

Lithuania

Commitment to coherence at the national and international levels provides a good basis to pursue more integrated policies. Last amended in 2011, The National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) is Lithuania's main strategic document ensuring national commitment and implementation of the SDGs and PCSD. It aligns with the SDGs and stresses commitment to policy coherence as a main implementation principle. The long-term strategic document *Lithuania 2030* contains the vision and goal to reach a top ten position in Europe on development and happiness indices. The government is currently updating this strategy as well as the body responsible for its supervision: the National Progress Council. Regarding development co-operation, for the first time the government adopted an Inter-Governmental Development Cooperation Action Plan for the period 2017-2019 which defines policy guidelines and implementing measures. The multi-stakeholder forum led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the National Development Cooperation Commission, NDCC), is responsible for PCD in development co-operation. It meets at least twice a year and submits proposals to the MFA on development co-operation policies. This cross-ministerial collaboration strengthens the interface between internal and external commitment to PCSD.

Updating institutional mechanisms can provide an opportunity to enhance and integrate co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence at the national level. The Ministry of Environment (MoE) co-ordinates the implementation of the national strategy and functions as secretariat for the National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCSD). The NCSD is chaired by the prime minister and comprises representatives from ministries, municipal institutions, NGOs, academia and business. In August 2016 the NCSD identified six areas of highest importance to Lithuania: combating social exclusion and eradication of poverty; healthy lifestyle; energy efficiency and climate change; sustainable consumption and production; high quality education; and development co-operation. The MoE has established an intergovernmental working group that provides inputs for the implementation of SDGs in Lithuania. Currently in reform, the National Progress Council and NCSD will be merged to create a unified body responsible for the implementation of 2030 Agenda, and include mechanisms for arbitration in the case of conflict. This institutional change will facilitate co-ordination for coherent policies. Lithuania is planning to strengthen the role of the Prime Minister's Office in the future and might consider moving the NCSD from the MoE to a high level. Such actions have facilitated effective co-ordination in other countries.

Current collaboration across ministries provides lessons for future reporting on policy coherence. Aiming to nationalise the SDGs, the MoE along with all relevant ministries has mapped and evaluated the coherence between the 17 SDGs and the national strategy and other relevant strategic documents. Currently stakeholders are invited to participate in the meetings of the Inter-institutional Working Group, including the Prime Minister's Office and the MoE (responsible for co-ordinating VNR preparations). The MoE reports every two years on implementation progress of the NSSD, while the national statistics office is responsible for collecting, collating and publishing sustainable development indicators.

Table 3.9. Institutional mechanisms for PCSD in Lithuania

Building Block	Lithuania
Political commitment	The 2011 National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) lists policy coherence as a main implementation principle (19.6). The National Commission for Sustainable Development (NCSD) is chaired by the prime minister and includes political leaders at minister or vice minister level. Lithuania is committed to further strengthening dialogue with stakeholders and achieving policy coherence at all levels of Lithuanian society.
Policy integration	The integration of economic, social and environmental actions in overarching strategic documents is a key principle of the national strategy to ensure they are coherent and mutually reinforcing. Further, the strategy calls for the main sustainable development provisions to be integrated into special sectorial plans, programmes, regional and municipal planning documents and other legal acts. Trade-offs and synergies are identified through respective sectoral strategies and planning documents of ministries which must into consideration sustainable development aspects outlined in the National Sustainable Development Strategy.
Intergenerational timeframe	The government is planning to update the National Progress Strategy <i>Lithuania 2030</i> , its main long-term strategic document, by incorporating the SDGs and principles. New goals may be formulated with a timeline until 2050.
Policy effects	Effects are identified through balanced impact assessments and consultations with stakeholders. In addition, upfront communication is an integral part of environmental assessment procedures. If economic activities are deemed to have potentially adverse transboundary impacts, affected parties will be notified at an early stage.
Co-ordination	The NCSD, chaired by the prime minister, is comprised of representatives from relevant ministries, municipal institutions, NGOs, academia and business. The Commission provides guidance and, consisting of high level political leaders, has the necessary political authority to make decisions on conflicting matters. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for co-ordination of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and works as a secretariat for the NCSD, also providing the platform for information sharing among institutions.
Local involvement	Regions, cities and municipalities are closely involved in the implementation of SDGs. PCSD is especially important in heavily urbanised areas. For example, Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) ensure that environmental aspects are integrated into city planning activities of the five major cities.
Stakeholder participation	Representatives from NGOs, business, academia and governmental and municipal institutions are members of the NCSD, making it a useful platform for addressing and solving conflicting interests. Intergovernmental working groups also include input from NGOs. Lithuania's national Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisation's Platform (NGDO) brings together 21 development and education NGOs, mainly to raise public awareness and provide civic education on sustainable development issues. Lithuania is currently working on closer and more formal involvement of the private sector, in particular in their international development co-operation activities.
Monitoring and reporting	The Ministry of Environment co-ordinates the implementation of the NSSD and monitors its progress in co-operation with other institutions in their respective fields of competence. Development indicators cover environmental, economic and social aspects of the country's sustainable development. Lithuania has started data collection and analysis and over 50 percent of sustainable development indicators have already been made publicly available. The statistics office is responsible for collecting, collating and publishing these indicators on its website, the Official Statistics Portal (OSP). In addition, the Ministry of Environment reports biennially to the government on the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and integrates information about the achievement of indicators into the annual ministerial report published on its website.

Box 3.7. Cross-ministerial collaboration for coherent environmental policies

Integrated approaches minimise adverse environmental impacts and maximise eco-efficiency. In Lithuania, different governmental institutions co-ordinate their actions in order to increase awareness and ensure the integration of environmental aspects into the implementation measures in their respective policies. Ministries collaborate to approve necessary norms, normative standards and rules as means to achieve environmental objectives. An integral approach is applied to transport, industry, energy, construction, agriculture, housing, tourism, healthcare and other sectors by promoting the use of best available techniques (BAT), effective pollution prevention technologies, and by taking into consideration the life cycle approach to production. Lithuania has implemented an integrated system of pollution prevention and control which includes water, air and soil protection and waste management measures. It ensures compliance via three principles: 1) the BAT is applied and, natural resources are used rationally, economically and energy efficiently; 2) waste is prevented, prepared for reuse, recycled, recovered or disposed of; 3) usage of hazardous substances is reduced and these substances are gradually replaced with less hazardous ones.

Environment and health considerations must be considered as part of an environmental impact assessment of a proposed economic activity before implementation. (Law No I-1495, last amended in April 2016). This set-up prevents environmental deterioration and ensures inclusive and representative decision making on at local, regional and national levels.

Source: OECD (2018), "Country profiles: Institutional mechanisms for policy coherence", in *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2018: Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264301061-6-en>.