficiency of the efforts. The Belgian final list of indicators for monitoring the progress towards the SDGs is not finalized yet.

In the 2017 Voluntary National Review (VNR), several efforts were announced to step up the mainstreaming of the SDGs in strategic policy processes. The same VNR recognized that the cooperation and consultation mechanisms currently in place are insufficient to guarantee strengthened forms of coordination in the complex Belgian federal system.

Conclusions

In Belgium, establishing and coordinating an efficient governance model for SD and SDG implementation is a greater challenge than in most other countries, because of the complex structure of the state. On the other hand, it is clear that many government actors are highly motivated to realize the SDGs, and to enforce the institutional framework that is needed to support that ambition.

In spite of many remaining challenges, Belgium has a lot of knowledge and capacity on different government levels and different topics, e.g. in the fields of circular economy or healthcare. The main challenge is to come to national coordination in all these fields.

In the short run, several steps forward are already planned or being laid out. In the long run, the main challenge for Belgium will be to coordinate strong answers to major challenges ahead, such as climate change mitigation, eradicating poverty and mitigating global impacts of domestic activities.

Samenvatting

Inleiding

Deze vergelijkende studie biedt een overzicht van goede beleidspraktijken ter implementatie van Agenda 2030. De studie focust vooral op institutionele veranderingen of governancepraktijken die inspirerend zouden kunnen werken voor de Belgische federale en subnationale overheden bij het implementeren van de Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Naast de buitenlandse beleidspraktijken belicht de studie ook beleidspraktijken in België, met het oog op het signaleren van hinderpalen voor de implementatie van Agenda 2030 in België, en om synergieën en wederzijdse opportuniteiten tot leren tussen de verschillende overheden en stakeholders bloot te leggen. Het maken van beleidsaanbevelingen gericht aan Belgische of andere overheden maakt geen deel uit van de doelen van deze studie.

Naast de Belgische case werden zes casestudies van een *longlist* van 41 internationale goede beleidspraktijken geselecteerd en onderworpen aan een diepteanalyse.

Zes internationale casestudies van beleidspraktijken

1. *Duitsland: externaliteiten of internationale spilloverimpacts*

Externaliteiten of internationale spilloverimpacts zijn onduurzame impacts die een land afwentelt op een ander land door zijn acties of ontwikkelingspatronen.

Duitsland profileerde zich als een voortrekker in het benoemen en het bestrijden van spillovers, door in zijn *Voluntary National Review* (VNR) van 2016 expliciete aandacht te besteden aan initiatieven m.b.t. het terugdringen van externaliteiten, en dit voor elk van de 17 SDGs. Hoewel Duitsland zelf niet onverdeeld goed scoort op de negen spillover-indicatoren, is het opnemen van dit thema in de VNR een innovatieve praktijk en toont het een bereidheid aan om de situatie te verbeteren.

2. *Nederland: het betrekken van lokale overheden bij de implementatie van de 2030 Agenda*

Gebaseerd op het gedecentraliseerde governancesysteem in Nederland werd de primaire verantwoordelijkheid voor de implementatie van Agenda 2030 bij de lokale overheden gelegd, nl. de 388 gemeenten, de provincies en de waterschappen. Hoewel het te vroeg is voor conclusies, wijzen studies erop dat het volledig overlaten van de SDG-campagne aan lokale stakeholders onvoldoende is om de SDGs in de harten en de gedachten van de bevolking te verankeren, en een nationale strategie zal wellicht nodig zijn om een verschil te maken.

3. *Finland: stakeholderparticipatie*

In 2013 presenteerde de Finse eerste minister, na lange beraadslagingen met de *National Commission on Sustainable Development*, de visietekst 'Het Finland dat we willen tegen 2050'. In 2016 werd de visie afgestemd op de 17 SDGs. Dankzij de diep verankerde traditie van participatie is Finland erin geslaagd om zijn Agenda 2030-governance vorm te geven met een belangrijke inbreng van de Finse civiele maatschappij en de zakenwereld.

4. *Zwitserland: Indicatoren en monitoring voor Agenda 2030*

De monitoring van de implementatie van Agenda 2030 in en door Zwitserland is gebaseerd op het Zwitserse systeem van duurzameontwikkelingsmonitoring (MONET), dat al operationeel is sinds 2003. In mei 2016 werd het systeem aangepast om Agenda 2030 en de SDGs te integreren. Van de 73 regelmatig geüpdatete indicatoren op de website van het Federale Agentschap voor Statistiek wordt een selectie van 36 gebruikt om de voortgang van de implementatie van de SDGs te monitoren in de periode 2016-2019.

5. *Tsjechische Republiek: mainstreaming*

Mainstreaming verwijst naar de mate waarin duurzame ontwikkeling en de SDGs doordringen tot in het hart van de besluitvorming.

De Tsjechische duurzameontwikkelingsagenda wordt op nationaal niveau gecoördineerd door de *Government Council on Sustainable Development* (GCSD), voorgezeten door de eerste minister. Ter voorbereiding van Agenda 2030 werden discussies gevoerd in beide kamers van het parlement. Nieuwe wetten over overheidsfinanciën en overheidsopdrachten zagen het licht, en dit legde de basis voor duurzaamheidsinitiatieven zoals het *Healthy Cities*-project van de Tsjechische Republiek.

6. *Duitsland: SDG-implementatie in een federaal land*

In Duitsland is de federale Kanselarij het bevoegde orgaan voor zowel de coördinatie van de SDG-implementatie als de relaties tussen de federale overheid en de regionale overheden (Länder). In het kader van de Nationale Strategie voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling van 2016 werden meerdere Regionale Dialoogconferenties georganiseerd, en de Länder hebben hun eigen bijdrage aan de strategie geleverd. Andere interfederale samenwerkingsinitiatieven, zoals de Federaal-Länder Vereniging voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling en het jaarlijks overleg duurzame ontwikkeling tussen de federale overheid en de Länder kunnen de interfederale samenwerking in het kader van Agenda 2030 in de toekomst verder versterken.

Het Belgische governancemodel voor Agenda 2030

Na het analyseren van de zes thema's van de casestudies in ons land stelden we vast dat België het onderwerp van de internationale spillovers nog niet heeft opgenomen. Lokale autoriteiten spelen een rol, maar de coördinatie van deze inspanningen is versnipperd over de drie gewestelijke koepelorganisaties van steden en gemeenten.

Een aanzienlijk aantal participatieraden en –inspanningen hebben ervoor gezorgd dat de civiele maatschappij heeft geparticipeerd in de Belgische strategie voor en implementatie van de SDGs, maar de fragmentatie ten gevolge van de Belgische bevoegheidsverdeling tast de efficiëntie van de inspanningen aan. De finale Belgische lijst van indicatoren voor het monitoren van de vooruitgang naar de SDGs is nog niet klaar.

In de Voluntary National Review (VNR) van 2017 werden verscheidene acties aangekondigd om de mainstreaming van de SDGs in strategische beleidsprocessen te versterken. Eveneens in de VNR werd erkend dat de samenwerkings- en raadplegingsmechanismen die momenteel bestaan, onvoldoende zijn om een versterkte vorm van coördinatie in het complexe Belgische federale systeem te garanderen.

Conclusies

In België is het ontwikkelen en het coördineren van een efficiënt governance model voor duurzame ontwikkeling en SDG-implementatie een grotere uitdaging dan in de meeste andere landen, omwille van de complexiteit van de staatsstructuur. Anderzijds is duidelijk dat veel overheidsactoren sterk gemotiveerd zijn om de SDGs te realiseren, en om het institutionele kader dat daarvoor nodig is, te implementeren.

Ondanks de nog vele aanwezige obstakels beschikt België over veel kennis en capaciteit op de verschillende overheidsniveaus, en dat rond vele thema's zoals circulaire economie en gezondheidszorg. De belangrijkste uitdaging is om rond al die maatschappelijke uitdagingen nationale coördinatie te realiseren.

Op korte termijn zijn al verscheidene stappen voorwaarts gepland of in ontwikkeling. Op lange termijn zal de belangrijkste uitdaging voor België liggen in het coördineren van sterke antwoorden op de toekomstige duurzaamheidsuitdagingen, zoals klimaatmitigatie, het uitroeien van armoede en het verminderen van de wereldwijde impact van de binnenlandse activiteiten.

Résumé

Introduction

Cette étude comparative offre un aperçu de bonnes pratiques en termes de mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030. L'étude se concentre surtout sur des changements institutionnels ou sur des pratiques de gouvernance qui pourraient inspirer les autorités fédérales et infranationales belges lors de la mise en œuvre des objectifs de développement durable (ODD).

En plus des pratiques étrangères, l'étude se penche également sur des pratiques mises en place en Belgique pour signaler des obstacles à la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030 en Belgique ainsi que pour révéler des synergies et des opportunités mutuelles d'apprentissage entre les différentes autorités et parties prenantes. La formulation de recommandations stratégiques adressées aux autorités belges ou autres ne s'inscrit pas dans les objectifs de cette étude.

En plus des cas belges, six études de cas ont été sélectionnées dans une première sélection de 41 bonnes pratiques internationales et ont ensuite été analysées en profondeur.

Six études de cas internationales en matière de bonnes pratiques

1. *Allemagne : externalités ou impacts de retombées à l'échelle internationale*

Des externalités ou impacts de retombées à l'échelle internationale sont des impacts non durables qu'un pays répercute sur un autre pays suite à ses actions ou à ses modèles de développement.

L'Allemagne s'est profilée comme une nation pionnière en matière de désignation et de lutte contre les retombées en consacrant dans sa *Voluntary National Review* (VNR) de 2016 une attention toute particulière à des initiatives de réduction des externalités et ce, pour chacun des 17 ODD. Bien que l'Allemagne enregistre un score mitigé aux neuf indicateurs de retombées, la reprise de ce thème dans la VNR est une pratique innovante qui témoigne d'une volonté d'améliorer la situation.

2. *Pays-Bas : l'implication d'autorités locales dans la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030*

Sur la base du système de gouvernance décentralisée aux Pays-Bas, la responsabilité première de la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030 a été confiée aux autorités locales : les 388 communes, les provinces et les confédérations hydrographiques. Bien qu'il soit trop tôt pour tirer des conclusions, les études révèlent que le fait de confier entièrement la campagne ODD à des parties prenantes locales ne suffit pas pour ancrer les ODD dans les cœurs et âmes de la population et qu'une stratégie nationale sera probablement nécessaire pour faire une différence.

3. Finlande : participation de parties prenantes

En 2013, le Premier ministre finlandais a présenté au terme de longues consultations avec la *National Commission on Sustainable Development* le texte de vision « La Finlande que nous voulons à l'horizon 2050 ». En 2016, la vision a été adaptée aux 17 ODD. Grâce à sa tradition de participation profondément ancrée, la Finlande est parvenue à façonner sa gouvernance Agenda 2030 avec une contribution importante de la société civile finlandaise et du monde des affaires.

4. Suisse : indicateurs et monitoring pour l'Agenda 2030

Le monitoring de la mise en œuvre de l'Agenda 2030 en et par la Suisse est basé sur le système suisse de monitoring du développement durable (MONET) qui est opérationnel depuis 2003. En mai 2016, le système a été adapté pour y intégrer l'Agenda 2030 et les ODD. Parmi les 73 indicateurs régulièrement actualisés sur le site Web de l'Agence fédérale des Statistiques, une sélection de 36 indicateurs est utilisée pour contrôler l'état d'avancement de la mise en œuvre des ODD durant la période 2016-2019.

5. République tchèque : mainstreaming

Le terme « mainstreaming » fait référence à la mesure dans laquelle un développement durable et des ODD pénètrent jusqu'au cœur du processus décisionnel.

L'agenda tchèque en matière de développement durable est coordonné au niveau national par le *Government Council on Sustainable Development (GCSO)* présidé par le Premier ministre. Pour préparer l'Agenda 2030, des discussions ont été menées dans les deux chambres du Parlement. De nouvelles lois sur les finances publiques et les marchés publics ont vu le jour et ces nouvelles lois ont jeté les bases d'initiatives de durabilité comme le projet *Healthy Cities* de la République tchèque.

6. Allemagne : mise en œuvre des ODD dans un pays fédéral

En Allemagne, la Chancellerie fédérale est l'organe compétent à la fois pour la coordination de la mise en œuvre des ODD ainsi que pour les relations entre les autorités fédérales et les autorités régionales (Länder). Dans le cadre de la Stratégie nationale de développement durable de 2016, plusieurs conférences de dialogue régional ont été organisées et les Länder ont apporté leur propre contribution à la stratégie. D'autres initiatives de collaboration interfédérale, comme l'Association Länder fédérale du développement durable et la concertation annuelle autour du développement durable menée entre les autorités fédérales et les Länder, peuvent renforcer dans le futur la collaboration interfédérale dans le cadre de l'Agenda 2030.

Le modèle belge de gouvernance pour l'Agenda 2030

Après avoir analysé les six thèmes des études de cas dans notre pays, nous avons constaté que la Belgique n'a pas encore repris le sujet des retombées internationales. Des autorités locales

jouent un rôle, mais la coordination de ces efforts est fragmentée entre les trois organisations faitières régionales de villes et communes.

Un nombre considérable de conseils et d'efforts de participation ont permis à la société civile de participer à la stratégie et à la mise en œuvre belge des ODD, mais la fragmentation liée à la répartition des compétences en Belgique affecte l'efficacité des efforts. La liste finale des indicateurs belges pour le contrôle de l'état d'avancement de la mise en œuvre des ODD n'est pas encore prête.

Différentes actions visant à renforcer le mainstreaming des ODD dans les processus stratégiques ont été annoncées dans la Voluntary National Review (VNR) de 2017. La VNR reconnaît également que les mécanismes de collaboration et de consultation qui existent à l'heure actuelle sont insuffisants pour garantir une forme renforcée de coordination dans le système fédéral belge complexe.

Conclusions

Le développement et la coordination d'un modèle de gouvernance efficace en matière de développement durable et de mise en œuvre des ODD constituent en Belgique un défi plus important que dans la plupart des autres pays en raison de la complexité de la structure étatique. D'autre part, il est clair que de nombreux acteurs publics sont extrêmement motivés à l'idée de concrétiser les ODD et de mettre en œuvre le cadre institutionnel nécessaire à cet effet.

Malgré les nombreux obstacles encore présents, la Belgique possède des connaissances élevées et de nombreuses compétences aux différents niveaux de pouvoir et ce, sur de nombreux thèmes comme l'économie circulaire et les soins de santé. Le principal défi consiste à réaliser une coordination nationale autour de tous ces défis sociaux.

Différentes avancées sont déjà prévues ou en développement à court terme. À long terme, le défi majeur pour la Belgique consistera à coordonner des réponses fortes aux défis de durabilité futurs comme l'atténuation du changement climatique, à éradiquer la pauvreté et à réduire l'impact mondial des activités nationales.

1. Introduction

This comparative study aims to provide an overview of good policy practices implementing the 2030 Agenda. The study will be based on cases of policy practices abroad and in Belgium. First and foremost, the study will focus on changes in the institutional architecture and main policy instruments through which the Belgian federal and subnational governments, as well as the other stakeholders, can be inspired to bring about appropriate policy change. Next to policy practices from abroad, Belgian policy practices will be highlighted, in order to signal bottlenecks that may hinder the 2030 implementation in Belgium, as well as to detect synergies and mutual learning potential between the various governments and stakeholders. Making recommendations to the Belgian or other governments is not in the scope of this study.

This final report consists of six sections. In the second section the methodology used for this study is laid out. In the third section, we present the longlist of national policy practices which is the result of the broad scanning exercise we did of a large group of countries. The fourth section explains how we reduced the large number of cases to six policy practices to be studied in detail. The following six case studies are analysed in section 5:

1. Germany: Externalities or international spillover impacts
2. The Netherlands: Involving local authorities in the implementation of the 2030 agenda
3. Finland: Stakeholder participation
4. Switzerland: Indicators and monitoring for Agenda 2030
5. Czech Republic: Domestication or mainstreaming
6. Germany: SDG implementation in a federal country

The sixth section gives an overview of the Belgian federal SDGs¹ and SD governance model. Finally, transversal observations and general conclusions are formulated in the seventh section.

¹ In this report, the Sustainable Development Goals will be frequently abbreviated to SDGs, and sustainable development by SD.

2. Methodology

This study aims to provide an overview of good policy practices implementing the 2030 Agenda. As the implementation of the SDGs has been running for only two years, it makes little sense to focus on the final impact of the SDG and the national policy practices, e.g. on climate change, decent work etc. Therefore, our study focuses mainly on governance-related policy practices, which includes the institutional architecture of the Agenda 2030 implementation and topics like stakeholder participation, horizontal and vertical policy integration and monitoring and indicators.

Our approach for this study was to start with a broad analysis of national policy practices that are described in literature and international reports. This comprehensive scope led to a longlist of 41 good policy practices. We evaluated those cases using a set of criteria that are explained in section 4 of the report, and selected six cases for a more in-depth analysis. Eleven interviews were conducted, with both general SD experts and country experts. The list of interviewees can be found in annex 1. Finally, a discussion workshop was organized specifically about the topic of transferability to Belgium with public governance expert professor Marleen Brans (KU Leuven) as the central expert. This discussion mainly fed the final section of the report, containing the horizontal observations and the general conclusions.

The results of the literature review, the interviews, the discussions with the follow-up committee and the workshop were all used and integrated to draw up this final report.

3. Longlist of good policy practices in other countries

The scoping exercise based on a literature study and four orienting interviews led to a longlist of 41 good policy practices, which are displayed in the matrix below (table 1). In the matrix, the practices are displayed with the referred country or international organization, a subject, a short description of the practice, a reference to the sources (upon which the selection is based + additional sources for further elaboration), and comments (including on the relevance to Belgium).

