



**A unified strategy with commitment at the highest-level promotes PCSD.** The German Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the cabinet in January 2017 is the key policy instrument for implementation of the 2030 Agenda under the direct aegis of the Federal Chancellery (German Federal Government, 2016<sup>[1]</sup>). The strategy bundles various policy areas to achieve greater coherence, in light of the large number of systemic interdependencies. It also contains the ambition to use the 2030 Agenda as an opportunity to increase efforts for policy coherence with particular reference to SDG 17.14 (2016<sup>[1]</sup>). It thus provides a good basis for enhancing further Germany's sustained commitment to PCSD (OECD, 2015<sup>[2]</sup>).

**The centre of government promotes PCSD through an issues based approach, backed by all ministries.** The State Secretaries' Committee (SSC) is the central steering institution of the Sustainable Development Strategy. It is composed of representatives from all ministries and chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. Germany's whole-of-government approach also requires all ministries to participate actively in the Sustainable Development Working Group (UAL-AG) which prepares the meetings of the SSC, and helps to implement and further develop the strategy. The SSC meets regularly to address important cross-cutting or sectoral issues on a consensus basis, setting a new political frame for topics or announcing concrete actions. While Germany has implemented many mechanisms after its first VNR, such as the establishment of sustainable development coordinators in each ministry (German Federal Government, 2016<sup>[3]</sup>), it could go further to harness the potential of societal stakeholders (OECD, 2017<sup>[4]</sup>).

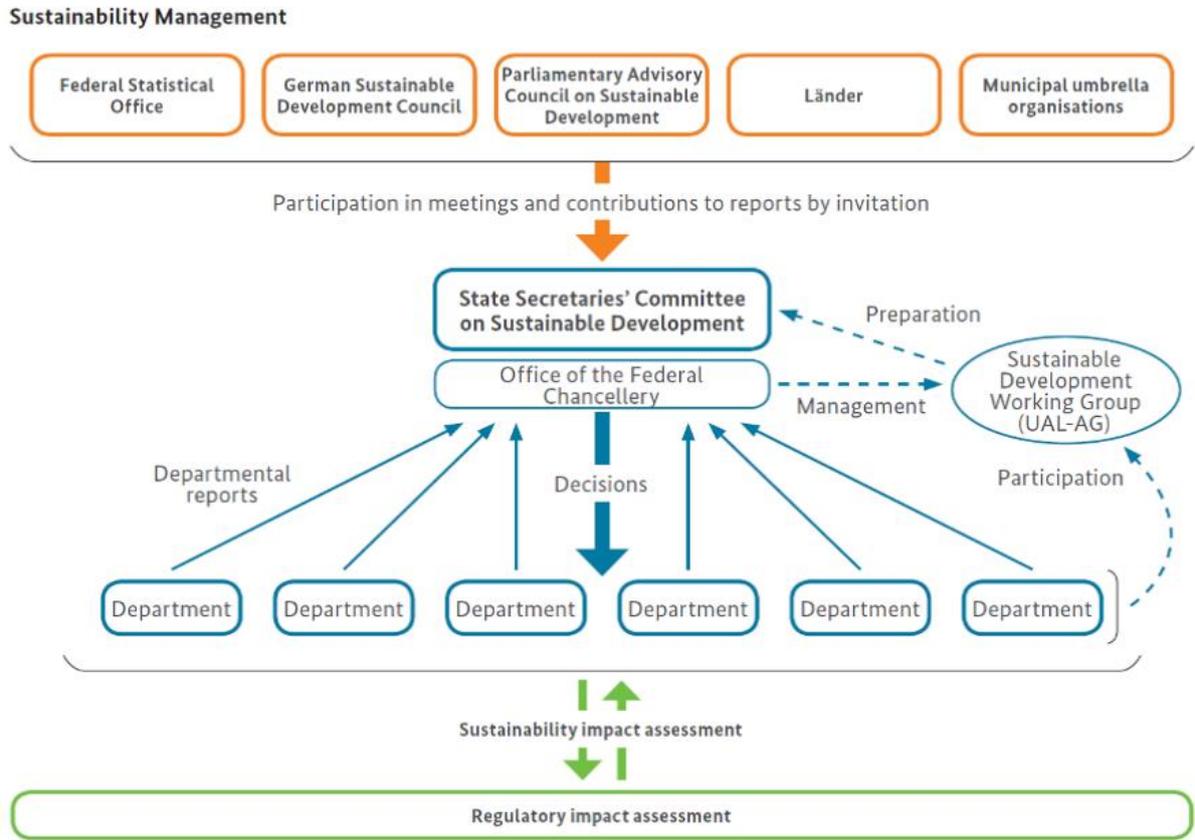
**Indicators established to measure transboundary and domestic impacts set a good example for tracking progress on PCSD.** The German Sustainable Development Strategy contains 63 key indicators including at least one indicator-backed target for each SDG. An inter-ministerial working group of representatives from the government and the statistical offices develops and adopts new indicators, while the Federal Statistical Office reports every two years on progress. This enables independent continuous monitoring while maintaining the possibility for revision. 13 new topics and 30 indicators have been added to the strategy, some of which include transboundary consequences of national policies. One example is the target to increase the share of imports from LDCs, another one is to increase membership of the Textile Partnership (Destatis, 2017<sup>[5]</sup>).

