PEER LEARNING ACTIVITIES ON GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COHERENCE FOR THE SDGs

Background Note for the 20th Meeting of National Focal Points for Policy Coherence, 25-26 November 2020

Introduction

The purpose of this background note is to provide national focal points and delegates with information on recent pilot projects (peer-learning activities) undertaken within the framework of the proposed *Hub on the governance for the SDGs[1]* and as part of the activities to support Members and partners in the implementation of the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development [OECD/LEGAL/0381].

ROMANIA – "Multi-stakeholder workshop for identifying joint milestones related to circular economy that could be included in the Sustainable Development Action Plan" - 21-24 September 2020

Romania has developed a national strategy for the implementation of the SDGs that will be translated into an action plan in 2021. To ensure an enabling environment for its practical implementation Romania has adhered to the OECD Recommendation for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. In 2020 the OECD conducted an Institutional Scan to take stock of the strengths of the current governance framework in terms of applying coherence for sustainable development into the policy making, and issues that remain to be addressed. As part of the pilot, Romania has benefitted the experience of an expert from Belgium (identified with the support of the Government of Belgium) on how to successfully implement policy coherence measures by piloting a peer learning experience over three days.[2]

The peer-learning activity, bringing together 19 state and non state actors, aimed at tackling the fundamental problem of raising awareness, commitment and ownership around SDGs, through a "learning by doing" experience. The workshop aimed to help build skills and capacities of state and non-state actors to have a concrete interaction and develop cross-sectoral actions in the field of circular economy, aiming at enhancing PCSD. It also aimed to support strengthened the capacities of the Department for Sustainable Development to conduct similar discussions in different sectoral clusters, in order to build a shared understanding around a milestone to be included in the 2030 Action Plan.

The workshop was also the opportunity to test the validity of the conclusions of the OECD Institutional Scan in terms of the institutional and capacity bottlenecks that undermine policy coherence, thus strengthening the governance environment for the implementation of the SDGs. Both the participants from the Department for Sustainable Development as well as other state and non-state actors expressed their satisfaction for the workshop that allowed them to formulate a concrete collective action in the field of circular economy, by breaking silos and developing new partnerships.

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[1] The proposed Hub on the Governance for the SDGs could serve as an initiative to support countries in strengthening their governance mechanisms and policy coherence in support of SDG implementation. The Hub could be designed to assist countries through knowledge, expertise, targeted support and peer-learning. The peer learning activities would be supported through the Expert Roster which could build skills through a real time, "learning by doing" approach.

[2] The participation of the expert – as part of the proposed roster of experts - was enabled with the financial support of the Government of Romania.

COLOMBIA - "Effective stakeholder engagement to accelerate progress on the SDGs in Colombia in times of Covid-19" - 11-13 November 2020

As part of the pilot under the proposed Hub, this peer-learning activity, which was organised in close collaboration with the National Planning Department of Colombia, brought together over 100 representatives from governments, civil society, private sector from Sweden, Spain and Colombia, including SDG coordinators from the three countries, as well as UNDP. During the three days, experts from Sweden and Spain participated in the peer-learning dialogue with Colombian stakeholders with the to explore the mechanisms and policy environment that support the effective engagement of multiple stakeholders in SDG implementation; examine the role that different stakeholders could play in ensuring a long-term sustainable recovery from the Covid-19 crisis in line with the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda; and identify specific SDG initiatives in areas of priority for the Government which could be reinforced through more effective multi-stakeholder engagement. The work has also built on the ongoing UNDP activities in Colombia in support of the SDG implementation.

This peer-learning activity aimed to support the National Department of Colombia in the formulation of a joint document setting up an SDG multi-stakeholder platform which is expected to be launched in 2021.[3] In particular, participants worked on helping set the rules of engagement of the proposed SDG multi-stakeholder platform in terms of its mandate, governance, financing mechanisms and priority actions for post-COVID recovery. The pilot activity provided the foundation for the next steps in setting up the SDG Multi-stakeholder platform in 2021 in Colombia.

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[3] The organisation of the peer-learning activity in Colombia was made possible with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency. Contributions by experts from Spain and Sweden have been made on voluntary basis, as part of the OECD peer-learning methodology.