We aimed to make a distinction between (a) domestic policy, (b) international policy (such as development cooperation) and (c) external effects of domestic activities (such as trade and investments abroad), but the sources available do not follow this logic, probably because the ‘domestic external’ category is rather new to most countries, including developed countries. Nevertheless, we have detected some good practices in the ‘domestic external’ category, such as the cases 20 (Switzerland) and 34 (Germany). The Bertelsmann Stiftung (2017) has dedicated one of its [reports to exactly these international ‘spillover’ effects](#), and one of our in-depth cases is dedicated to this phenomenon (see section 5.1).

In this phase, we applied pragmatic criteria to distinguish ‘good’ policy practices from ‘other’ policy practices. Our main reference was the recommendation by an interviewee or external report or other publication describing this policy practice as ‘a good one’.

We distinguish between the following types of policy practices in the table:

GOV = governance

GOV-DEC = decentralized governance

PAR = stakeholder and public participation

COM = communication

KNO = Knowledge acquisition or dissemination

M&E = monitoring and evaluation

SDG = progress in reaching the targets of specific SDGs.

The sources are referred to as follows:

Interviews

VNR = National Voluntary Review

CC = Concord matrix

ESDN = European Sustainable Development Network

UCLG = United Cities and Local Governments

BERT = Bertelsmann report on international spillovers

OECD = report Measuring distance to targets, and other.

The ranking in the table below reflects neither an order of preference nor a quality assessment.

Table 1. Longlist matrix of 41 good policy practices

N°	Type	Country	Description	Sources	Comments
1	GOV	Brazil	Joint parliamentary front to support UN SDGs	VNR	
2	GOV	Czech Rep.	Mainstreaming SDGs into national policy (strategy for sustainable development)	VNR	
3	GOV	Denmark	Anchorage of 2030 agenda through institutional linking with annual budget (Ministry of Finance is SDG-coordinator)	VNR / Interview	Recommended
4	GOV	Ethiopia	Legally binding system to implement SDGs	VNR	
5	GOV	Finland	Strong political leadership + structured governance (with tasks assigned)	CC	
6	GOV	Netherlands	Internal advocacy: SDG-ambassador & SDG focal points for inter-ministerial cooperation	Interviews & docs	Leads available
7	GOV-DEC	Brazil	Guide for localizing SDGs to municipalities	VNR	
8	GOV-DEC	Germany	Strong leadership: Chancellor as chair of the SDG-committee + delegated competences to Länder/ local governments	VNR / ESDN / Interview	Recommended & leads available
9	GOV-DEC	Netherlands	Global goals campaign for municipalities	VNR / CC / UCLG	Well documented
10	GOV-DEC	Slovakia	Granting mechanisms (incentives) to the local levels	CC	
11	GOV-DEC	UK-Wales	Regional political leadership (for default of national leadership): act + policy anchorage	CC / Interview (2)	Recommended
12	GOV+M&E	Bangladesh	Annual performance agreement (& performance assessment tool)	VNR	
13	GOV+M&E	Czech Rep.	180 indicators (not all disaggregated): reformulation of SDGs in relevant and consistent thematic domains & 3-year progress reports	CC / Interview	Recommended
14	GOV+M&E	Denmark	Projected implementation through progress monitoring	Interview	
15	GOV+M&E	Germany	Time projection of envisaged progress; aligning National Strategy of SD with SDGs (showing under-addressed SDGs & assigning existing institutions & reviews)	VNR / ESDN / Interview	Recommended & leads available
16	GOV+M&E	Finland	Policy Coherence of Sustainable Development (PCSD)-mechanism introduced in 2030 agenda (incl. design of impact assessment)	CC	
17	GOV+M&E	Slovenia	Transparent & self-critical VNR; integration in existing institutions & ad hoc interdepartmental expert working	ESDN / Interview	

			group; reformulation of SDGs in relevant and consistent thematic domains		
18	M&E	European Commission	Translation of Plan Juncker into SDGs.	Interview	
19	M&E	Finland	Translation of SDGs in indicators & 4-year report & yearly stocktaking (account of government to parliament).	CC / Interview	
20	M&E	Switzerland	Results measurement method (combining quantified results & evidence of impact). The federal government MONET system of indicators (used to monitor sustainable development) is expanded to track progress towards the SDGs.	Interviews (2)	Recommended
21	PAR	Finland	Timely and representative involvement of CSO and stakeholders in all regions (incl. advice, strategy, VNR); societal support creation.	Interviews (2) / CC/doc Niestroy, Paving the way etc.	Recommended & well documented
22	PAR	Italy	Italian alliance for SD (stakeholder coalition to raise public support & awareness)	VNR	
23	PAR	Netherlands	Involvement of CSO & stakeholders by separate chapters in national report (before VNR, which was consensus doc)	Interview / SDG-charter	Leads available
24	PAR	Sweden	Swedish leadership initiative (stakeholder forum directed towards the private sector)	VNR	
25	PAR	Sweden	Instagram competition in Ljungby (directed towards citizens)	UCLG	
26	COM	Costa Rica	Attractive campaign & communication: user-friendly website, with emphasis on leave-no-one-behind & native minorities	Interview	
27	COM	Indonesia	'One data portal' (to avoid data fragmentation)	VNR	
28	COM	Kenya	Internal & external communication strategy: internal communication & advocacy through focal points in departments; social media platform to inform the public	VNR	
29	COM	Netherlands	Transparent & uniform presentation of statistics (referring to indicators)	Interview	
30	KNO	Brazil	Training course in the role of the Supreme Audit Institution (to verify progress of SDGs)	VNR	
31	KNO	Global Partnership for Education	& International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities: Remittances as funding source for Impact Bonds targeting education in LIC & MIC	brookings.edu (doc)	
32	KNO	OECD & partners	PCSD (Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development) Online learning and networking platform aimed at policy coherence, SDG-interconnectedness, progress tracking, addressing synergies, trade-offs and spillovers of domestic policies	oecd.org and other	

33	KNO	UNITAR	Executive leadership program in Evaluation of Sustainable Development Goals (4-week online course & residential workshop & follow-up coaching; for government staff & evaluators, \$ 6000 subscription fee; next starts 13.11.17)	Unitar.org	
34	KNO	ICC	Toolkit on how ICT can support countries and agencies to achieve SDGs (published by International Chamber of Commerce & freely downloadable)	iccwbo.be	
35	SDG	Germany	Focus on efforts to contribute to global well-being (the 'external' chapters of each SDG)	VNR / Interview	Recommended (relevant for BE) & leads available
36	SDG	Colombia	Holistic approach of SDGs, has pushed for inclusion of SDG16 on peace & security	Interviews (2)	Recommended
37	SDG	Rwanda	May draw lessons from its excellent achievements in implementing the MDGs Launched the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (learning & study center for African countries)	Interview	
38	SDG	Denmark	Good progress in domains in which Belgium is lagging behind, notably SDG7 (Energy), SDG13 (Climate), SDG 15 (Land & biodiversity)	OECD (+ Bert.)	
39	SDG	Netherlands	Good progress in domains in which Belgium is lagging behind, notably SDG12 (Sustainable production), SDG 15 (Land & biodiversity)	OECD	
40	SDG	Norway	Good progress in domains in which Belgium is lagging behind, notably SDG7 (Energy), SDG11 (sustainable cities), SDG12 (sustainable production), SDG13 (Climate), SDG 15 (Land & biodiversity)	OECD (+ Bert.)	
41	SDG	Sweden	Good progress in domains in which Belgium is lagging behind, notably SDG7 (Energy), SDG11 (sustainable cities), SDG13 (Climate)	OECD (+ Bert.)	

4. Selection of case studies

The longlist of 41 policy practices was used for the selection of six case studies to be treated in-depth. The cases are presented based on the topic rather than on the country. With this approach, it was possible to add information of a second country where this was relevant. Each time, one specific national case made out the central analysis, but elements from other practices were added where appropriate.

The criteria we used for proposing the six cases were the following:

- A good mix of cases relating to the topics institutional architecture and governance, stakeholder participation, integration of targets or actions and policy coherence, communication methods, monitoring and indicators and the progress made;
- learning potential for Belgian policy-makers: particular attention was given to examples that are known as challenges for Belgian policy-making² and to practices appearing in countries with which benchmarking is meaningful, such as neighbouring countries, countries with a federal state structure or countries with a comparable level of economic development;
- Strong tradition of a country/region in a SDG domain or aspect (governance, participation, ...);
- Success in solving/preventing a problem or overcoming a hurdle (with regard to a specific domain or aspect);
- Cases with good information and data availability;
- Cases recommended by neutral experts.

The proposal of the six cases was discussed with and confirmed by the follow-up committee of this study. Five additional potential cases were selected as a back-up, but they did not make it to the final list. The list of these back-up cases is added in Annex 3.

Based on these criteria as well as on the 41-case longlist, we selected six cases, which are explained below. Cases 2, 3, 4 and 6 are 'typical' topics when sustainable development governance is discussed, whereas, the cases 1 and 5 are less frequently debated. Therefore, those two cases are explained with more detail.

1. International Externalities or spillovers: lessons from Germany

Externalities or international spillover effects are *adverse sustainability impacts that are imposed by the actions or the development pattern of a country to another country*. The topic of international externalities came to the fore when the issue of *policy coherence for Sustainable Development* was explicitly added to the SDG subtargets, in target 17.14: "Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development". It is a reaction against the predominant practice of measuring the sustainability impact of a country on the basis of its production levels. Adding

² According to Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2017), Belgium has a favourable 'SDG Index', ranked at the 12th place out of 157 countries. However, low scores were registered for SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water) and 17 (partnership for the goals).

indicators based on consumption allows to account for the fact that developed countries' industrial production is increasingly taking place in less developed countries, along with the negative environmental and sustainability impact of industrial production. For example, electronics consumed in Belgium have a production chain that is almost entirely located abroad. By looking at consumption indicators, the size of international or global impacts can be estimated more accurately.

The importance of the global impact of domestic activities was also highlighted by the Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development (2017) in its opinion on the Voluntary National Review (paragraph 19).

2. Involving local authorities: Lessons from the Netherlands

This case explains how the local authorities are involved in the implementation of the SDGs, and how the interplay between the central and the local governments is organized.

3. Stakeholder participation: Lessons from Finland

Stakeholder (or major group) participation is an important topic in all discussions on SD. This case examines how old and new stakeholders are involved in the strategies, the policy practices and the implementation of Agenda 2030.

4. Indicators for Agenda 2030: Lessons from Switzerland

Indicators of sustainable development are another topic that has been part of the debates ever since SD gained traction. Indicators and monitoring for the SDGs are important, as they fulfil multiple objectives. First, they allow for evaluation of the policies implemented. Based on indicators, 'gap analysis' or other types of research provide knowledge on policy effectiveness. Second, they promote policy learning, both for 'impact indicators' (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions) and 'process or output indicators' (e.g. the number of meetings of a policy integration working group). And third, they support holding governments accountable for the performance and efficiency of their policies. In case of insufficient performance, reforms or even sanctions can be imposed.

In this case, we highlight the processes, methodologies and institutional background for the development and the use of Agenda 2030 indicators.

5. Domestication (mainstreaming): Lessons from the Czech Republic

Domestication or mainstreaming refers to the degree to which sustainable development and the SDGs permeate into the heart of policy-making. In this case we do not focus on governance-related policy practices, many of which are institutional in kind, e.g. the establishment of a council, the membership of certain actors in an advisory council or the draw-up of a sustainable development strategy. Instead, we focus on those policy practices that integrate sustainable development and Agenda 2030 into the 'hard' planning and budgeting processes. Examples include (1) requiring administrations to explicitly mention how they integrated the SDGs in their

formal annual planning cycle, and (2) taking away a part of the annual budget to ministries or administrations and earmarking them for projects contributing to the implementation of the SDGs.

6. Coordination in a federal country: Lessons from Germany

Belgium is a federal state, which implies that many government activities and practices are more complex than in countries with only one government responsible for designing 'national' policies. For this reason, many good practices will be very difficult to transfer to Belgium. This case focuses on the coordination of the SDG implementation in a federal state, with the aim of uncovering practices with a high transferability to Belgium.

The six case studies are summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Description of the six cases of policy practices

	Name	Description	Motivation
1	Externalities	Approaches to stimulate SDG-internal design & implementations with external repercussions (spillovers, trade & investments,...) Main case: Germany	(a) Germany (35) claimed to have an explicit policy with regard to 'externalities' (b) Externalities seen as a challenge for Belgium (45) (c) Additional good practice may be found in Switzerland (20), refined indicator system on externalities
2	Local involvement	Involvement & participation of municipal administrations and citizens. Translating, assigning & monitoring of Agenda 2030 to local levels Main case: Netherlands	(a) Netherlands (9) feature a recognized Global Goals campaign for Municipalities (b) Less systematic implementation in Belgium at municipal level, so learning from abroad is useful (46) (c) other examples: Czech Republic (13), Brazil (7), Sweden (25)
3	Civil society participation	Involvement and participation of CSOs & other stakeholders in the process (formulating concrete local targets, awareness initiatives) Main case: Finland	(a) Finland features a timely and representative involvement of CSO & other stakeholders in all regions (incl. strategy formulation); Finland was elaborating this process ('social contract') already before the SDGs. (b) Finland also sets good examples in governance (leadership), monitoring, accounting to parliament, ... (c) Other example: Netherlands (23)
4	Monitoring and indicators	Adapting existing monitoring system to measure progress and impact of SDGs Main case: Switzerland	(a) Switzerland (20) combined indicator development and refined measuring methods to measure progress and impact (b) Other cases: Finland (19), Germany (15)
5	Domestication	Bringing Agenda 2030 in line with domestically	(a) Czech Rep. (2, 13) has translated SDG goals into 97 domestically used indicators, adapted to sectors, regions and civil society

		<p>applied policies, planning and indicators</p> <p>Main case: Czech Republic</p>	<p>(b) May be compared with similar attempts in Belgium: FIDO (42: federal departments integrating SDG targets annually); Flanders (43: streamline SDGs with other sets of domestic sustainable goals)</p> <p>(c) Additional good practices to be found in Germany (15), Denmark (14), Slovenia (17)</p>
6	Federal/regional competence assignment	<p>Optimal/ suboptimal coordination & task assignment between federal government and sub-national authorities</p> <p>Main case: Germany</p>	<p>(a) Germany (8) has the chancellor as coordinator (indicating strong leadership) & simultaneously dispatches tasks to regional & lower authorities</p> <p>(b) Germany has a comparable structure like Belgium (federal & regional authorities)</p> <p>(c) Assigning competences to central/regional governments may be a challenge in Belgium (47)</p> <p>(d) Additional good practice in Wales, UK (11)</p>

Most case studies will elaborate a good example from abroad and check to which extent it meets the gaps, needs or existing practices in Belgium. The choice was made to deliberately select those cases which hold the most learning potential for Belgium. That means that some of the countries who have since long had a good track record in sustainable development (such as Norway and Sweden) are not among those selected: they do not need the SDG implementation all that much to reach the desired sustainability levels. On the other hand, we realize there is a dominance of European countries in our two lists, but potential learning effects would be more limited otherwise.

5. Case studies of policy practices

5.1 Case 1. International Externalities or spillovers: lessons from Germany

5.1.1 Case subject

This case focuses on the adverse sustainability impacts that are imposed by the actions or the development pattern of a country to another country. These impacts are also called 'externalities' or 'international spillovers'. A typical example is provided by the 'imported CO₂ emissions', which are the emissions that are embedded in the goods countries import.

5.1.2 Reason for selecting this case study

The recent report of the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2017) brought the existence of international spillovers under the attention, as an important factor in the SDG performance of countries. Germany stepped up as a leading country in taking spillovers seriously, by integrating explicit details on its initiatives regarding externalities in its 2016 VNR for each single SDG. Although Germany's scores on the nine spillover-related indicators are not straightforwardly positive, the explicit inclusion in the VNR is innovative and shows a commitment to improve.

5.1.3 Elaborate description

The phenomenon of international externalities is closely related to the concept of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD), which is based on the concept of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which has been in development debates for several years (O' Connor et al., 2016)³, and which was anchored in EU development policies through the [European Consensus on Development](#) (2006) and the [Lisbon Treaty](#) (2007).

In most recent reports and documents related to the SDGs and/ or sustainable development, Germany explicitly makes the distinction between the three levels:

1. Impacts in Germany;
2. Impacts on other countries and on global public goods (*spillovers* or *externalities*);
3. Supporting other countries

³ O'connor et al (2016) define PCSD as follows: "PCSD starts from the premise that an array of policies across sectors and dimensions of sustainable development will be needed to deliver the SDGs and that, given the integrated nature of the goals and interdependencies among targets, it will be important to examine interactions among different policies" (p.6)

Germany's engagements for this level 2 is laid out in detail for each individual SDG in the 2016 VNR. More specifically, it is referred to in the parts on the following topics:

- Our worldwide impacts from trade or climate policy;
- Fighting poverty and hunger;
- Protecting the global environment and climate;
- German entrepreneurial activities
- Respect for and realization of internationally accepted human rights standards (especially in global value and supply chains)
- Worldwide efforts to combat illegal financial flows and money laundering
- Promoting transparent and independent certification systems.

Germany's efforts related to spillover impacts are focused on three main fields. First, the realization of the global energy shift (Energiewende), away from fossil fuels. Second, on the impact of German entrepreneurial activities around the world, Germany is working on a national action plan on business and human rights in order to strengthen corporate social responsibility and foster respect for and realization of internationally accepted human rights responsibilities. And third, by contributing to more sustainable lifestyles and production methods worldwide. Sustainable public procurement is one example of turning this principle into action.