#### Box 1. German initiative on sustainable cocoa

PCSD enables countries to consider transboundary effects of domestic policies. This includes national production and consumption patterns, as well as trade agreements. The German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (GISCO) is a multi-stakeholder initiative including policy-makers and business stakeholders from the cocoa, chocolate and confectionery industry, the German retail grocery trade and civil society. It brings together relevant actors from Germany with those from producing countries and international initiatives to promote sustainable cocoa production. GISCO currently has more than 70 members and is open to other interested parties. The goal of GISCO is to improve the lives of cocoa farmers and their families, preserve natural resources and biodiversity in cocoa-producing countries and ultimately increase the proportion of sustainable cocoa production. The Federal Government is represented in the alliance by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The initiative exemplifies how national coordinated action across ministries, including stakeholders and the transboundary perspectives can create synergies supporting several SDGs simultaneously.

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[4]</sup>) and German Federal Government (2016<sup>[1]</sup>).

Figure 1. Institutional mechanisms for SDG implementation in Germany



Source: (German Federal Government, 2016<sup>[1]</sup>).

**Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Germany**

*PCSD Building Blocks*

Political commitment	The Chancellor stressed repeatedly Germany's commitment for an ambitious implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Federal Chancellery, is in charge of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, the essential framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
Policy integration	All ministries retain primary responsibility for their own contributions to the implementation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy within their respective policy areas. Newly appointed Ministry Coordinators for Sustainable Development strengthen policy integration and coordination (within each ministry).
Intergenerational timeframe	There is broad political consensus in parliament and across main political parties on the importance of SDG implementation and sustainable development. The first management rule of the German Sustainable Development Strategy includes intergenerational fairness as a core principal. Possible long-term effects of a particular regulation are part of the Sustainable Impact Assessment. Intergenerational aspects are further anchored in the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Art. 20a).
Policy effects	All proposals for new laws and regulations are subject to a Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA). The SIA is based on indicators, targets and management rules, which include intergenerational and transboundary dimensions. Since March 2018, laws and regulations can be checked against those through an online tool: <a href="http://www.enap.bund.de">www.enap.bund.de</a>
Coordination	The State Secretaries' Committee (SSC), headed by the Federal Chancellery, is the central steering institution of the German Sustainable Development-Strategy/SDG implementation. A standing working group on Sustainable Development ("UAL-AG" – at Deputy Director General' level) chaired by the Federal Chancellery prepares the SSC's meetings with participation of all ministries. The SSC meets regularly to address relevant cross-cutting or sectoral topics, e. g. setting a new political frame or announcing concrete actions, and decisions are taken on a consensus basis. The coordination mechanism aims for decision-making, information sharing and consultations.
Local involvement	Representatives of the Länder and municipalities are invited to SSC meetings when relevant. Thirteen out of sixteen Länder have drawn up or are currently working on their own Sustainable Development strategies. The Federal-Länder Experience Exchange on Sustainable Development offers space for regular communication between the federal and Länder level. The Sustainable Development Council supports vertical integration by a Sustainability Network of Lord Mayors and the creation of regional hubs. An inter-ministerial working group on sustainable urban development (IMA Stadt), including i.a. the Association of German Cities and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities promotes the 2030 Agenda at the municipal level. The Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) provides information on community-level development cooperation.
Stakeholder participation	The independent Sustainable Development Council advises the Federal Government on all sustainability matters. Its 15 members, last appointed in 2016 for a three-year term by the Chancellor, represent the three dimensions of sustainable development based on their professional and personal backgrounds. A Sustainability Forum is organized once a year by the Chancellery in order to give a selection of important stakeholders the opportunity to comment on sustainable development policy in Germany.
Monitoring and reporting	The Sustainable Development Strategy includes domestic and international indicators and targets and defines long-term goals, most of them until 2030. The Federal Statistical Office continuously monitors the 63 indicators and publishes an independent indicator report every two years in which weather symbols illustrate whether the target is on track. The findings can influence agenda setting and evaluation within the SSC. The Parliamentary Advisory Council on sustainable development monitors the Federal Government's sustainability policy at national, European and international level in the Bundestag. The German Sustainable Development Strategy itself is reviewed every four years. In 2018, the strategy was updated for the first time. A comprehensive review is foreseen for 2020.

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[4]</sup>; 2018<sup>[6]</sup>)

## References

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