



New directives aimed at incorporating the SDGs into the programmes of all ministries helps to strengthen the commitment across the government towards policy coherence.

In January 2016 the Austrian Council of Ministers instructed all ministries to integrate the SDGs into their relevant programmes and strategies and where necessary to develop new action plans for coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Thus, line ministries share responsibility to achieve the SDGs in their respective areas (Statistik Austria, 2018^[1]). The subsequently published *Outline 2016 - Contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the Austrian Federal Ministries*, from March 2017, serves as evidence for political commitment and outlines national responsibilities and policy processes for SDG implementation (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, 2017^[2]). The relevance of policy coherence is thus systematically recognized in SDG implementation, albeit with a particular focus on the international level. An explicit commitment to PCSD is also articulated in the current Three Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2016-2018 (Federal Ministry for Europe, 2016^[3]). An even stronger commitment will be incorporated in the next Three Year Programme 2019-2021 (OECD, 2017^[4]).

A newly installed inter-ministerial working group helps to take into consideration both domestic and international objectives related to the SDGs and to identify potential trade-offs.

An inter-ministerial working group – co-chaired by the Federal Chancellery and the MFA – has been established to coordinate activities via information sharing and supports SDG-implementation as well as their promotion within society (Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, 2017^[2]). SDG focal points from all ministries participate in its regular meetings, exchange information on different policy objectives and are thus able to identify trade-offs and synergies. At these meetings, the international perspective of PCSD is addressed. Furthermore, the Austrian Development Agency's (ADA) work is guided by seven principles (Ownership; Do-no-Harm; Equity, equality and non-discrimination; Participation and inclusion; Accountability and transparency; Empowerment; Sustainability) to foster coherent policies and avoid unintended negative effects.

Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Austria

PCSD Building Blocks	
Political commitment	Under the Federal Act on Development Cooperation of 2003, PCSD is a legal obligation both at national and international level. The federal government instructed all ministries in January 2016 to incorporate the principles of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in their relevant strategies and programmes and to elaborate action plans. At strategic level, commitment to PCSD is expressed in the Three Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2016-2018.
Policy integration	The decision-making process for integrating the SDGs in international policies is supported at policy level through the Advisory Board for Development Policy, dialogue with CSOs as well as with Parliament and at operational level via inter-ministerial working groups, evaluations and selective thematic platforms. The instruction by the Council of Ministers to integrate SDGs in the programmes of ministries provides the incentive to exchange information and objectives among the SDG focal points in ministries, and thus allow for the identification of trade-offs and synergies. Cross-cutting issues of development cooperation (gender and environment) have to be mainstreamed in programming-, planning- and monitoring processes as well as in policy dialogues at various levels.
Intergenerational timeframe	Intergenerational time frames are integrated, where applicable, into new national policies and strategies. The obligation of all ministries to integrate the SDGs into their relevant programmes and strategies is not affected by the electoral cycle.
Policy effects	Potential policy effects are assessed on an ongoing basis in the different working groups and through regular evaluations of the existing inter-ministerial common strategic guidelines.
Coordination	An inter-ministerial working group, consisting of SDG focal points from all ministries and co-chaired by the Federal Chancellery and the MFA, coordinates SDG- implementation, presents progress reports and aims for information sharing. As all ministries are part of the inter-ministerial working group, it takes into consideration both domestic and international objectives related to the implementation of the SDGs. For international policies in selected areas the department responsible for the Three Year Programme is also responsible for PCSD.
Local involvement	The liaison office of the Laender (Austria's regions) has been integrated in correspondence and working groups in preparation of the Three Year Programmes 2016-2018 and 2019-2021, currently being finalised. Under the auspices of the MFA, annual meetings are organised between government representatives of the Laender, cities and municipalities for information exchange and, subsequently, to help align actions undertaken at different levels of government for achieving the SDGs. The MFA is also striving to reach the local population through multiple events organized as part of public relations efforts.
Stakeholder participation	Main national policy frameworks and strategies rely on well-established multi-stakeholder advisory groups and a broad consultative process. Ministries, other governmental entities and institutions, civil society, the private sector, academia, political parties and interest groups (such as The Federation of Austrian Industries – IV and the Austrian Economic Chamber - WKÖ) took part in developing the Three Year Programme 2019-2021. SDG Watch Austria, a civil society platform to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Austria, went online in September 2017.
Monitoring and reporting	The inter-ministerial working group will prepare periodic progress reports to monitor national SDG-implementation. Statistic Austria has developed a first national set of SDG-indicators but does not provide national indicators for SDG17.14. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is responsible for effective monitoring and control while instructing their field offices to ensure that local cooperation is based on equal partnership.

Source: OECD (2017^[4]) and Bundeskanzleramt Österreich (2017^[2]).

References

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- OECD (2017), *2017 Survey on applying the eight building blocks of PCSD in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Austria*, OECD, Paris, unpublished. [4]
- Statistik Austria (2018), “Agenda 2030 - SDG-Indikatoren”, *Statistics Brief Austria*, http://www.statistik.at/web_de/services/statistics_brief/index.html (accessed on 27 February 2018). [1]