These fields may still seem superficial and non-committal. However, Germany provides several examples of concrete actions related to specific SDGs. Some examples:

1. SDG 3: Germany has developed a strategy called 'German Government's strategy entitled Shaping Global Health – Taking Joint Action – Embracing Responsibility. In addition, Germany initiated, jointly with the World Health Organization, The road map 'Healthy Systems – Healthy Lives'.
2. SDG 6: the German government is working on the development of a global, indicator-based monitoring system for water quality and water resources management
3. SDG 8: Germany has set up a working group involving the federal and federal states' governments and other stakeholders to devise a strategy to combat **human trafficking**. Furthermore, Germany is taking steps to establish the issue of **sustainability in global supply chains** more firmly on the global agenda, e.g. at EU level, in the OECD, in the ASEM process and during Germany's G20 presidency in 2017
4. SDG12: Germany has developed a [website](#) to raise awareness of sustainability labels and expand credible labelling schemes based on environmental and social standards. In addition, Germany initiated and participates to several global partnerships with businesses, trade unions, governments and civil society on promoting sustainable supply chains, e.g. the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa
5. SDG13: Germany has pledged to double its contributions to international climate finance by 2020, compared to 2014 levels.
6. SDG15: In 2013, the German Federal Government established a Forest Climate Fund, which supports measures aimed at maintaining and increasing the CO₂

reduction potential of forests and timber, and at forest adaptation to climate change.

5.1.4 Success factors and preconditions

The policy practice on lowering spillovers is especially important for developed countries with a high GDP and (mostly) high consumption and high imports. All the countries meeting these conditions can improve their impact on global goods by implementing actions and policies aimed at these externalities. Germany is a good example of a country that fulfills these conditions.

A precondition is the awareness and the acknowledgement of the existence of these adverse impacts. If there is no consensus within a government (1) that externalities pose a sustainability and ethical problem and (2) that the spillovers caused by the country are significant, then policies are likely to fail or remain stuck in declarations or shallow and marginal actions.

The fact that Germany has always been a frontrunner in terms of development cooperation increases the likelihood that real actions are possible, both on the administrative and on the political level.

The attention for spillover impacts can be expected to increase once several countries have embraced it in their VNRs. In this sense, Germany is likely to have paved the way for other countries in the future.

5.1.5 Causal link of the policy practice with the SDGs

The causal link with the Agenda 2030 is particularly high. In its VNR, Germany explicitly refers to Agenda 2030 to justify its focus on negative spillovers. The actions planned are presented per SDG. The conclusion is that Germany's focus on externalities would probably not have existed without the SDGs.

5.1.6 Immediate effects of the policy practice

The German focus on negative spillovers can catalyze the interest by other countries, who might make the same choice in the future. This is important, since spillover impacts will only disappear if a large number of (particularly developed) countries make a priority of it.

Each of the actions shown in paragraph 5.1.3 have different impacts. In most cases, the immediate impact is not so strong; many are governance instruments that may contribute to mitigating several existing externalities, but their impact is mainly indirect.

5.1.7 Relevance for Belgium

Germany and Belgium both face many remaining challenges judging on the nine indicators related to international spillovers that have been put forward by the Bertelsmann Stiftung report (2017), as is shown by the following table:

Table 1. Score for Belgium and Germany on the nine spillover-related indicators

	Belgium	Germany
Imported CO ₂ emissions, technology-adjusted	Small distance	No distance
Imported groundwater depletion	Large distance	Small distance
Imported biodiversity impacts	Very large distance	Very large distance
Net imported emissions of reactive nitrogen	Large distance	Large distance
Net imported SO ₂ emissions	Very large distance	Very large distance
International concessional public finance, including official development assistance	Large distance	Large distance
Tax Haven Score	Small distance	No distance
Financial Secrecy Score	Small distance	Very large distance
Transfers of major conventional weapons (exports)	Small distance	Very large distance

The colours represent the distance from the threshold for the SDG:



Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network (2017), country profiles

As a conclusion, the global environmental impact of Belgium’s import and consumption are a significant challenge, which shows the relevance for inclusion in sustainability policies.

5.1.8 Transferability

Although Belgium and Germany are two countries with a very different size and population, they are very comparable when it comes to economic production and consumption level and patterns, climate mitigation challenges, consumer attitudes, mobility practices, etc. Moreover, they are both federal countries, which increases their institutional and governance comparability.

One barrier for implementation in Belgium is that awareness at the level of both the public and policy actors regarding spillover impacts is limited. Up to now, the presence of import or consumption-based indicators in existing reporting efforts is scarce. In the VNR (2016), one indicator of the 34 took into account consumption, which is *domestic material consumption*. If Belgium would consider policies aimed at reducing international externalities, it would

simultaneously need to develop more indicators to monitor the results. Examples of such indicators can be found in table 1.

In a first phase, Belgium could start by analyzing the results for the nine indicators reported by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, and consider setting-up policies to improve a number of them. These indicators could be included in the second progress report of the Belgian NSDS, scheduled for the beginning of 2019, as was suggested by the policy expert on the workshop that was organized for this study (see section 2).

5.1.9 Importance

Implementing policy practices to tackle spillover impacts is not explicitly required by Agenda 2030. However, as Agenda 2013 is formulated a *universal* and *transformative* agenda, it is important that (rich) countries do not generate negative spillovers that may hinder the ability of poorer countries to achieve the SDGs (Bertelmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2017). Combating negative spillovers can thus be considered to enhance policy coherence. Moreover, this type of policy action can be considered to be *transformative*, which is the overall aim of the whole Agenda 2030.

5.1.10 Lessons from other countries: Switzerland

That the global impact of a country's activities is not new as an emphasis in sustainability policies, is proven by Switzerland. As soon as in 2008, Switzerland published a separate publication containing nine indicators on the global dimension of sustainable development. Based on those indicators, Switzerland concludes that it is "transferring pollution abroad and its energy consumption is heavily dependent on imports" (Federal Statistical Office of Switzerland, 2008).

5.2 Case 2. Involving local authorities: Lessons from the Netherlands

5.2.1 Case subject

Based on the subsidiarity principle and the Dutch tradition of approaching important issues in a participatory way, the Netherlands demonstrate to have an effective policy for involving municipalities in the implementation of the 2030 agenda. In this chapter, we go deeper into the challenges of such approach, the different policy aspects, and the results so far.

5.2.2 Reason for selecting this case study

Designing and implementing the Agenda 2030 is not just the national government's task. It requires the commitment, determination and creativity of all sections of the society, including

the different governmental layers, the private companies, the CSOs and the individual citizens. Because of its proximity with the citizen, municipal authorities deserve a particular attention as a simultaneously implementing, communicating and facilitating agency. Since the turn of the century, a trend of governmental decentralization took place in the Netherlands. When Agenda 2030 took form in the Netherlands, it was not in the first place through a comprehensive governmental plan, but through the e-portal SDG Gateway, holding a SDG Charter. One of the prominent actors underwriting this Charter was VNG (Association of Dutch Municipalities), emphatically promoting the Gemeenten4Global Goals campaign (Municipalities for Global Goals).

5.2.3 Elaborate description

Right from the outset, the Dutch government has decided that the implementation of Agenda 2030 would not take the shape of a governmental plan but rather a joint effort of all parts the Dutch society at large. Given the decentralized governance system in the Netherlands, the primary responsibility for this would be laid on the shoulders of the decentral governments, being the 388 municipalities, the provinces, and the water authorities.

The municipalities were facing the task of at the same time campaigning, facilitating and implementing the global goals at local level. The VNG-umbrella was to support the Dutch municipalities in this. VNG, realizing the enormity of the task, produced a guide with the different steps a municipality could follow to have their actors and populations shifting from principles through attitude changes to activities. VNG also regularly visits its members, bringing about tools, ideas and initiatives. One of the methods used is the 'time capsule', with the mayor and the city councilors to formulate wishes and prospects for 2030 regarding SDG-goals and targets. This often takes the form of a whole day-event (sometimes a festival), with schools, businesses, administration units and citizens dialoguing about which future they would prefer to see. As for the facilitation task, municipalities feel that through facilitating cross-sector collaboration⁴ they can stimulate the local civil society as well as the private sector to contribute to the goals. Municipalities are also advised to adjust their public procurement policy (especially for infrastructure works) to Agenda 2030 goals, such as climate adaptation, transition to clean energy and a circular economy.

Municipalities who formerly had profiled themselves as embracing the MDGs (about half of all Dutch municipalities did that) showed a significant advantage in terms of enthusiasm and initiatives - compared to the other ones⁵. This divide does not seem to correspond with urban/rural, or central/peripheral of large/small divides, but rather reflects the incidental or traditional dynamics of a location. Typical fallacies are seeing the SDGs as an aspect of development cooperation, or otherwise stating the importance of local rather than global development.

⁴ This appeared from a survey combined with group discussions among representatives of Dutch local governments, cfr. Spitz G., van Ewijk E. & R. Kamphof (2016), *Global goals, local action? Approaches of Dutch Local Governments to the Sustainable Development Goals*, Discussion Paper, Amsterdam: Kaleidos.

⁵ Cfr Spitz et al. (2016), p.9.

The decentralized governments, like the civil society, the private sector, the youngsters and the knowledge institutes were invited to take part in the consultations prior to the Dutch National Voluntary Review at the HLPM, and were allowed to write their proper chapter. While this was acknowledged to be an important symbolic gesture, it was regretted by the decentralized governments notably that the responsibilities shifted towards them were not accompanied by extra funds to carry out the tasks. This was seen as confirming an already existing perception that the decentralization process was just as much a unilateral cut in public expenditures from the side of the national government. Other than e.g. in Germany or Finland, the Agenda 2030 commitment at national level was located in the hands of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and not in the Prime Minister's Office. This gives local governments the somewhat mixed feeling that a common cause is not commonly taken up, and that initiatives of whichever sort are left to the disposition of local convictions, the local enthusiasm, or the pressure of the local electorate.

That said, many activities have sprung up, either to spark up inspiration and enthusiasm, or to get local actors in motion, especially in areas where global goals are meeting business opportunities. Some examples⁶:

- The Utrecht4GlobalGoals campaign gives awards to inspiring initiatives, such as the Syr organic restaurant ventures (run by Syrian refugees). Utrecht has set itself ambitious new targets such as increasing the number of solar panels from 4000 by 2015 to 15000 by 2020. Other than that, HeelUtrechtU is a digital platform that allows residents to share SDG-related achievements and allows them to request a grant for local initiatives online.
- Global Goals Oss is a platform that comprises 35 representatives of Oss-based organizations (churches, schools, NGOs, businesses) organizing a range of events including an annual 'world dinner', whereby fair trade products are promoted.
- Social Enterprise NL, the umbrella of Dutch social enterprises held a congress on social enterprises as business partner of municipalities in The Hague (September 2017), discussing procurement, recognition of social enterprises and stimulating local networks (SDG 17).
- In Amsterdam, the We Do 2030 Festival took place (November 2017), hosting a line-up of internationally renowned speakers (e.g. Koffi Annan) addressing Businesses and NGO to explore the inspiration SDGs offer for investments and future partnerships.
- The city of Eindhoven together with VNG organized a gathering for municipalities to share experiences with Global Goals (October 2017).

These initiatives coincide with a municipalities-driven movement called Code Oranje aimed at rethinking democracy, removing it from the national political parties and bringing it closer to the citizen.

The prime interest of the municipalities and their umbrella VNG is therefore situated with SDG 17 (partnerships), SDG 11 (sustainable cities) and SDG 16 (security and public services). The other SDGs, whether aimed at the social, economic, ecological or even international dimensions of Agenda 2030 are in the municipal scope as well though.

⁶ <https://gateway.sdgcharter.nl> has an updated list of relevant international, national (Dutch) as well as local initiatives (including events and publications).

5.2.4 Success factors and preconditions

As has been pointed at in the above sections, the Netherlands have gone through a phase of governmental and administrative decentralization, with significantly increased responsibilities as well as competences for the municipalities and the provinces. The idea of the SDGs as a society-wide exercise makes the Dutch municipalities as not only a good vantage point but also a jumping-off point to set things (and notably actors) in motion. The Netherlands also feature an old self-help tradition, whereby it is accepted and even encouraged that local authorities, civil society actors, private businesses and citizens do not wait for the national government to provide instructions, but take initiatives themselves for whichever challenges or problems may be coming up. A third factor is the Dutch tradition of concertation between (possible opposed) stakeholders – the so-called Poldermodel – to come to a practical agenda with which each party can live.

An additional factor is the track record of many municipalities with regard to profiling themselves as fair trade community or MDG city which had taken the form of proper ways of governing, stimulating citizens to take initiatives and establishing links with civil society and business partners (including overseas partners and twin cities). In this light, SDGs can be seen as a further step in a process of becoming sustainable communities in a sustainable world.

The challenge, as it was admitted in the Dutch SDG report to the parliament ('Nederland ontwikkelt duurzaam, mei 2017) will be the upscaling of initiatives, due to shortage of funds, incompatible regulations, market imperfections and vested interests. Preparedness to experiment, to take risks and to learn will be elementary for achieving those goals in which the Netherlands still fall short, such as gender equality, social equality and use of renewable energy. This is confirmed by a VNG publication (Spitz et al., 2016), stating the municipalities blame the national government for being absent (both as a coordinator and a link with the UN-processes), for not releasing the required resources for municipal governments to lead a proper policy, and for not raising public awareness of the subject by not communicating with the public at a national level. It is felt the municipalities who show a sincere commitment, should be rewarded one way or another for their efforts.

5.2.5 Causal link of the policy practice with the SDGs

The Dutch commitment to implement Agenda 2030 together with the decentralization has put the municipalities, together with non-governmental actors in the spotlight as the levels where the SDG-implementation is expected to take place. The extent to which this affects or alters municipal policies still remains to be seen (and may be different for different cities). It may also be jeopardized by the lack of both financial support by the central government and the absence of a common national plan (even when this would have to be carried out locally).

5.2.6 Immediate effects of the policy practice

The initiatives themselves could lead to a chain of replications or similar initiatives. But the effects aimed for and thought to be most relevant are public awareness and support for SDGs, and the genuine 'score' in achieving the goals and targets themselves.

In 2016, the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics (CBS) published a first report on the measurement of the SDGs in the Netherlands based on a set of known indicators. While the Netherlands achieved a good overall score, climate, energy and inequality were still described as matters for concern. But CBS had, conform to its vocation as a statistical specialist, more thorough reservations. First, the list of 230 'unique indicators' as elaborated by the Statistical Commission of the UN by March 2016 was considered not a definite list by the Statistical Commission itself. About a third of the indicators are not directly measurable. Second, CBS regrets that are often more input-oriented than outcome-oriented, and often fall short of indicating the effects 'later' (instead of now) and 'elsewhere' (besides 'at home'). Also, SDGs give an incomplete picture of sustainability at country level, because they do not make the trade-offs between economy, environment and society visible. Third, the default of a national strategy with regard to the 2030 Agenda makes that a number of SDGs are not yet translated into national ambitions, which implies that national indicators and a corresponding monitoring strategy are still to be developed⁷. The good overall core of the Netherlands on existing rankings (the OECD report of Boarini et al in 2016 and the Bertelsmann report of Sachs et al also in 2016) may therefore conceal the Dutch challenges regarding sustainability.

The Kaleidos survey on the opinions of the Dutch population on the SDGs (carried out in May 2017, cf. Boonstoppel 2017) revealed that 70% had not yet heard of the SDGs. Peace, security and climate were given more priority than for instance gender equality (which received a lower score than in 2015). The majority was not convinced of the interconnectedness of climate change and global poverty, nor did they see a link between behavior at home and poverty elsewhere.

Although it is too early to jump to conclusions, both studies mentioned indicate that leaving the SDG-campaigning to the municipalities and the local stakeholders may be insufficient to get the SDGs into the hearts and the minds of the population, and that a national strategy (for both implementation and campaigning) may be necessary to make a difference.

In 2016, the Telos institute carried out a survey among Dutch municipalities on their performance regarding the various aspects of sustainability. Compared to the same exercise in 2014, the trend seemed upward, particularly with regard to the environmental and economic dimensions. Small communes showed a better progress than larger cities, and scores of the industrial areas west of Rotterdam, already bad by 2014, still deteriorates. The value of this monitor however lies in the comparing scores of all municipalities on all aspects of sustainability, and a clustering exercise resulting in a provisional typology (distinguishing growing and shrinking

⁷ While in its national report ('Nederland ontwikkelt duurzaam', May 2017), the Netherlands stated it is in the process of integrating SDG implementation into regular policy cycle through measuring, consulting and reporting on SDG progress, the newly formed government (November 2017) had only a brief mentioning of the 2030 Agenda, i.e. under its international cooperation chapter.

communes; new and historical towns; residential versus working area; green and/or agrarian; service-oriented, old industrial or tourist communes). This typology allows municipalities to compare their performance with others in their cluster, which leads to a more acceptable way of 'judging'.

5.2.7 Relevance for Belgium

In federalized Belgium, 'coordination of municipalities' is a competence of the subnational regions, which induces an extra level between the global and the local level. The Flemish (VVSG), Walloon (UVCW) and Brussels (Brulocalis) umbrellas of municipalities are well aware of their role to inform and stimulate the municipalities to consider the 2030 Agenda as an important source to inspire their policy. However, from some recorded interactions (e.g. the minutes of the conference organized by VVSG in 2016 'Global goals, local focus') appeared a clear hesitation if not reluctance by many municipalities to start up SDG-related initiatives. The fact that neither a guidance, nor a budget has come from the regional governments to this end is resented, although some municipalities do show a genuine interest. On the Flemish level, currently VVSG is encouraging a number of municipalities and cities to integrate the SDGs in the 'policy and management cycle', which is an instrument of multiannual planning and reporting (and budgeting) of the local authorities, coordinated by the Flemish region. Some local governments, such as the city of Harelbeke, have already added the SDG focus to their strategic planning processes.

The Dutch experience shows that, however dynamic and enthusiastic some local initiatives may be, the subsidiarity principle cannot be reduced to 'leaving it to spontaneous bottom-up initiatives'. Assuming the municipalities are closest to the citizen does not discharge higher authorities (regional or national) from elaborating an overarching strategy which includes implementation cycles, processing indicators and monitoring frameworks, guidance and motivation of local governments and allocating appropriate budgets for suggested tasks. Local campaigning also should be backed up by national campaigning. Moreover, a local policy on Agenda 2030 will require local 'champions', definitions of what could count as successes, and just rewarding of successes achieved (e.g. recognition in the media or through public events, co-financing schemes, ...).

Belgium has not gone through the decentralization process as has happened in the Netherlands. Moreover, many Belgian municipalities struggle with limited budgets. As a result, massive involvement of the local level is not expected to happen soon through a top-down mechanisms, and bottom-up initiatives are totally depending on local engagement (and budgets). This makes that inspiration from abroad (the Netherlands, Sweden) could come in very useful.

5.2.8 Transferability

As explained above, local initiatives in other countries (e.g. the time capsule) could inspire local initiatives in Belgium. The Belgian policy pyramid between local, regional and national levels is so unique to Belgium, that chains of interactions as they happen in other countries cannot simply be copied. However the need for a national strategy including nationally translated indicators

and ways of monitoring seems to be a universal requirement for any country-based application of Agenda 2030. To include the local level, policy coherence both horizontally and vertically will have to be aimed at explicitly.

5.2.9 Importance

The UN roadmap for localization of SDGs spells out: ‘While the SDGs are global, their achievement will depend on our ability to make them a reality in our cities and regions.’ The local level cannot be possibly overlooked. The power of local governments is two-fold: (a) they can take into account the context, be it in terms of infrastructure, pollution, legacies from the past, population characteristics, housing, transport etc. (b) they are the closest governmental level from the viewpoint of the citizen. Either directly or via CSO and neighborhood committees they can communicate with the citizen. This provides the best options for changes in behavior and attitude to become transformative.

5.3 Case 3. Stakeholder participation: Lessons from Finland

5.3.1 Case subject

This case-study looks at the involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in Finland in the policy planning, implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030. The civil society and the private sector are focused on in particular.

5.3.2 Reason for selecting this case study

Finland was one of the frontrunners of turning sustainable development into national policies and effectively involving all stakeholders in such policy. As the 2030 Agenda came shortly after the Society’s Commitment Strategy with regard to the governmental sustainability objectives (summarized as ‘The Finland we want by 2020’), Finland could benefit from a set of reality-proven mechanisms to gain the engagement of the civil society, the knowledge workers and the private sector alike. Having learned from the past, the Finnish experience holds a number of interesting lessons to any country that aims to deploy its widest possible range of actors.

5.3.3 Description

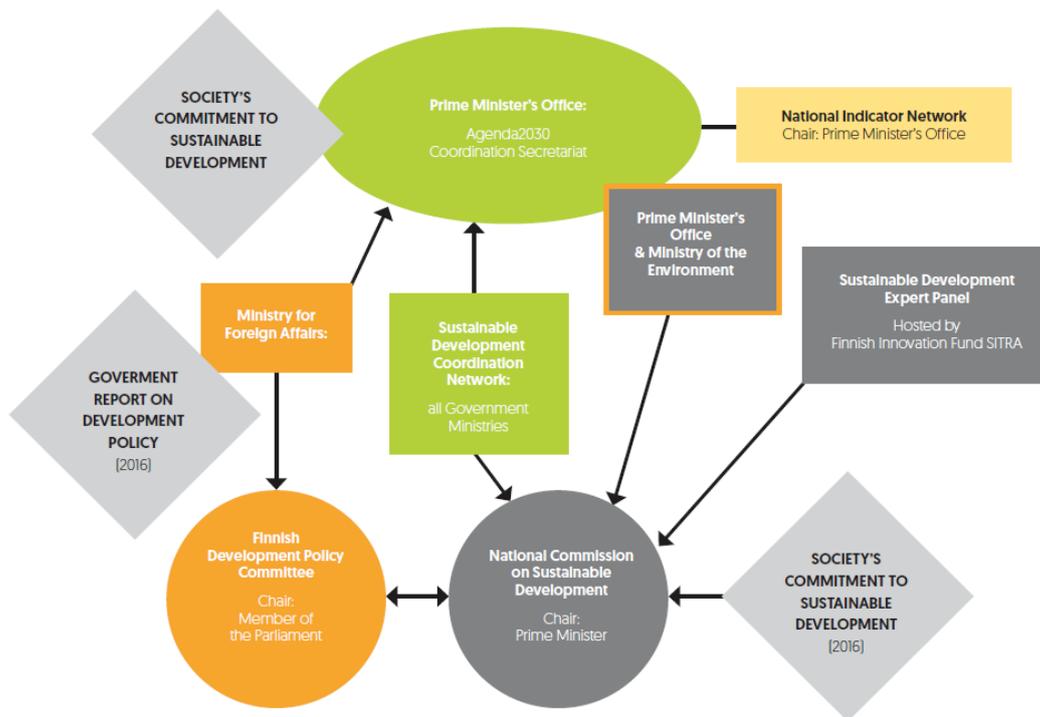
Finland has a long tradition in promoting sustainable development both in domestic policies and in international development cooperation. While under the direct leadership of the Prime Minister’s administration, two major multi-stakeholder committees support and promote all sustainable development policies. The *Development Policy Committee* is a parliamentary body whose mission is to follow the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda in

Finland from the development policy perspective and to monitor the implementation of the Government's development policy guidelines. The *National Commission on Sustainable Development* is a Prime Minister-led partnership forum that has operated in Finland for 23 years without interruption with the aim of integrating sustainable development into Finnish policies, measures and everyday practices. The membership of both committees includes a broad spectrum of non-governmental stakeholders, private sector actors, interest groups and civil society organizations.

By 2013, and after longish consultations within and by the National Commission on Sustainable Development, the Prime Minister proudly presented 'The Finland we want by 2050', a vision text targeting eight objectives: equal prospects for well-being, a participatory society for citizens, sustainable work, sustainable local communities, a carbon-neutral society, a resource-wise economy, lifestyles that respect the carrying capacity of nature, and decision-making that respects nature. This transition-oriented vision also includes a modus operandi through the Society's Commitment, a social innovation enabling the integration of sustainable development into everyday practices and the engagement of a broad spectrum of societal actors in joint efforts. The implementation mechanism takes the form of an ever-expanding list of companies, ministries, schools, municipalities, CSOs, churches and individuals who underwrite the Society's Commitment by launching their own operational commitments. By the end of 2015, 200 organizations had joined the Society's Commitment. By mid-summer 2017, the number had risen to over 750. In April 2016, the commitments were aligned with the 17 SDGs. The Prime Minister's Office presently serves as a "hub", connecting to multiple actors and networks in government and in the larger society.

Compared to the 'Finland we want in 2050', stakeholders feel that the 2030 Agenda is even broader, more ambitious and more suited for participatory processes. The institutional multistakeholder set-up was therefore kept and fed with the range of tasks needed for the implementation of the SDGs. This included a gap analysis and the processing of thematic baskets of indicators allowing effective monitoring of progress in the different domains.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA 2030 IN FINLAND
-KEY BODIES AND MECHANISMS**



Stakeholders like KEPA and Kehys⁸ (the Finnish CSO umbrella organizations), while appreciating the participatory approach, tend to be critical if these efforts do not sufficiently emerge in a national policy that takes into account the external effects of domestic activities. KEPA has also regretted the insufficient resources released by the government to monitor progress, a critique that has led to additional personnel allocations at the Prime Minister's office for these specific tasks. Further on, having the CSO umbrella organization and the Confederation of Finnish industry (EK) together in a stakeholder process at times brings conflicting interests to the surface. At the ground level, however, many partnerships between CSOs and Finnish companies have been finding common ground in such areas as child labour, supply chains and environmental awareness. Even when not always talking the same language, CSOs often help to inspire companies to see opportunities (branding, new markets,...) in the 2030 Agenda.

Some examples of this: *Honkajoki Oy* is a recycling facility returning animal-based slaughter by-products back in nature as fertilizers, animal feed and raw materials for energy consumption. This model has been inspired by CSOs promoting circular economy applications. *Plan International Finland* now uses and distributes solar media backpacks as portable media units in Ethiopia, with the technology for it was developed by Finnish industry. The company *Vaisala* has developed new weather observation systems to allow countries like Vietnam to cope with the negative consequences of climate change. (source: [FIBS website](#))

⁸ KEPA and Kehys will merge as of June 2018, <https://www.kepa.fi/english>

It would be fair to say that Finnish businesses are not just a stakeholder because of being 'pushed' by CSOs or the public opinion. Through several decades of having sustainable development in Finnish school education programs as well as in Finnish media, entrepreneurs and staff of Finnish companies are well aware of the importance of sustainability issues, and eager to show that they are the ones who can provide solutions.

Finally, this participation process has been well articulated with the parliamentary work for launching a national 2030 policy. After the initial consultations in the NCSO, the government has allowed the parliament to play its role as both forum (notably the Committee for the Future) and lawmaker. Parliamentary fractions are also represented in the NCSO, which ensures that parliamentary discussion and stakeholder participation do not come as two parallel processes but are very much part of one and the same concertation.

5.3.4 Success factors and preconditions

The key factors for the success in involving stakeholders in Finland's 2030 Agenda are multifold: a long history of considering sustainable development as a genuine policy domain; an equally long tradition of participation; a social contract; a preference for partnership; and an attitude of patience, informality and willingness to learn.

Finland has an Environment Ministry since 1983⁹. By 1993, Finland became the first country to form a National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSO), established in the first place to work on the Finnish commitments regarding the 1992 Rio Conference. From 2000 onwards, the NCSO started developing sustainability indicators meant for subsequent policy plans and continuous monitoring. A review cycle was set-up to correspond with the Europe 2020 Strategy and its mechanism for assessing progress (the European Semester). The NCSO operated as a multistakeholder body, chaired by the Prime Minister and including 45 institutional members, among which several ministries, parliamentarians from all political parties and a wide spectrum of representatives from Finnish civil society, business and industry, academia, trade unions, churches and scientific institutions. The council has quarterly plenary meetings, with several ad-hoc working groups having more frequent meetings. Apart from the official NCSO, an 'expert group' (composed by NCSO members) operates in parallel in a more informal brainstorming setting. One of the challenges the council was confronted with was the phenomenon of 'silo-strategies' by policy-makers. The NCSO, under the impulse of its members, has therefore pushed Finnish governments to promote sustainability from an aspect of policy domains to the overarching policy strategy in its own right. It was clear that sustainable development policy was to become a collaboration between the governments and all societal actors, with a shared vision, as well as common goals, targets and actions. This would eventually become 'Society's commitment' the dynamic to materialize the eight objectives of 'The Finland we want in 2050' (see above).

⁹ This section is based on: Niestroy I., Garcia Schmidt A. & A. Esche (2013), Finland: Paving the Way toward a Social Contract for Sustainability, in: Bertelsmann Stiftung, *Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future*, Bertelsmann Verlag.

This dynamic has been transcribed and expanded as the mechanism to anchor the 2030 Agenda in all layers and sectors of Finnish society. Bottom-up initiatives are encouraged, with partnerships and networks being the preferred mode, even if it takes time and holds the risk for the process to fall apart. Finns have cultivated the patience, incrementalism and diplomatic skills that the search for consensus requires, as well as the willingness to learn from failures in the past.

Much of the above characteristics sort under the denominators of ownership, binding character and reflexivity. However, policy coordination is also an element, both horizontally and vertically. The central position of the NCSD, the efficient secretariat of the Sustainable Development Coordination Network (inter-ministerial) in combination with members acting as ‘SDG champions’ in their administration or their organization has contributed to a solid and effective participatory process.

Because of this deeply rooted tradition of participation and the institutions created to accommodate it, Finland has been able to immediately design a proper Agenda 2030 policy without having to ‘reinvent the hot water’.

5.3.5 Causal link of the policy practice with the SDGs

As elaborated above, Finland already had an elaborate routine of participation of stakeholders, both governmental (ministries, municipalities) and non-governmental (CSOs, private sector, citizen initiatives) before the establishment of Agenda 2030. In 2013, this social capital valorization culminated in Society’s Commitment for the implementation of the vision text ‘The Finland we want in 2050’. The participation for the implementation of Agenda 2030 could bank on this institutionalization and continue with the same involvement. It was, however, quickly apparent that Agenda 2030 had a stronger appeal for the private sector, as Agenda 2030 not only covers a wider range of challenges (incl. economic growth, employment and scientific and technological innovations) but also tends to enlarge the social responsibility of companies to the external effects of their activities. While this may be a genuine feature of Agenda 2030 worldwide, it takes a profound analysis followed by a serious commitment to put this aspect of Agenda 2030 into practice. In Finland, at least the first steps in that direction are taken.

5.3.6 Immediate effects of the policy practice

The most positive effects were the processing of indicators for Finland, the provision of personnel for systematic monitoring, and the linking of SDGs implementation with the national budget. The latter was the consequence of CSOs advocating within the parliamentary Committee for the Future, which resulted in the currently ongoing elaboration by the Finance Ministry of a system that links the SDGs with the annual budget. The task of elaborating national indicators was assigned to expert groups composed by stakeholders (umbrella organizations) and selected experts. And since annual monitoring was assigned to personnel recruited especially for this purpose in the Prime Minister’s office, this task is likely not to wane in the future.

Another early achievement is that, in spite of different viewpoints and organizational cultures, the civil society and the private sector are gradually finding each other, both at representation level and on the ground in establishing concrete partnerships. This is as much the merit of Society's Commitment as it is of the participation in Agenda 2030, as both are making a continuum in the Finnish sustainable development policy.

A consequence of having the umbrella organization of development NGOs in the consultation group is that there will be a particular attention for the international effects of domestic policies. This is an aspect often overlooked if the debate is left to national policymakers (parliament and government), as there is no natural representation of the global south among the electorate.

Finally, the stakeholder communication about the 2030 Agenda in public forums may have contributed significantly to the figure of 73% of the Finnish population 'having heard of' the existence of SDGs (compared to 36% of EU population, source Special Eurobarometer 441, December 2015).

5.3.7 Relevance for Belgium

While being quite established in the domains of social-economic policy (with the social partners), stakeholder participation in sustainability policy is not as common in Belgium as it is in the Nordic countries. Moreover, participation takes place in a different way in the different Belgian regions and communities, with the Walloon region opting for stakeholders consultation progressing at a slow pace, while Flanders preferred to have an indicator system first before having stakeholders involved.

The Finnish case shows that a thorough societal involvement goes hand in hand with a firm central guidance, preferably in the hands of the political leadership of the country. The absence of such leadership (e.g. in the Netherlands) may hold the risk that societal involvement, even after a promising start, may be missing a focal point and gradually run out of steam.

5.3.8 Transferability

Transferring the Finnish experience to the Belgian context would possibly collide with the Belgian federal state structure, in which the regions and the communities hold important competences. Therefore, some of the enabling conditions rather than the current process itself could be considered a field in which lessons could be taken. Three conditions are standing out to this respect: the longish Finnish tradition of embracing sustainability as a central policy matter, the future projection ('2015') emerging in the Society's Commitment charter, and the routinized and widely accepted position of the NCS as the forum for stakeholder consultation, dialogue and policy guidance. While a longish tradition cannot be made up overnight, a broad projection-and-commitment exercise could certainly be considered, as well as an empowered advisory body on sustainability matters within the national political leadership. Finland showed that it's only through the Prime Minister's Office leading the coordination of the 2030

implementation, that all governmental offices and all stakeholders could be brought to participate and co-own the SDGs¹⁰.

A barrier for more stakeholder participation is the limited institutional capacity of many civil society organizations. For the smaller organizations, it is often not feasible to follow all the policy processes, let alone participate to them. And while the larger business and civil society organizations do have the capacity (sometimes supported by the government) to add their voice to the policy discussions and advisory councils, even for them involvement often stays limited to one person following all the SD-related processes. Involvement of a larger group of experts inside those organization would mean an enrichment, but is often a challenge due to full agendas and other priorities.¹¹

5.3.9 Importance

Sustainability is not something that can be implemented by decree. It takes a lengthy period of education, adaptation and habituation in all layers or sectors of society. The collaboration and proper role of stakeholders able to reach the economic actors as well as the population at large seems indispensable to this end. Sustainability finally needs to result in a changed attitude, behaviour and conviction for all members of society. A firm and thorough degree of stakeholder involvement will therefore, more than any legal or political decision, generate significant transformative power.

5.4 Case 4. Indicators for Agenda 2030: Lessons from Switzerland

5.4.1 Case subject: short description

After the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, Switzerland developed an effective intergovernmental monitoring and review framework to make it possible to review progress and to exchange experiences on how to implement the SDGs. A third interim report on the strategy's implementation status was published in at the end of 2013. The Swiss Sustainable Development Strategy 2016-19 sets out the Federal Council's policy priorities for sustainable development in the medium to long term. A new brief guide on 17 key indicators to measure progress towards sustainable development was published in March 2015. Switzerland started its first implementation activities immediately after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. On 18 December 2015, the Federal Council decided on the initial steps to take and launched an inter-ministerial process to this effect within the Federal Administration (FDFA et al. 2016).

A similar monitoring approach with 21 key indicators for sustainable development was developed in Germany. Their relevance for political action is expressed in terms of allowing to

¹⁰ The Finnish example was also mentioned in O'Connor et al. (2016).

¹¹ Source: workshop.

achieve a consensus among actors in government and civil society about the path to be taken and the measures this will entail (Federal Chancellery, Germany, 2017).

5.4.2 Reason for selecting this case study

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) published the report ‘Indicators and a Monitoring framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs’ (SDSN, 2015). The 10 criteria the report proposes for robust indicators for SDGs are:

1. Limited number and differentiated by reporting level;
2. Clear, with straightforward policy implications;
3. Allow for high frequency reporting;
4. Consensus based, in line with international standards and reporting system-based information;
5. Constructed from well-established data sources;
6. Disaggregated;
7. Universal;
8. Mainly outcome focused;
9. Science-based and forward-looking; and
10. A proxy for broader issues or conditions.

Switzerland adapted the existing federal government MONET system of indicators (used to monitor sustainable development) to measure progress and impacts of SDGs, combining quantified results & evidence of impact.

5.4.3 Elaborate description of the ‘good policy practice’

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda in and by Switzerland is based on existing instruments and strategies, including the Swiss sustainable development monitoring system (MONET), in place since 2003. Federal offices are required to include sustainable development in their own periodic reports on items of business or areas covered by their sectoral policies. MONET is *an evolving system*, in which indicators are revised as new focal points and framework conditions for sustainable development emerge. In May 2016, the system’s reference framework was amended in order to be ready to take into account the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Of the 73 regularly updated indicators published on the website by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), a selection of 36 is used for monitoring progress of the implementation of the SDGs 2016–2019, thus laying the foundation for both national and international reporting (FDFA, 2016).

In annex 4, a table is presented with the MONET indicators system in more detail.

5.4.4 Success factors and preconditions

Switzerland’s guidelines state that responsibility for the future means promoting the principles of prevention, “producer pays” and liability as the essential framework for sustainable, long-

term economic, environmental and social action *at all levels*. In early 2016, the federal government embarked on an *interdepartmental process* to implement the 2030 Agenda. The work is being *coordinated by the National 2030 Agenda Working Group*. The Working Group is led jointly by the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). It is made up of representatives from the Federal Offices for the Environment (FOEN), Health (FOPH) and Agriculture (FOA), the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), the FDFA Directorate of Political Affairs (Sectoral Foreign Policies Division) and the Federal Chancellery. (OECD, 2016)

5.4.5 Causal link of the policy practice with the SDGs

Switzerland's adaptable existing monitoring instruments and strategies, allowing an evolving system, would have existed without the SDGs.

The system allows the country to position itself in the Agenda 2030 implementation, indicators are revised as new focal points and framework conditions for sustainable development emerge.

5.4.6 Immediate effects of the policy practice

The MONET system improves policy coherence (interconnectedness of SDG-policies). It is a flexible system, coordinated by a federal working group, and involving the federal agencies as well as their cantonal level. So far, no evidence was found on a direct link with policy actions (will be further investigated in the interview).

Statistical offices cannot afford to make too many assumptions about the relations between indicators or between indicators and other variables. The models they use need to rely on a broad scientific consensus regarding their validity and reliability. The MONET typology is used by Eurostat as an example of how to structure the SDG indicator sets or systems in European countries (Eurostat, 2014). The visualization through a dashboard is to be interpreted as the *direction of the progress*, rather than as a state. It is based on a conceptual framework with a frame of reference, a systemic structure, on selection criteria and on participative indicator selection methods. The evaluation of each indicator is communicated by traffic light symbols (green/positive: moving towards sustainability, red/negative: moving away from sustainability, yellow/neutral: irregular or no significant change). This *straightforward visualization* is based on *detailed information* does helping to overcome the gap between skepticism towards composite indicators and the growing need for summarized answers to complex questions (Wachtl et al. 2011).

Germany uses 21 key indicators for sustainable development. The German government reports, at two-year intervals, on the progress towards sustainable development and where further action is needed. The *number of key indicators was deliberately kept low* in order to provide a rapid overview of major developments. To gain a comprehensive picture it is important to see the indicators not in isolation, but as part of an overall system (Federal Chancellery, Germany).

5.4.7 Relevance for Belgium

Switzerland is a federal country, an example for Belgium, demonstrating how a shared monitoring approach can - through clear agreements among agencies and government levels - enhance policy coherence in various policy levels and domains towards implementation of the SDGs.

5.4.8 Transferability

The multistakeholder setting of MONET system helps to reach the following objectives:

- To strengthen *institutional cooperation* on sustainable development by means of a specialized sustainability office and delegates at cantonal level.
- Setting up a *support group* consisting of academia, business and civil society representatives—for clarifying the procedures and for coordination—for effective cooperation with non-state actors.
- A *consultative review* the “2030 Dialogue on Sustainable Development” linked to the Confederation’s sustainable development policy cycle of planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

A similar approach in Belgium could stimulate more structural collaboration to improve consistency among different policy areas and local, regional and national levels. Belgium has, scattered among different statistical offices, the same data and statistics. The recently established Interfederal Institute of Statistics, based on a partnership involving the regions, the communities and the federal government, is the logical actor to integrate these resources, and to implement a common monitoring system. On the other hand, as with other cases, one should not expect that a holistic and coherent SDG indicator system will be available for Belgium in no-time. The Swiss experience is based on more than 20 years of making progress on indicators in the federal system. Path-dependency plays a role, and progress should be pursued one step at a time. Ideally, the Interfederal Institute of Statistics should select the SDG indicators independently from political influence and based on scientific and policy knowledge, and with room for a dialogue with civil society for determining the priorities and selecting the indicators. Up to now, Belgium statistical offices have no tradition of involving stakeholders in their work.

5.4.9 Importance

Each policy field and governance level has its own information silo, reflecting their silos of action. The SDG agreements are made through intergovernmental negotiations and require development efforts that go beyond this limit (Stevens et.al., 2016). In line with this, monitoring and policy evaluation requires communication between the information silos. The key is not to change systems that perform well by attempting new data collection methods, but to identify a common level of indicators, allowing to communicate among statistics. The MONET model allows to identify this common level in terms of SDG implementations assessment. A derived contribution of implementing the MONET system in Belgium, would be to provide an incentive for collaboration among policies.

5.5 Case 5. Domestication (mainstreaming): Lessons from the Czech Republic

5.5.1 Case subject

The Czech Republic has translated the SDG goals into 97 domestically used indicators, adapted for sectors, regions and civil society. This can be compared with similar attempts in Belgium: FIDO (42: federal departments integrating SDG targets annually); Flanders (43: streamline SDGs with other sets of domestic sustainable goals). The Czech Methodology of the Local Sustainability Evaluation made by experts for the working group Local Agenda 21 (WG LA21) in 2010 was tested in four cities during 2011. The national Conception of LA21 Support including the action Plan 2012 – 2013 was finalized in the middle of 2011 and was submitted by the government in January 2012 (SD Network 2017).

5.5.2 Reason for selecting

Based on the 128 available indicators allowing coverage of 95 of the 169 SDG targets, the Czech Republic has currently achieved 15 of the 95 targets. Relative to the OECD average, the Czech Republic outperforms on goals such as biodiversity and poverty, and is either ahead of, or fairly close to, the OECD average distance on several other goals. The main exceptions to this are gender equality and energy, and to a lesser extent food, health, climate and the means of implementation, where performance is below the OECD average (OECD, 2016).

Within the four countries from the Eastern European Group that have volunteered for the 2017 VNRs, the Czech Republic reports in its main messages that it has adopted *Czech Republic 2030*, which will serve as the main implementation platform for the SDGs in the country. The document sets 97 specific goals aimed at improving people's well-being, while respecting sustainable development principles, and will serve as an overarching framework for sectoral, regional and local strategies.

On accountability, the Czech Republic states that compliance of sectoral and regional strategic documents, programmes and measures with Czech Republic 2030 and progress on national goals will be monitored by a biannual analytical report on quality of life and its sustainability, prepared by the GCSD. In addition, Czech Republic 2030 will be supported by a voluntary commitments framework, to allow civil society, private sector and other actors and individuals to participate in implementation and encourage partnerships.

Because the governance structure of the Czech Republic was fragmented, an adapted strategy was developed. In the Czech Republic, the territorial public administration is carried out by a

large number of municipalities, almost 6,250 municipalities to date. Only 600 of them are towns but they often have fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. Therefore, the basic structure now consists of 225 municipalities in delegated powers – the so called “small districts” (municipalities exercising extended powers). Besides all the ministries, the work on the framework involved over 300 institutions and organisations (Czech Republic, 2017: 3).

5.5.3 Elaborate description

The Governmental Council for Sustainable Development (GCSO) is responsible for coordinating SD policy-making among the central administrative authorities on an inter-departmental basis. Representatives from the Parliament, all ministries, NGOs, municipalities, industry, agriculture, trade unions, research, academic society and other stakeholders are members of the 9 Committees of the Council and many working groups. The GCSO serves as the main body for inter-departmental coordination of:

- the relevant policies among central administrative authorities;
- development of the strategic framework ‘Czech Republic 2030’ and its reviews;
- the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation;
- biannual reporting on the implementation of the sustainable development strategy in the Czech Republic and monitoring of indicators;
- methodological coordination of conceptual documents. (GCSO, 2017)

The Czech Republic 2030 defines long-term objectives not only in social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development, but also in governance, global development and regions and municipalities. The sustainable development agenda is coordinated at the national level by the Government Council on Sustainable Development (GCSO), chaired by the Prime Minister (Figure 1). In the National Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Regions and Municipalities are a separate key area bringing a sub-national perspective to the implementation of the SDGs and provides a framework for mainstreaming sustainable development to regional and local policies. This key area touches upon all of the categories of the 2030 Agenda. The preparation of the 2030 Agenda involved discussion in both chambers of Parliament. (Czech Republic, 2017: 6, 14)

The Czech Republic seeks to make its territory polycentric and achieve the cohesive development of big cities and regions at all levels. The objective is to complete a reform of regional administration by 2030. Strengthened coordination among public institutions is envisaged to lead to more coherent and coordinated policies while respecting the principle of subsidiarity at different levels of governance, including local government, with an emphasis on the accessibility and efficiency of public administration. Economic, social and environmental links between cities, sub-urban and rural areas will be also intensified. The state will provide methodological and coordination support to regions and municipalities in order to set minimum standards for public services and ensure the exchange of information and good practices. In order to successfully reduce disparities among the large number of administrative units and fulfil the development potential of isolated and structurally disadvantaged regions, the capacity of regional institutions to provide services and engage citizens in local decision-making has to be further strengthened (Czech Republic, 2017: 25-28).

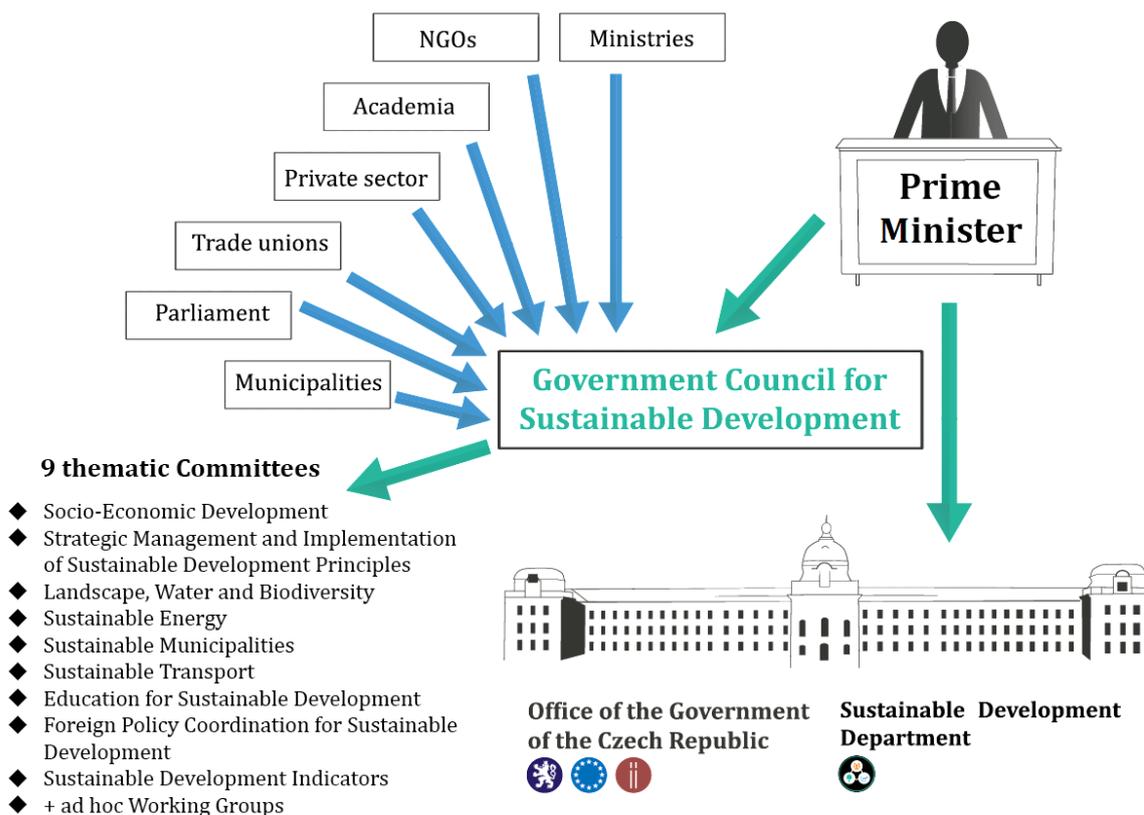


Figure 1. Institutional structure for sustainable development in the Czech Republic (Czech Republic, 2017: 7)

European and national grant aid are channelled, e.g. in order to support ecosystem services and achieve adequate food security. An example of such realisation is the participation to the WHO Healthy Cities project, through the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (HCCZ). HCCZ is an interest association of legal entities, founded according to an article of the Civil Code (Article 20f of Act No. 40/1964). The association’s mission is to connect municipalities in order to cooperate in systematic support of health and quality of life and active application of sustainable development on the local, regional and international levels. Any municipality, association of municipalities and other legal entity of non-municipal nature can become a member. HCCZ has 130 members, with regional influence on 2152 municipalities with 5,423 million inhabitants (52% of the population of the Czech Republic). Examples of strengths and weaknesses (i.e. targets where progress has not been satisfactory) are showcased in each key area in order to provide a balanced and a deeper view into the current state of implementation of selected SDGs. Furthermore, work towards achieving the goals of Czech Republic 2030 will also be supported by the framework of voluntary commitments, which will allow civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders and individuals to participate in the implementation process and encourage partnerships between various sectors of society. Public institutions will continue to promote the principles of sustainable development and raise awareness about the SDGs. The main tool for tracking the compatibility of the goals at different levels is 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. The database can serve as a tool to create new documents and to monitor connections between strategic goals (Healthy Cities, 2017).

Since 2011, the Regulatory Impact Assessment and other sectoral assessments have been a formal part of the legislative process at the government level and the inclusivity, efficiency and accountability of governance has been supported by many other acts and cross-sectoral strategies.

The compliance of sectoral and regional strategic documents, programmes and measures with Czech Republic 2030 and progress towards national goals will be monitored by the biannual analytical Report on Quality of Life and its sustainability, prepared by the Sustainable Development Department. The GCSD Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and serves as the main forum providing consultation and building new partnerships among the various stakeholders in the field of sustainable development. One of the main tasks of the Council will be to follow up and review the national implementation of the new strategic framework and 2030 Agenda and encourage society's commitment to sustainable development. The work of the Council is supported by its Secretariat based in the Sustainable Development Department at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The institutional location of the Secretariat allows the horizontal integration, cross-sectoral coordination and mainstreaming of all three pillars of sustainable development into national policy-making.

The Czech Republic 2030 includes recommendations for policies, strategic documents, concepts, programmes and measures based on the compliance assessment results. The relevant stakeholders from the non-governmental and private sector which are not represented in the GCSD will be invited to elaborate on the “shadow report” in order to provide an alternative analysis.

5.5.4 Success factors and pre-conditions

The Civil Service Act no. 234/2014 Coll. was adopted at the end of 2014 and entered into force on January 1, 2015, providing terms of reference for an anti-corruption reform and for independency of civil service from political pressure. There is a strong emphasis on structural reforms of economic institutions, management of resources, infrastructure, public finance and the approach to research and innovation. The Czech Republic has been criticised for some gaps in management efficiency of public finance and the fiscal system. The fiscal responsibility law that was adopted by Parliament in January 2017 aims to address the main shortcomings of the Czech fiscal framework, since it was evaluated as one of the weakest in the EU. In addition of fiscal responsibility acts, a new Act on public procurement was adopted in 2016. Nevertheless, some other challenges, e.g. poor coordination of investment projects across sectors, still remain (Czech Republic, 2017: 21).

5.5.5 Causal link

The local level is very active on SD issues: LA 21 initiatives and local SD strategies are currently at the core of NSDS implementation. The Government Council for SD cooperates with the Association of Regions and the Union of Towns and Municipalities in the Council 'Working Group for LA 21' (WG LA 21). This working group involves various stakeholders and is very active in developing bottom-up strategies based on local situation and activities. On the basis of the work of the Healthy Cities (initiative under the auspices of the World Health Organisation and coming out from the LA 21 Rio summit concept), the working group developed 'Criteria for LA 21' which were adopted in 2006. These criteria include a system of indicators for benchmarking local SD processes and activities. In October 2008, WG LA 21 presented its plan to start 'LA 21 Strategy in the Czech Republic'. Methods and Indicators of Local Sustainability were prepared for the evaluation of the best municipalities (ESDN, 2017).

Healthy Cities, Towns and Regions provide a good example of what it means in practice to implement good governance, strategic planning and management with active public involvement and with regard to sustainable development, health and quality of life. Although the organizational base of this program is a local authority, it is more than an "administration". It is primarily a community-based project – it provides scope for empowering local residents and enhances their interest in public affairs. Several municipalities in the Czech Republic joined the HCCZ project after it was launched by the WHO in 1988, so the practice existed prior to the Agenda 2030. The Agenda 2030 stimulated participation. HCCZ is presently the only association of Czech municipalities that stipulates in its statutes to consistently work towards sustainable development, health, and the quality of life in cities, municipalities and regions of the Czech Republic (Healthy Cities, 2017).

5.5.6 Immediate effects

Based on the 128 available indicators allowing coverage of 95 of the 169 SDG targets, the Czech Republic has currently achieved 15 of the 95 SDG targets. The remaining distance to achieve the targets are small in several areas. However, a number of important data gaps need to be addressed to enable a more complete assessment (OECD, 2017). Some challenges remain. Where targets are not achieved, such as in gender equality, emphasis is placed on policy efficiency from the point of view of both the public administration and of the citizens (beneficiaries). To strengthen democracy, greater representation of women in decision-making positions is promoted. (Czech Republic, 2017: 18, 32). However, today, only the Social Democrats (CSSD) have voluntary quota provisions, stipulating that (only) 25 percent of those elected by the party must be women (IDEA, 2018).

The commitment of the local level has improved. HCCZ has 130 members, with regional influence on 2152 municipalities with 5,423 million inhabitants (52% of the population of the Czech Republic). HCCZ offers recommendations, tailor-made consultations and assistance to the members. For community participation, direct cooperation and assistance is offered for methodologies including: roundtables, public or school fora, participatory budgeting, community projects and community development plans (Healthy Cities, 2017).

In order to raise awareness about the SDGs and award national projects which contribute to their implementation, a contest entitled The Czech SDG Awards was organized in 2017 by a consortium of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Office of the Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Czech Development Agency, the Association for Social Responsibility (A-CSR) and the United Nations Information Center. In total 215 projects applied and entered the competition in 2017 (Czech Republic, 2017: 36).

5.5.7 Relevance

The HCCZ approach is an inspiring example of streamlining effects that can be achieved by stimulating, informing and supporting the local level. Good practise examples are shared among municipalities within the country, which improves transferability. The link with international level initiatives is at the national level.

5.5.8 Transferability

The mandate of the Czech Government Council for Sustainable Development, as the coordinator of both government and participatory actions, could inspire the Belgian federal governance system. Its takes the lead in developing a collaborative network and the tools it uses (recommendations, consultations, policy assessment instruments ...) to stimulate local governments, are already well mainstreamed in the FCSD's activities.

5.5.9 Importance

The HCCZ approach is mostly relevant for medium and small cities, who don't have the capacity to make use of existing international support instruments.

5.5.10 Lessons from other countries

One way of mainstreaming SDGs into general policy-making, is by integrating them structurally in the leading strategic decision-making cycles, documents and processes, such as coalition agreements, policy statements, ministerial policy letters and formal planning and budgeting processes. The initiative of the Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) to guide 20 pilot municipalities in integrating the SDGs in the formal Management and Policy Cycle (BBC) is a very commendable experiment (VVSG, 2016). If this experiment is successful and then upscaled to all municipalities, it could give a boost to the SDG implementation on the level of local authorities. Additionally, VVSG has training programmes to newly elected local politicians. Using this training tool to enhance young council members' knowledge and awareness of the SDGs, could give an additional boost to local take-up of the SDGs. On the expert workshop (see section 2), prof. Brans labelled these examples as 'closing policy cycles' and 'going beyond discourse'. She added another instrument that could be used to promote the SDG

implementation, on all policy levels, is *performance-based budgeting*, on the condition that sustainability (or the SDGs) are formulated as a performance target.

5.6 Case 6. Coordination in a federal country: Lessons from Germany

5.6.1 Case subject

In most countries, vertical integration on the national level is limited to the interaction between the national government and the local authorities, who can often be divided into municipalities and provinces (or similar government levels). However, not all countries are centrally planned. Federal countries tend to have an additional government level to include in the coordination. In Belgium, these are the three regions and the three communities. Germany is also a federal country, whose 'Länder' can be compared to the Belgian subnational regions. This case study examines how Germany organises its sustainable development governance, and how the interaction between the federal and the regional governments is organised.

5.6.2 Reason for selecting this case study

Although policy competences are not assigned in the same way in Germany and Belgium, many governance instruments can be labelled as 'soft policies'. Coordination, communication, interdepartmental collaboration, stakeholder participation and setting-up monitoring systems are examples of such instruments. Most of these instruments can be implemented at all policy levels in a country regardless of the exact regulatory power division.

Next to being a federal country, Germany is also a neighbouring country of Belgium, with a similar level of economic development. Moreover, Germany is considered to be a frontrunner when it comes to sustainability governance, which was already illustrated in case 1. Finally, as a large country (population of 82 million), it has larger institutional capacities than smaller countries.

5.6.3 Elaborate description

In Germany, the federal Chancellery is the main responsible for both the coordination of the SDG implementation and the relations between the federation and the Länder. This choice increases policy coherence and the chances of having a good collaboration between the different government levels. In figure 1, the German governance model is presented in a flowchart.

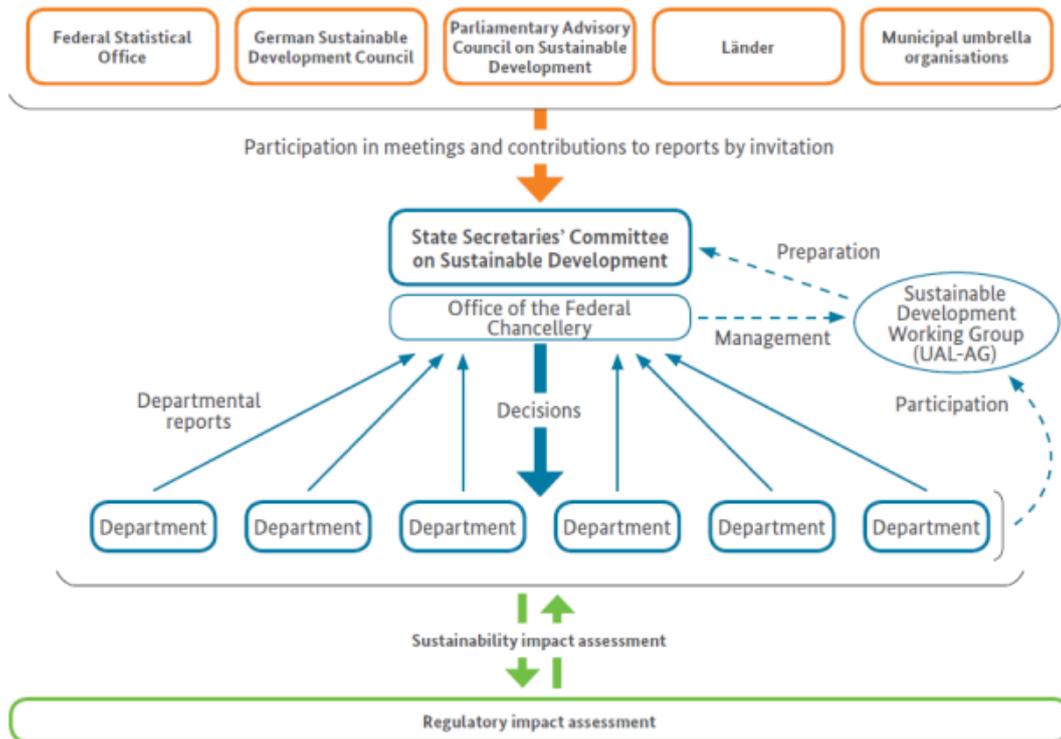


Figure the German governance model

Source: Scholz et al., 2016

At the end of 2016, the new German Sustainable development Strategy was adopted. During the process, four public conferences were organized to discuss the content of the strategy. After that, four Regional Dialogue Conferences (in the South, North, West, Eastern parts of Germany) were organized. Both Länder governments and local authorities actively participated to these conferences, and the Länder have (again) made their own contributions to the strategy (Scholz et al., 2016).

According to the new National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD), the federal government has proposed to establish a new concertation platform on a higher level, namely the 'Federal-Länder Association for Sustainable Development' as part of the Conference of the Heads of the State and Senate Chancelleries of the Länder (CdS) and the Federal Chancellery Federal Government (2016a). In addition, the federal government claimed that it will argue for an annual consultation regarding sustainable development between the Federal Government and the Länder in talks between the Head of the Federal Chancellery and the CdS of the Länder.

The federal government is making efforts to (1) persuade the remaining Länder to also draw up their own SSD and (2) to increase coordination, aiming to persuade all the Länder to align their strategies more with the national strategy. At the same time, it acknowledges the right of the regions to set their own priorities in line with the power divisions in the German federal state. Eleven of the 16 German Länder already have their own SDS or are in the process of developing one (Federal Government, 2016b).

Germany has a 'Federal-Länder Experience Pool', co-chaired by the Federal Chancellery and one regional government (Land). It is a cooperation platform specifically on sustainable development. In 2015/2016, the main topic on the agenda was the international negotiations on Agenda 2030 and its national implementation.

The Sustainable Development Council (RNE) has also announced an initiative to strengthen the collaboration between the federal government, the Länder and the local authorities. So-called 'Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies' (RENNs) have been established. The RENNs have the mission to intensify the link between the federal government, the Länder and the local authorities.

5.6.4 Success factors and preconditions

A strong tradition in both SD governance and interfederal cooperation is an important precondition for successful vertical collaboration related to SDG implementation. Typically, without a tradition in SD governance, most countries are likely to start to build up their governance model on the central (federal) level, as can be observed in the Belgian case as well. In a later stage, steps to increase vertical integration with the devolved level of government are more likely. On the other hand, a weak tradition of interfederal cooperation can hamper an efficient collaboration model.

5.6.5 Causal link of the policy practice with the SDGs

Two observations can be made on this point. First, a clear path of continuity can be perceived in the German SD governance model. Although Germany has succeeded in making the SDGs the dominant paradigm in the structure of its National Strategy for Sustainable Development, the conceptual paradigm shift has not led to deep changes or leaps in the strategic choices related to SD. The same can be said for the coordination with the Länder, which is also following a continuous path rather than leaps forward.

Second, and on the other hand, the last SD strategy (2016) has dedicated remarkable attention to the establishment of new councils and working group to realize a higher degree of integration with the Länder (see 8.2.3). It is fair to say that the efforts to strengthen the federal collaboration model have substantially been increased. Although this is not a full proof of causality, the causal link with the SDG process can be regarded as likely hypothesis, which could be further examined in future research projects.

5.6.6 Immediate effects of the policy practice

On a governance level, this new wave of interfederal cooperation in Germany has clear immediate effects. More collaboration bodies have been established and have started their operations and the Länder show increasing interest in designing their own SD strategies.

5.6.7 Relevance for Belgium

The relevance for Belgium was one of the main arguments for selecting this case study (see 8.2.2). Germany's proximity to Belgium and its federal status have made this case highly relevant. However, a note should be made regarding the difference in the two federal state systems. First, while the German federal government still has significant powers in such policy fields as the environment, the Belgian federal government's competences in this field are more limited¹². Second, in Germany many competences are shared between the federal government and the Länder; the federal government still has powers to block policies in those areas, whereas in Belgium, officially, competences are exclusive to one government level. For example, the main environmental policy domains are on the regional level (water, air, waste, biodiversity...), with no coordination from the federal level whatsoever. However, in practice, interfederal cooperation is needed as several horizontal powers are on the federal level. For example, air pollution policies is on the regional level, but product standards (e.g. for wood stoves) is on the federal level.

5.6.8 Transferability

To what extent to the differences between the Belgian and the German federal systems, described in the previous section, affect the transferability of this case study to Belgium? As noted in section 5.6.2, most governance instruments and practices are examples of 'soft policies', which can still be implemented on levels that do not have the full regulatory powers of the policy field. As a corollary, we deem the transferability to be high, although the different role of the federal government in both countries should be taken into account when looking for policy lessons. According to the policy expert on our workshop (see section 2) and some interviews, one obstacle is that the Belgian federalism is not known for being a collaborative one. This is illustrated by the long and arduous process which – after ten years – led to a very concise 'framework text' for a National Sustainable Development Strategy. The Strategy was criticized in a joint opinion of nine advisory councils, coordinated by the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD, 2016).

5.6.9 Importance

The importance of SDG coordination on the national level of federal states is not a formal requirement in any UN or other SD-related document. However, it is clear that the absence of such coordination and collaboration can lead to suboptimal policy efficiency. Several SDGs refer to policy problems that also have binding targets, such as climate change mitigation. Such complex and persistent mutisectoral challenges can only be tackled successfully on the condition that all government levels cooperate and pull together.

¹² Restricted to product standards, protection against ionising radiation, import, export and transit of non-native plant and animal species and their remains and protection of the marine environment (FPS Health, Food Chain Safety, and Environment, 2016).

6. The Belgian case

It is not within the scope of this study to give a full description of the institutional SD model for the federal government, the three regions and the three communities. Instead, we focus on a number of policy practices we deem relevant for this comparative study. Our primary interest goes out to the policy practices that were analysed in the six in-depth cases of section 5.

6.1 Externalities or international spillovers

Both the 2016 VNR and in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development contain no explicit references to externalities. However, several practices reported in the VNR under SDG 12¹³ have a link with global product chains:

- Belgium aims to be designated Fair Trade Country by 2020
- Since 2015 Belgium cooperates with the European Chemicals Agency on international trade in hazardous chemicals so as to strengthen the Rotterdam Convention's¹⁴ implementation in third countries such as Gabon and Cameroon.
- Belgium supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).
- Belgium provides financial support to the Extractives Global Programmatic Support (EGPS) Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

6.2 Vertical integration and the role of local authorities

In Belgium, municipalities and provinces contribute actively to the implementation of the SDGs, and they are often supported for that by the regional governments:

- Several financial support mechanisms are in place for cities to improve their inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable character (SDG 11).
- The Flemish, Walloon and Brussels associations for local authorities are offering guidance to their member on how to work on the implementation of the SDGs:
 - o How to integrate the SDGs in local political party programmes;
 - o Tools for inspiring and offering structure to municipalities that wish to act for the SDGs;
 - o Communicating on good practices;
 - o Material for awareness-raising campaigns towards citizens
 - o The Flemish association (VVSG) offers intensive counseling to 20 communities in a 'pilot trajectory'. One of the focus points of the training is the integration of the SDGs in the planning and management cycle (see section 5.2.7).

¹³ "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns"

¹⁴ Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

6.3 Stakeholder participation

Ever since the ‘Law on the Coordination of Sustainable Development’ was adopted in 1997, Belgium has had a very active Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD). The members represented are employer and employee organizations, environmental and development NGOs, consumer organizations, youth organizations, federal government, and the scientific community. Moreover, five members of the Belgian devolved government are also members of the FCSD. Local authorities are not represented.

However, stakeholder participation in Belgium cannot be limited to just one advisory body. Because of the complex division of power in the federal state, many other advisory bodies on the regional and community levels are to be involved to get a representative opinion covering all competences. Although no actor has a formal mandate to coordinate the national stakeholder participation efforts, it is the FCSD who sometimes takes the initiative to coordinate a national process of advisory action, involving up to nine advisory councils. This was the case for the opinion on the Framework Text of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2016), where the Federal Council took the initiative and successfully coordinated a common opinion for nine advisory councils. The same was attempted, at the request of the federal government, for the Opinion on the Belgian report for the Voluntary National Review (2017), but this process failed due to the too tight advice period of just 19 days, which the FCSD regretted in its Opinion from 30 May, 2017 (FCSD, 2017). The council also writes in this advice that it “regretted that it had to urge the policy makers to be able to play a sufficiently structural role in this process” (p. 2).

Many other advisory councils are relevant for sustainable development and the SDGs, such as the Advisory Council on Policy Coherence for Development, which advises the government on issues related to Policy Coherence for Development.

6.4 Indicators for sustainable development

The federal law of 1997 introduced the bi-annual federal reports on sustainable development, containing indicators to monitor the progress towards sustainable development. The reports were published in 1999, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015 and 2017. The last one was entirely dedicated to the SDGs, and was a future study for the 34 indicators that were selected for the 2017 VNR. The Belgian government recognized in its VNR that these 34 indicators were selected “on the basis of their availability” (p. 2) and that a more comprehensive indicator set will be “progressively incorporated into a comprehensive inter-federal SDG follow-up and review mechanism” (p. 5).

At the end of 2017, a study was published on the distance-to-target (gap analysis) for all the SDGs (Orsini et al., 2017). The study exclusively focused on the relevant targets for the federal government.

On the level of the regions, several efforts have equally been undertaken.

In 2017, the Walloon Region published the report '[En Route vers 2030](#)' ('Towards 2030'), which contained a list of 70 indicators that were based on the official list of the UN, but adapted to the Walloon situation based on the following criteria:

- Coverage of economic, social and environmental issues;
- Preference for indicators that are available on a very disaggregate level;
- Preference for horizontal indicator covering multiple SDGs;
- Based on the previous work of the Walloon Institute for Evaluation, Prospective and Statistics (IWEPS);
- Coherence with previous Walloon sustainability indicator efforts, e.g. for the 2nd Walloon Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- Comparability with the national, European and international level;
- Compatibility with the national indicator development exercise Interfederal Institute for Statistics (still ongoing);
- Quality of the available data.

In the spring of 2018, the Flemish Region published its draft Vision Note 'Vizier2030' (Eye on 2030). The vision document translates the SDGs into a set of more operational objectives tailored to Flanders. It announces that the goals will be quantified and monitored through a monitoring and indicator framework that will be developed as soon as the Vision Note is approved. As this Vision Note is still in the phase of stakeholder participation, the adoption of the full set of indicators is not to be expected before 2019, which is relatively late compared to most countries.

6.5 Domestication or mainstreaming

This topic refers to the degree to which the SDGs permeate the highest level of political processes and the most important management and policy instruments used by the government. In Belgium, the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development (FISD) and the minister of sustainable development proposed that every minister integrate not only the 17 SDGs, but even the 169 subtargets, in their annual policy statements (source: interviews). The proposal was approved, but the integration of the SDGs in the policy statements became a voluntary commitment. In 2016, only the FPS Health, Food Chain Safety, and Environment has chosen to fully integrate the SDGs in its annual policy statement. The administrations of Finance, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Economy, Mobility and Transport and Social Integration have chosen to limit the integration to the strategic targets. Finally, the PPS Science Policy, the FPS Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defense have chosen to draw up an action plan for sustainable development without a link to the annual policy statement (ICSD, 2017).

In her [2018 policy note](#), the federal minister declared that she 'invited her fellow ministers and state secretaries to indicate, based on the results of the recent gap-analysis study, which actions they still see possible for the remainder of this policy term' (until the fall of 2019).

Next to government administrations, parliaments are important government bodies with the power to bring the SDGs to the heart of the democracy. The VNR announced (p. 67) that, from Autumn 2017 onwards, each federal parliamentary committee will integrate in its work the SDGs relevant for its policy area. Furthermore, the parliamentary committee for external affairs announced it will organize a discussion on one different SDG each year, which attention for both the domestic and the international dimension, and inviting all members of parliament to join the discussion. The conclusions of that debate would then be brought to the plenary level to be debated in presence of the Prime Minister.

Since 2004, all the federal administrations have ‘sustainability cells’, whose main missions are:

- To contribute to the implementation of sustainable development policies on the federal level;
- To coordinate the implementation of the Federal Plan for Sustainable Development
- To represent its administration in the Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable development (ICSD);
- To support the process of the Federal Report for Sustainable Development.

6.6 Federal integration and coordination

After the UN Rio Conference of 1992 on ‘Environment and Development’, the Belgian institutional architecture for sustainable development was set-up on the federal level. More than ten years later, the regions started to take up sustainable development more actively themselves, and the Belgian interfederal collaboration model for sustainable development has been evolving ever since. In 2007, art. 7bis on sustainable development was added to the Constitution, which is a ‘national’ instrument.

The collaboration between the devolved entities on sustainable development is not always running smoothly. The process of developing a National Strategy for Sustainable Development took more than ten years. But in 2016 the ‘Framework Text of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development’ was finally approved. The Framework Text contains common principles and fields of actions, but for the concrete actions, the text refers to the strategic plans of the devolved governments. Because of the Belgian federal system, which is based on *exclusive powers* rather than on a hierarchy between policy levels, the coordination of national sustainable development policies is not in the hands of the federal government. A separate body, the Interministerial Conference for Sustainable development, with representatives from all government levels, is responsible for the coordination.

As a result of the complex structure of the state, not many governance initiatives can carry the label ‘national’. Among the exceptions we find, next to the national strategy described above, the [‘National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights’ \(2017\)](#), for which six advisory councils on the federal level and two on the regional level provided input.

In 2014, the [Interfederal Institute for Statistics](#) (ISS) was established, based on a legal collaboration agreement between the federal government and the subnational regions and communities. This institute is a step forward for the coordination of monitoring and indicators

for sustainable development, including for the SDGs. The ISS is responsible for coordinating Belgium's SDG monitoring.

Belgium's choice for a federal system based on equality between the federal, the regional and the community levels has resulted in the fact that, in interfederal policy processes, there is not one coordinator, but up to seven. When consensus is not reached, no-one has the authority to make a final decision, and in practice, this regularly leads to a standstill. National coordination will therefore always remain a challenge in contemporary Belgium.

7. Horizontal analysis and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The literature study on the SDGs, several interviews, the six international cases, the Belgian case, internal brainstorms and the discussion workshop with the policy expert have provided us with a richness of material, which allows us to make a horizontal analysis and to draw conclusions. As mentioned before, making recommendations to the Belgian SDG and SD governance system is not part of the scope of this study.

In our horizontal observations, we see three concepts coming back that can be used as common threads for our analysis:

1. path dependency
2. the drivers of policy change
3. the transformational impact of the SDGs.

In the next section, we lay out the horizontal analysis based on the three transversal topics described. In the subsequent section, we present the general conclusions of the study.

7.2 Horizontal observations

We learnt from the cases that a strong policy practice never starts from scratch, which is why good practices of SDG implementation are found predominantly in countries that have had a strong tradition in SD governance for years and even decades. We conclude that the presence of **path dependency** stands in the way of rapid change, and progress advocates should realistically aim for gradual improvements rather than a turnaround. Disruptive innovations and system-changing transitions are often referred to when sustainability challenges are mentioned, but (1) even those usually need years (or decades) to unfold and (2) they occur outside democratic and bureaucratic policy-making. Policy change takes place slowly, and patience is needed to bring about fundamental change. However, the call for patience is by no means a call for inaction. Because of path dependency, changes will take a long time before they are brought about, but change does not occur automatically. In order to bring about change in the long run, action in the short run is required.

Policy change does not only require patience and continuous effort, it also is bound to a number of conditions. It will not always occur, many policy processes lead to no change at all. Many conditions for policy change have been studied in political science over the last century. In this report, we restrict our analysis of the **drivers for policy change** to the input from the interviews, the discussion workshop and a few sources from literature.

In general, these conditions and influencing factors of policy change are regularly mentioned: a clear plan, plausible goals, a strong and smart communication strategy, clear understanding by all the actors involved in the policy process, social and political support, sufficient (financial and other) resources to realize the changes, sufficient expertise to implement the changes, the

absence of (too much) competition among the actors that implement the change and those that are affected by it, good electoral timing and the occurrence of crises. We add to this list that policy change is usually the result of a dynamic that circulates in certain coalitions or actors involved, who are formed in and close to policy formation processes (Sabatier & Jenkins, 1993). In this discussion, the role of leadership by civil servants should not be underestimated. By making coalitions with actors in and outside of government, they can also initiate change processes. The same can be said for actors who circle around the policy cycle but who do not directly shape them, such as advisory bodies. And finally, policy change is also dependent on the willingness of government actors to learn (Cerna, 2013).

Right now, some of these conditions seem favourable in Belgium, because of the window of opportunity that is offered by the local elections of 2018 and the regional, federal and European elections of 2019. Political parties can include SDG-related ambitions in their election programmes, and business and civil society organizations can write memoranda for the elections and advocate the values they adhere to by making use of various other communication strategies.

Both path dependency and the drivers for policy change are important to estimate what can be expected from the **transformational power** of the SDG framework. The transformational ambition of the SDGs can be derived from the title of Agenda 2030 ('Transforming our world') and from other sections in the Agenda text, e.g. "We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path" (Preamble).

Assessing the transformational impact of Agenda 2030 deserves a separate study, and it was not an explicit research question for our study. However, based on the many policy practices we studied, several observations and reflections can be made.

First, interpreting the term 'transformational' in its literal sense, after two years of SDG implementation, we did not find straightforward indications that Agenda 2030 is really about to unchain sustainability transitions. Nor could we identify any SDG-induced national policy practices with the clear potential to spark such a process of massive change. However, two years' time is too short a timeframe to make this assessment, and the broad uptake of the SDGs may eventually spark dynamics and processes that could contribute to such system-changing transformations.

Second, looking at some of the governance and societal output and processes, Agenda 2030 has the clear merit of broad inclusion, creating a framework that sparks broad societal support on the global, national and local level. In their first two years of implementation, the SDGs have been effective in activating policies and governance models on a wide scale, which may contribute to the side conditions for tackling the most persistent global sustainability problems.

We feel one should be humble to expect clear and direct cause-and-effect kind of changes from a non-binding agreement with such a large group of countries about such a complex, comprehensive and controversial challenge. However, that being said, if one looks closer, we also see reasons to be optimistic about the Agenda 2030 potential impact. Our recommendation

is to convert the question ‘which sustainability transitions will be achieved in 2030?’, into the question ‘which significant contributions could the SDGs, and their concomitant national policy practices, have on future global sustainability?’

In Belgium, the transformational impact of the SDG could be greater if all the government actors and level in the federal system learnt more from each other. This conclusion is supported by the VNR, which states that (p. 67) “the common understanding among the NSDS signatories is that strengthened forms of coordination are particularly necessary since insufficiently guaranteed through the existing cooperation and consultation mechanisms.” More coordination activities could contribute to increase learning. In that sense, the creation of the Interfederal Institute of Statistics was a good decision.

Agenda 2030 can strengthen its transformational power if it makes the leap from ‘one of the many policy agendas’ to ‘in the heart of strategic policy-making’. **Mainstreaming** the SDGs by making all policy levels responsible for their implementation and their fulfillment is a stepping stone to policy change on the system level. Mainstreaming is a kind of ‘deep integration’ of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs into the DNA of policy-making. One way of mainstreaming the SDGs into general policy-making, is integrating them structurally in the leading strategic decision-making cycles, documents and processes on all policy levels, such as coalition agreements, policy statements, ministerial policy letters, budget exercises and formal planning and budgeting processes. The initiative of the Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) to guide 20 pilot municipalities in integrating the SDGs in the formal Management and Policy Cycle (BBC) is in that respect a very commendable experiment (VVSG, 2016).

An important condition for an impact of Agenda 2030 on national policy practices, is political support and leadership. Generally, coordination by the Prime Minister’s Office is regarded to have a higher profile than coordination by another minister. However, the importance of this governance choice should not be overestimated. In our view, more progress can be made in a system with a highly-motivated separate minister for SD than with a Prime Minister who is in the cockpit but has no interest in stepping on the gas.

A last success factor for systemic change is the interplay between bottom-up initiatives and top-down leadership. Both elements are crucial for a successful impact, and their interaction can be mutually reinforcing. This observation includes both policy initiatives and the role of societal stakeholders. Local, national, supranational and global governmental actors should cooperate and reinforce each other. This can be said for initiatives and experiments by local authorities, local businesses, citizens, NGOs, labour organizations, other grassroots players and – importantly – by innovative coalitions of these stakeholder groups. Realizing sustainability transitions becomes feasible when all possible barriers are overcome, including obstruction by certain actors or a lack of political or public support.

7.3 General conclusions

Agenda 2030 is a very ambitious agenda and policy change takes time. Policy change is hardly ever as big as the discourse about it. For this reason, we should not expect a drastic turnaround

in SD policy practices in Belgium overnight. Progress should be aimed at not by advocating revolution, but by gradually improving processes and introducing policy practices that bring about progress for the take-up of the SDGs and the necessary governance framework behind it.

In Belgium, establishing and coordinating an efficient governance model for SD and SDG implementation is a greater challenge than in most other countries, because of the complex structure of the state. This complexity makes the coordination of all policy targets, impacts and practices a daunting task. On the other hand, it is clear that many government actors are highly motivated to realize the SDGs, and to enforce the institutional framework that is needed to support that ambition.

In spite of many remaining challenges, Belgium has a lot of knowledge and capacity on different government levels and different topics. This goes for both technical issues, such as indicators and statistics and for policy strategies, e.g. in the fields of circular economy or healthcare. The main challenge is to come to national coordination in all these fields.

In the short run, several steps forward are already planned or being laid out, such as the plans to boost the federal parliament's involvement in the follow-up and implementation of Agenda 2030. In the long run, the main challenge for Belgium will be to coordinate strong answers to major challenges ahead, such as climate change mitigation, eradicating poverty and mitigating global impacts of domestic activities.

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Annex 1. List of interviewees

Rudy De Meyer, deputy-director, 11.11.11 National

Katja Hintikainen, KEPA – umbrella of Finnish development CSOs

Patrizia Heidegger, Director Global Policies and Sustainability, European Environmental Bureau

Pieter Leenknecht, Coordinator UN development agenda, Belgian Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and External Trade

Riikka Leppänen, FIBS – Finnish Institute for Corporate Responsibility

David Leysens, Network Director, The Shift vzw/asbl

Tuuli Mäkelä, Confederation of Finnish Industries EK

Ingeborg Niestroy, SD researcher, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Leida Rijnhout, Programme Coordinator Resource Justice and Sustainability, Friends of the Earth Europe

Maria van der Harst, Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten

Edith van Ewijk, Postdoctoral Researcher at University of Amsterdam and formerly senior researcher Kaleidos Research, NCDO

Annex 2. Notes on longlist of good practices

N°	Country	
1	Brazil	As one of the 11 Latin American and Caribbean countries volunteering for the 2017 VNRs, Brazil's main messages note that it has established the National Commission for the SDGs, which is an advisory and parity body composed of 16 representatives from Federal, State, District, Municipal governments and civil society. The Commission is tasked with proposing and monitoring initiatives for SDG implementation at the state, district and municipal levels. In addition, the Brazilian National Congress has created the Joint Parliamentary Front to Support the SDGs, a non-partisan action that brings together more than 200 house representatives and senators, equivalent to a third of its parliamentarians. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/
2	Czech Rep.	According to the Czech Republic's main messages, its Government Council on Sustainable Development (GCSD), chaired by the Prime Minister, is coordinating the sustainable development agenda at the national level. The document notes that preparing for the VNR has provided an "important opportunity" to re-assess national sustainable development priorities in relation to the SDGs, and to critically evaluate the current state of implementation. In this regard, the Government in consultation with relevant stakeholders prepared a 'National Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Czech Republic' as an input to the HLPF. It notes that poverty reduction, the unemployment rate and the fight against communicable diseases are already close to the 2030 target levels, but gender equality, non-medical determinants of health (emissions of hazardous substances, harmful use of alcohol and tobacco) and quality of earnings and lifelong learning opportunities are still far from the 2030 aspirations. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/
3	Denmark	According to its main messages, Denmark's government has formulated an action plan for the 2030 Agenda centred on the five "P's" of the 2030 Agenda (prosperity, people, planet, peace, and partnerships), accompanied by 37 targets that each include one or two national indicators. Denmark states that its <u>Ministry of Finance is responsible for coordinating SDG implementation at the national level</u> , but line ministries are responsible for designing policies compatible with the SDGs "when relevant." It adds that the Ministry of Finance maintains close coordination of efforts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for SDGs in the context of the UN and other international fora. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/ + Information through interviews
4	Ethiopia	Ethiopia (LDC and LLDC) reports that all the SDGs have been integrated in the priority areas of its Second Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II) 2015/16-2019/20, approved by the Council of Ministers and ratified by the House of Peoples Representatives of Ethiopia, and that it has become legally binding to implement the SDGs in the country. Its main messages state that approximately 70% of its annual regular national budget allocation has been focusing on poverty oriented sectors such as agriculture, education, health, water and sanitation, and rural roads, and that its SDG-integrated GTP II seeks to attain a national poverty level of 16.7 % by 2019/20. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/
5	Finland	Finland adopted a national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda with clear activities for different ministries. The Prime Minister's Office holds the coordination responsibility.

		<p>The Government reports annually to the parliament. The annual report will from now on include a section on sustainable development, which allows all the parliamentary committees to discuss sustainable development every year in the context of the Government's overall actions. The Government gives a report on 2030 Agenda to the parliament every four years. The future committee has lead the 2030 Agenda discussions in the parliament so far, but it does not have any law making mandate.</p> <p>Some municipalities have involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda. But there is no systematic way to do it. The National Commission on Sustainable Development promotes the 2030 Agenda to cities and municipalities.</p>
6	Netherlands	<p>Leading: Dutch MoFA (Ministry for Development Cooperation & International Trade), after formation of new cabinet leadership might shift to another ministry. Leadership is not that strong, due to choice of Ministry and choice to 'implement SDG's pragmatically'.</p> <p>Every ministry has a <u>SDG-focal point</u> who are in regular contact with each other, presided by the National Coordinator SDG's (MoFA).</p>
7	Brazil	<p>At the local level, Brazil's National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM) developed a <u>guide for localizing the SDGs in municipalities</u>, and a guide for incorporating the SDGs into Municipal Multi-Year Plans for the period 2018-2021. Brazil outlines tools that will support the planning and dissemination of the SDGs, such as SDGs Strategy, an electronic website aiming to broaden the SDG debate and propose means of implementation for the SDGs, and SDG networks including civil society, private sector, governments and academia at the national and subnational levels. These networks include the Civil Society Working Group for the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs Brazil Network, and the Nós Podemos (We Can) National SDGs Movement. Argentina, Belize, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Peru and Uruguay also will be part of the 2017 VNRs. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/</p>
8	Germany	<p>https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_13.2016.pdf https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/2017/02/2017-02-27-nachhaltigkeit-neuaufgabe-engl.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1</p> <p>ESDN Case Study N°20: Integrating SDGs into national policy frameworks and governance structures – activities in 4 selected EU Member States, 2015 – Author Katrin Lepuschitz – Germany p.10-13) + Information through interviews (on <u>centralized leadership & decentralized implementation</u>)</p>
9	Netherlands	<p>Global Goals <u>campaign</u> for Municipalities → https://vng.nl/onderwerpenindex/internationaal/gemeenten4globalgoals https://vng.nl/global-goals-gemeenten</p>
10	Slovakia	<p>The planned steps on implementation include involvement of local level, the implementation should include <u>granting mechanism trough local governments</u>, still waiting for approval by the government.</p>
11	UK-Wales	<p>The Welsh Government has implemented the <u>Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act</u>, which requires public bodies in Wales to carry out their activities in a sustainable way.</p>
12	Bangladesh	<p>Bangladesh (LDC) notes that it has integrated the 2030 Agenda in its seventh Five Year Plan (FYPs) 2016-2020, and should finalize an action plan for implementing the SDGs in line with the FYP by June 2017. At the institutional level, Bangladesh has established an 'SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Committee' at the Prime Minister's Office to facilitate implementation of the SDGs Action Plan, and has introduced an <u>Annual Performance Agreement (APA), which serve as a results-based performance management system that assesses individual and ministries performance</u>. It reports that it has mapped out lead, co-lead and associate ministries against each SDG target to reduce duplication of efforts and enhance synergies. According to its main messages document, the government has data for 70 indicators, partially available data for 108</p>

		indicators, and needs to devise new data mining mechanisms for 63 indicators. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/
13	Czech Rep.	<p>Within the four countries from the Eastern European Group that have volunteered for the 2017 VNRs, the Czech Republic reports in its main messages that it has adopted Czech Republic 2030, which will serve as the main implementation platform for the SDGs in the country. The document sets <u>97 specific goals aimed at improving people’s well-being, while respecting sustainable development principles, and will serve as an overarching framework for sectoral, regional and local strategies.</u></p> <p>On accountability, the Czech Republic states that compliance of sectoral and regional strategic documents, programs and measures with Czech Republic 2030 and progress on national goals will be monitored by a <u>biannual analytical report on quality of life and its sustainability</u>, prepared by the GCSO. In addition, Czech Republic 2030 will be supported by a voluntary commitments framework, to allow civil society, private sector and other actors and individuals to participate in implementation and encourage partnerships.</p> <p>http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/ + Information through interviews</p> <p>More critical: “There is 180 indicators from which is 11 grey – without clear methodology. Many of these indicators are disaggregated. These indicators cover strategic goals of Czech Republic 2030 strategic framework – which is not exactly same as indicators for Agenda 2030, but covers most of agenda goals. Rest should be covered separately.”</p>
14	Denmark	Information through interviews
15	Germany	<p>https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/2017/02/2017-02-27-nachhaltigkeit-neuaufgabe-engl.pdf?blob=publicationFile&v=1</p> <p>ESDN Case Study N°20: Integrating SDGs into national policy frameworks and governance structures – activities in 4 selected EU Member States, 2015 – Author Katrin Lepuschitz – Germany p.10-13) http://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/case%20studies/ESDN%20Case%20Study_20_SDGs%20integration_final.pdf</p> <p>+ Information through interviews (time-projection)</p>
16	Finland	The set will include in total 40 indicators and consist of 10 indicator baskets each including 4 indicators. The baskets cover topics like global responsibility and coherence, inequality, health, education. Not clear yet how well they will be disaggregated. They were consciously selected to be complementary to the global indicators.
17	Slovenia	<p>ESDN Case Study N°20: Integrating SDGs into national policy frameworks and governance structures – activities in 4 selected EU Member States, 2015 – Author Katrin Lepuschitz – Slovenia p.14-16) http://www.sd-network.eu/pdf/case%20studies/ESDN%20Case%20Study_20_SDGs%20integration_final.pdf</p> <p>+ Information through interviews</p>
18	European Commission	<p>Information through interviews +</p> <p>Niestroy I., <i>How are we getting ready? The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the EU and its Member States: Analysis and Action So Far</i>, DIE German Development Institute, Discussion Paper 9/2016. https://www.die-gdi.de/en/discussion-paper/article/how-are-we-getting-ready-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-in-the-eu-and-its-member-states-analysis-and-action-so-far/ See p.45 for a matrix on EU Sustainable Development Strategy and the SDGs.</p>
19	Finland	<p>For now it seems that there will be government reports to the parliament every four years. The quantitative progress will be published annually. The indicator baskets will be updated/released one per month, and will be followed by public online discussion/debate on the progress.</p> <p>These stock-taking moments will be organized annually, mainly for the parliament but they are open to other stakeholders as well.</p>

20	Switzerland	Information through interviews + https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/switzerland-sustainable-development-goals/ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10617Full%20Report%20HLPF%202016_Switzerland_EN%20fin.pdf “Switzerland has had a comprehensive sustainable development monitoring system (MONET) in place since 2003. Its 73 regularly updated indicators give an overall picture. 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 (...)” (p. 19-21)
21	Finland	CSOs engage in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through two advisory multi-stakeholder committees, the National Commission for Sustainable Development, and the Development Policy Committee. Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), <i>Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future</i> , Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013 (for Finland see p.103-127; authors Niestroy & alt.) + Information through interviews
22	Italy	Information through interviews + http://www.asvis.it/asvis-italian-alliance-for-sustainable-development/ https://www.researchitaly.it/en/events/2017-sustainable-development-festival/ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=11652 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?progress&id=156
23	Netherlands	http://www.sdgnerland.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Nederlandse-SDG-Rapportage-2017.pdf http://sdgcharter.nl/ role of SMEs: http://kaleidosresearch.nl/publication/small-business-global-impact/ role of local governments: http://kaleidosresearch.nl/publication/global-goals-local-action/ role of CSO http://kaleidosresearch.nl/publication/wait-and-see-or-take-the-lead-approaches-of-dutch-csos-to-the-sustainable-development-goals/ http://sdgcharter.nl/2017/06/09/e-25-000-for-the-best-climate-business-cases/
24	Sweden	Information through interviews http://www.sida.se/English/how-we-work/approaches-and-methods/funding/financing-for-development/swedish-leadership-for-sustainable-development/ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16033Sweden.pdf
25	Sweden	UCLG, National and Sub-national Governments on the Way towards the Localization of the SDGs, Report to the 2017 HLPF (for Instagram Competition in Ljungby, Sweden, see section 5.1.2)
26	Costa Rica	Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), <i>Winning Strategies for a Sustainable Future</i> , Reinhard Mohn Prize 2013 (for Costa Rica see p.81-103).
27	Indonesia	Indonesia’s main messages note that its Ministry of National Development Planning (“Bappenas”) is assigned to coordinate the entire process of planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the SDGs, and that the government seeks to involve stakeholders in the implementing team and working group within the SDGs National Coordinating Team. Indonesia plans to incorporate the SDGs into the fourth phase of its National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020-2025, and into its Long Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2025-2045. Indonesia reports that it has developed 87 SDG indicators, and is establishing a “ <u>One data portal</u> ” that is coordinated by Bappenas, the Office of the Presidential Staff (KSP) and Statistics Indonesia (BPS). On financing, Indonesia intends <u>to include in its SDGs Indonesia Action Plan contributions and commitments from non-state actors</u> (philanthropy, businesses and social organizations), <u>and to document these contributions so as to measure, monitor and evaluate them</u> . Indonesia notes

		<p>that the country has guidelines for green banking and green financing, a sustainable finance program to provide financing to institutions that apply sustainable finance principles, and is initiating the implementation of circular economy by improving resource efficiency and reducing waste.</p> <p>http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/</p>
28	Kenya	<p>In its main messages, Kenya says that it launched the SDGs nationally on 14 September 2016, and has used <u>social media platforms</u>, such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp to disseminate SDG messages to the public. It reports that it: prepared an SDGs roadmap; has mapped the 17 SDGs with its Vision 2030 Second Medium Term Plan (MTP) objectives; and plans to integrate the SDGs into its third MTP, for 2018-2022. Kenya also notes that the Government has directed all ministries, departments and agencies to <u>mainstream</u> the SDGs into policy, planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation systems and processes, and that officials for planning and budgeting have been trained.</p> <p>At the institutional level, SDG implementation and monitoring is coordinated by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The SDGs focal point within the Ministry offers technical backstopping for SDGs within government and among stakeholders. Kenya's main messages also note that an <u>Inter-Agency Technical Committee</u> has also been set up, including members from line ministries, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the National Council for Population and Development, representatives from civil society organizations, and the private sector. On monitoring and reporting, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics has undertaken an indicator mapping, and identified 128 indicators out of the 230 global SDG indicators that can be measured with available data or data that can be produced within one to two years with minimum effort. The Government is in the process of integrating climate change into the curriculum for primary and secondary levels of education, and has placed a total ban on plastic bags with effect from August 2017.</p> <p>http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/</p>
29	Netherlands	<p>https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2016/44/meten-van-sdgs-een-eerste-beeld-voor-nederland (incl. progress report & statistics)</p> <p>http://kaleidosresearch.nl/publication/nederlanders-de-sdgs/ (Survey on attitude of the Dutch public toward SDGs)</p>
30	Brazil	<p>On accountability, the Brazilian Federal Court of Accounts (TCU) created the SDGs Project and carried out a pilot audit to evaluate how the Brazilian Federal Government is preparing to implement the 2030 Agenda, in terms of institutionalization and internalization of the Agenda, and alignment of its national strategy with the SDGs, monitoring, evaluation and transparency. It also developed a <u>training course on the role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI)</u> in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Brazil reports that 86% of the SDG targets and 78% of the SDG indicators show convergence with the attributes of its current Multi-Year Plan (Plano Plurianual – PPA) 2016-2019. http://sdg.iisd.org/news/vnr-main-messages-highlight-diverse-sdg-approaches/</p>
31	Global Partnership for Education	<p>https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2017/09/28/where-next-for-impact-bonds-in-developing-countries/?utm_source=ECDPM+Newsletters+List&utm_campaign=b5ac34e0eb-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_10_02&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f93a3dae14-b5ac34e0eb-388645793</p> <p>https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2016/09/27/variations-on-the-impact-bond-concept-remittances-as-a-funding-source-for-impact-bonds-in-low-and-middle-income-countries/</p>
32	OECD & partners	<p>The <u>PCSD Partnership</u> brings together governments, international organizations, civil society, think-tanks, the private sector, and other stakeholders from all regions of the world committed</p>

		<p>and working to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (SDG 17.14) as a key means of SDG implementation.</p> <p>The main working method of the PCSD Partnership will be virtually through an online platform, with annual face-to-face meetings in the margins of the HLPF. The Partnership will be presented for the first time at the 2016 Knowledge Exchange on 18 July. This will be followed by an electronic discussion in the first half of September moderated by the PCSD Unit at the OECD. It is proposed thereafter to organise sharing of knowledge and expertise through four collaborative working groups:</p> <p>A. Evidence-based analysis – Developing evidence-based analysis on specific issues applying a PCSD lens to inform policy dialogue and policy making. Such analysis could be linked to the specific theme identified for in-depth discussion at each HLPF e.g. food security or sustainable cities.</p> <p>B. Integrated and coherent approaches – Developing methodologies for addressing critical interactions among SDGs and targets and support coherent implementation. Some innovative approaches are already being developed and applied, e.g. Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI); International Council for Science (ICSU).</p> <p>C. Institutional practices – Identifying good institutional practices for enhancing policy coherence in SDG implementation, building on good practice experience through development cooperation and/or National Sustainable Development Strategies.</p> <p>D. Monitoring policy coherence – Strengthening capacities for tracking progress and reporting on policy coherence in SDG implementation. It will be important to clarify the needs of stakeholders and match supply with demand.</p> <p>To join the PCSD Partnership, please contact Ebba Dohlman (ebba.dohlman@oecd.org); Ernesto Soria Morales (ernesto.soriamorales@oecd.org); and/or Carina Lindberg (carina.lindberg@oecd.org).</p> <p>https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=12066</p> <p>Partners: OECD, SEI (Stockholm Environment Institute) & CGD (Centre for Global Development)</p>
33	UNITAR	https://www.unitar.org/event/full-catalog/executive-leadership-programme-evaluation-and-sustainable-development-goals
34	ICC	https://www.iccwbo.be/shop/ict-policy-and-sustainable-economic-development/
35	Germany	<p>Information through interviews</p> <p>http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf</p> <p>https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Anlagen/2017/02/2017-02-27-nachhaltigkeit-neuaufgabe-engl.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=1</p> <p>https://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumente/beitraege/2017/Bachmann_NAC_Sudan_2017-05-22.pdf</p> <p>https://www.bmz.de/en/publications/type_of_publication/strategies/Strategiepapier380_07_2017.pdf</p>
35	Colombia	<p>Information through interviews +</p> <p>http://sdg.iisd.org/news/colombia-finland-highlight-ways-to-maintain-momentum-on-sdgs/</p> <p>http://unsdsn.org/news/2016/05/06/a-case-study-of-colombia-data-driving-action-on-the-sdgs/</p> <p>http://cepei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Getting-ready-for-SDG-implementation-in-Latin-America.pdf</p> <p>https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/colombia</p>
37	Rwanda	<p>Information through interviews +</p> <p>http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MINECOFIN-presentation.pdf</p>

		http://www.chronicpoverty.org/blog/2016/3/3/sdgs-series-1-where-rwanda-needs-to-focus-on-in-the-new-course-of-sustainable-development-goals-by-2030 https://www.thenews.coop/113399/topic/development/rwandan-president-launches-sustainable-development-goals-centre-africa/
38	Denmark	http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf http://sdgindex.org/assets/files/2017/2017-SDG-Index-and-Dashboards-Report--full.pdf https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/denmark
39	Netherlands	http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf http://sdgindex.org/assets/files/2017/2017-SDG-Index-and-Dashboards-Report--full.pdf https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/netherlands https://www.wereldinwoorden.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/SDG_opmaak_Def.pdf
40	Norway	http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf http://sdgindex.org/assets/files/2017/2017-SDG-Index-and-Dashboards-Report--full.pdf https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/norway
41	Sweden	http://www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDG-Targets.pdf http://sdgindex.org/assets/files/2017/2017-SDG-Index-and-Dashboards-Report--full.pdf https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/sweden
42	Belgium (federal)	https://www.sdgs.be/nl/news/de-sdg-voices-zijn-bekend https://theshift.be/nl/inspiratie/sdg-voices-8-ambassadeurs-promoten-duurzaamheid-in-belgie https://www.duurzameontwikkeling.be/nl/themas/sdgs https://www.duurzameontwikkeling.be/nl/fido/duurzaamheidsverslag http://presscenter.org/nl/pressrelease/20171004/fido-lanceert-nieuwe-projectoproep-in-hun-zoektocht-naar-6-nieuwe-sdg-voices
43	Belgium (Flemish region)	‘Naar een Vlaams 2030 doelstellingenkader’ (document Flemish administration Team Sustainable Development at Interministerial conference sustainable development MCDO – person to contact Ine Baetens)
44	Belgium (Walloon region)	http://www.wallonie.be/sites/wallonie/files/pages/fichiers/rapport_odd_wallonie_0.pdf
45	Belgium	https://theshift.be/en/library/labc-des-sdg
46	Belgium & regions	https://www.gemeentevordetoekomst.be/themas/sdg-voices
47	Belgium & regions	Interviews
48	Belgium	interviews

Annex 3. List of five back-up cases

G	Internal advocacy	SDG ambassadors and Ministerial focal points Main case: Netherlands	(a) Netherlands (6) has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinating & an operational system of Ministerial focal points and a SDG-ambassador (b) Lessons of this internal advocacy could be useful for the Belgian federal government (comparable coordination structure)
H	Budgeting	Anchorage of SDG-targets into yearly department budgets Main case: Denmark	(a) The Ministry of Development Cooperation of Denmark (3) is supposed to link SDG-labeled budgets to its annual expenditures (b) It could be investigated whether this could be an additional element in the FIDO-proposal to integrate the SDG-targets in the annual Ministerial declarations
I	Transparency to the public	Direct communication, e.g. through website Main case: Costa Rica	(a) Costa Rica (26) has a user-friendly SDG website (b) Costa Rica has been a long time champion of sustainable development issues on the Latin American continent
J	Holistic & exhaustive approach	Including in SDG concept & implementation all aspects of societal and individual well being Main case: Colombia	(a) Colombia (36) has pushed for including the domain of peace and security in the SDGs (b) Relevance for Belgium: not to limit efforts & monitoring to environment and development cooperation issues
K	Innovative policy	Activate private funding such as remittances under the form of Impact Bonds	(a) Brookings Institute acts as an innovative knowledge platform on Impact Bonds, linking them to development initiatives in partner countries (e.g. in the field of education) (b) Relevance for Belgium: an experimental design meant to take leadership in this new form of connectedness (service provider – investor – final donator)

Annex 4. Detailed overview of the Swiss MONET indicator system for the SDGs

SDG	MONET indicator	Related IAEG indicator
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	Poverty rate	1.2.1 Proportion of population living below the national poverty line, by sex and age
	Equivalised disposable income	-
	Remittances by migrants	17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Arable land	-
	Agricultural nitrogen balance	-
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	Suicide rate	3.4.2 Suicide mortality rate
	Life satisfaction	-
	Risky alcohol consumption	3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol [...]
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	Reading skills of 15-year-olds	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people [...] achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading ...
	Participation in further education activities	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12
	Internet competencies	4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill
	Early school leavers by migratory status	-
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Gender wage gap	-
	Number of female victims of serious violence	5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15-49 years who

		have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age
	Time allocated to professional activity ant to domestic and family work	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
	Proportion of women in the National Council and in cantonal Parliament	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	Phosphorus content in selected lakes	6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	Final energy consumption per capita	7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption
	Renewable energies	
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	Working poor	-
	Material intensity	-
		8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	Investment to GDP ratio	-
	Employment in innovative sector	-
	Expenditure on Research and Development	9.5.1 Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	Labour market participation by people with disabilities	-
	Professional position by gender	5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions
	Direct investments in developing countries	10.b.1 Total resource flows for development, by recipient and donor countries and type of flow (e.g. official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other flows)
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	Housing costs by income quintile	-
	Particulate matter concentration	11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)
	Average distance to nearest public transport stop	-
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Material footprint	12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP

	Rate of separately collected waste	12.5.1 National recycling rate, tons of material recycled
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	Greenhouse gas emissions	-
	Greenhouse gas intensity	-
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	Not relevant for Switzerland, from a national point of view	
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	Ecological quality of the forest	-
	Settlement area	-
	Breeding bird populations	15.5.1 Red List Index
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Number of victims of serious violence	Number of victims of serious violence
	Participation in the vote or election	Participation in the vote or election
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	Official Development Assistance	17.2.1 Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of [...] gross national income (GNI)
	Remittances by migrants	17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP
	Duty-free imports from developing countries	10.a.1 Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff