

Planning, implementation, follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals



Regional survey by UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia

Geneva and New York, 2 December 2015

Purpose

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York (25-27 September 2015), the Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda, including the ambitious and far-reaching 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Entering into force on 1 January 2016, they will guide sustainable development efforts in all countries in the 15-year period until 2030.

In this context, this survey is sent to the Governments of 56 UNECE member States¹ to collect inputs on three crucial topics:

- The plans and approaches of governments to integrate the SDGs and targets in their national strategies and to implement them in their countries.
- The plans of governments to build and conduct monitoring and review at the national level for the SDGs and targets.
- The expectations of governments towards the regional UN system in view of SDG implementation and follow-up.

The survey is jointly conducted by UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia. The information received will be summarized and shared by their secretariats. It will serve to share experiences and to provide a practical overview of the first steps on the path to achieving the SDGs. Once the results are available, it is further envisaged to organize dialogues with and among member States in Geneva and New York in early 2016 to discuss and take forward the results.

¹ The 56 UNECE member States are listed as follows. They include 17 countries in which the Regional UN Development Group (R-UNDG) works (marked with *). In addition, the R-UNDG is active in Kosovo (under UN Security Council resolution 1244). Albania*, Andorra, Armenia*, Austria, Azerbaijan*, Belarus*, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia*, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan*, Kyrgyzstan*, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova*, Monaco, Montenegro*, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia*, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Turkey*, Turkmenistan*, Ukraine*, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan*.

Questionnaire

Please complete

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REMARKS:*	/

Please return the completed questionnaire by **MONDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2016** to:

UNECE, Sustainable Development and Gender Unit (SDGU)
E-Mail: sdgu@unece.org

*The electronic version of the questionnaire is available at:
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/sustainable-development/Regional_SDG_survey_final.docx*

*The completed questionnaires will be posted on the websites of UNECE and the Regional UN Development Group for Europe and Central Asia (ECA R-UNDG). Please indicate under "Remarks" above if you prefer your reply not to be posted.

For questions or assistance, please contact:
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Note: At the current stage and shortly after the adoption of the SDGs, there may be no consolidated government position yet on many issues raised in the questionnaire. You are therefore kindly encouraged to share any preliminary thinking or tentative considerations you may have that will help provide an informal insight into the state of planning and debate in your Government.

Overall planning

Planning is a key step to embark on the path of SDG implementation. This includes the formulation of national (sustainable) development strategies and the integration of the SDGs in policy measures.

Question 1:

What are the overall plans of your Government to translate the SDGs and targets into action and measures at the national and subnational level and integrate them in national strategies and other policy interventions? In addition, will new planning tools or processes be developed in support of the SDGs or will existing structures be used?

Government of Montenegro has adopted the Draft of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development (NSSD) until 2030 in December 2015. After public hearing and inter-sectoral consultations that are planned for February and March 2016, it is expected that the document will be finalized by the end of June 2016.

NSSD represents improved national policy for sustainable development considering results of the implementation of previous NSSD 2007-2012 as well as international obligations regarding Montenegrin membership in UN and obligations within EU process of integration. In that regard, NSSD represents national response on Agenda 2030 and 17 goals and 169 measures defined in Agenda with clear plan on how to nationalize goals and measures and how to follow its implementation until 2030.

Prioritization

One distinctive feature of the SDGs is their universality, i.e. the entire SDG agenda should be implemented by all countries of the world. Nevertheless, particular topics and targets will be of higher priority than others given a country's specific circumstances.

Question 2:

What is your Government's approach to identify SDGs and targets that have priority for your particular country context?

NSSD offers responses on all priority problems of sustainable development through strategic goals and measures that are further elaborated through detailed Action plan for period 2016-2021. Having in mind that Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 is accepted by all UN member countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities, goals and measures of NSSD are matched with all goals and high

numbers of targets of Agenda 2030. The result is that 73,5% of Agenda 2030 targets of relevance for sustainable development; 73,9% of targets in the area of human resources; 78,2% in the area of natural resources; 81,4% in the area of economic resources and 81,8% in the area of social resources of the Agenda are translated into NSSD. Remaining targets that haven't been translated through NSSD are supposed to be nationalized through implementation into the sectoral and local strategies and policies in the upcoming period.

Adaptation

When devising national and local policies, experience suggests that global goals and targets may be adapted to national circumstances and that objectives, targets and indicators are developed and chosen that are in addition or complementary to the global agenda.

Question 3:

How does your Government foresee to transform global SDGs and targets into local objectives, targets and indicators (“localization” or “nationalization”)?

Having in mind that big percentage (73,5% of Agenda 2030 targets of relevance for sustainable development; 73,9% of targets in the area of human resources; 78,2% in the area of natural resources; 81,4% in the area of economic resources and 81,8% in the area of social resources of the Agenda are translated into NSSD) of the Agenda has been already nationalized within the Draft of the NSSD that Government has adopted in December 2015, the main task will be to incorporate remaining targets in sectoral policies. This work must be done within next period as regular process of harmonization of sectoral policies with National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro which represents umbrella document for the future development of Montenegro as well as implementing of the nationalized Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030.

Governance and budgeting

The SDGs are widely seen as an integrated agenda that encourages holistic policy-making and cross-sectoral cooperation. As such, they may have an impact on institutional and governance structures as well as on processes for resource allocation.

Question 4:

Does your Government envisage any changes in the budgeting processes and governance structures due to the SDGs, and which institution in your Government will oversee SDG implementation in your country?

National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro until 2030 envisages improvement of the existing financing for sustainable development. More precisely, in

order to improve governance for sustainable development, NSSD defines five strategic goals: strengthening the system of governance for sustainable development; strengthening governance for environment by improving application of instruments for environmental protection; carrying out reform of institutional organization of governance for sustainable development; establishing system for monitoring the sustainable development policy including transition from monitoring of MDGs to SDGs and establishing long-term sustainable system of financing for sustainable development.

NSSD defines measures within strategic goals in order to improve financing for sustainable development through establishing a system of sustainable financing mechanism for environmental protection and preserving natural capita, enabling introduction of green economy by mobilizing resources for financing for sustainable development, introducing fiscal measures to support financing sustainable development in line with the Addis Ababa Plan of Action, increasing number of national and international sources of financing. It also propose establishment of the Unit in Ministry of Finance that will be responsible for enabling annual budgetary planning to be in line with NSSD measures and Addis Ababa Plan of Action. This proposal of financing for sustainable development is subject of ongoing consultations and further approval by the Ministry of Finance. In that regard, it is defined to implement system of purposeful planning of annual budget for all budget users with special emphasize on sustainable development activities; establishment of Eco-fond and promotion of mobilization of resources for financing of environmental protection (green fiscal reform); abolish subsidies that are harmful for environment; mobilizing resources for improving of quality of infrastructure in the area of sustainable development; enabling financial support to the development of capacities for implementation of green economy in ten priority sectors and establishing framework for investments for green economy.

Stakeholder involvement

SDG implementation will require forging partnerships and collaboration between a range of actors. This will also have a bearing on the work of governments with other stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and academia.

Question 5:

How does your Government envisage to strengthen existing and build new partnerships with other stakeholders for the purpose of SDG implementation?

Implementing this transformative agenda will be impossible without engaging multiple stakeholders. Local governments, which operate on the front line of development, have an important role in localizing the implementation of the agenda. Parliaments should also play a critical role in national leadership and implementation. The involvement of civil society at all levels needs to be consistently strong.

One of the priorities of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro until 2030 is overcoming fragmentation and enabling active participation of all relevant stakeholders in order to achieve common goal - sustainable development of Montenegrin society based on integration of three dimensions of sustainable development.

NSSD defines strengthening system of measuring efficiency of the work of the public administration and strengthening participation of stakeholders in adoption and implementation of decisions in the area of sustainable development as key measures in achieving this goal. It also defines measures within strategic goal concerning implementation of the reform of institutional organization of the governance for sustainable development and capacity building.

Key partnerships for which Government is looking to be fully operationalized is partnership with UN (especially Eco Soc and HLPF) and all UN agencies and programs bearing in mind the UN announcement of the support that will be created to support countries in implementing Agenda 2030.

UN role in planning and implementation

As recognized in inter-governmental fora, the UN will play a critical role in support of SDG planning and implementation. Some key UN functions and services include providing fora for policy dialogue and exchange; international legal instruments, norms, regulations and standards; policy advice and expertise; capacity-building and technical cooperation. Based on the feedback from its member States, the UN system at the regional level will work towards strengthening and improving regional UN structures and processes and inter-agency cooperation to provide the most 'fit for purpose' SDG-related services.

Question 6:

What are the expectations and needs of your Government regarding the role of the UN system in the region² in assisting with SDG planning and implementation? Please highlight possible areas of improvement as well as any suggestions you may have.

UN system has crucial role in future process of translation of Agenda on national level as well as development of national institutional and strategic framework for sustainable development. Key role of UN/UN agencies that Montenegro expects in future period concerns the assistance regarding the development of indicators and monitoring system for the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro until 2030 which represents national response on global Agenda 2030.

Apart from HLPF which will provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations as well as Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental

² UNECE, R-UNDG, regional or subregional offices or units of UN entities, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, UN Country Teams active in the region.

bodies and forums, we also expect UN and UN agencies and programs help regarding assistance to the countries in translating the 2030 Agenda into local circumstances; capacity development on indicators development and SDGs monitoring as well as strengthening national capacity on sustainable development planning, implementation and monitoring. One of the very important roles of UN is also facilitation of the exchange of knowledge and experiences with the implementation and monitoring process.

Data and Monitoring

While the development of statistical indicators for the SDGs is ongoing, there are many calls for a “data revolution” to ensure that high-quality data will be available to monitor progress under the SDGs. This may involve more and better data, disaggregated data, new data sources, and building and strengthening statistical capacities on the ground.

Question 7:

How does your Government envisage to address the need for data, to strengthen statistical capacities and to monitor SDG progress?

Through the process of development of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro until 2030 we defined need for deep screening of the SDGs and related targets, as well as the list of sustainable development indicators, with the aim to prepare a plan for their successive integration into national statistical and monitoring and reporting system. Important component of this process will also be capacity building of official Statistical Agency staff.

Within the process of development of NSSD, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, together with UNDP, engaged team of national experts supported by international consultant who started a project with the aim of assessing available list of relevant national indicators with regard to their relevance for integration into plan for SDGs and related indicators translation into national context; linking NSSD measures with relevant SDGs targets and indicators; defining dynamic for implementation of the plan for SDGs, related target and indicators successive integration into national statistical and monitoring and reporting system in way to enable full harmonization with SDG platform until 2020 and establish the NSSD implementation monitoring based on SDGs in 2021; developing the NSSD project actions portfolio until 2020 in line with NSSD Action Plan for period 2015-2030; documenting the process and lessons learnt to facilitate knowledge sharing and potential transfer in the region and preparing info graphs to present key NSSD messages.

It is expected that first phase of the project (screening of national available indicators and indicators which integration is needed according to the NSSD) will be finalized by the end of March when it is expected to have UN Stat final list of global set of indicators which will enable Montenegro to compare list of indicators and define dynamic for

successive integration of globally proposed indicators into national statistical and monitoring and reporting system.

Assessment of progress

Based on a solid data foundation, it will be crucial to identify the reasons for SDG progress and shortcomings as well as to derive appropriate policy interventions and corrections.

Question 8:

How does your Government envisage to identify the drivers of satisfactory or unsatisfactory SDG progress and to draw the related policy conclusions?

National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Montenegro until 2030 defines regular system of monitoring of the implementation of NSSD, precisely indicators which are linked to each measure. In that way, depending of the findings of the report Government can identify whether the progress is satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Reporting

National reports are recognized as important cornerstones in the future SDG follow-up process. Typically, they will be government-led and involve a range of other stakeholders. The format and content of national reports is expected to depend on data availability and other constraints. Sharing national reports for discussion and mutual learning could be beneficial for all stakeholders, including at the subregional and regional levels.

Question 9:

What is the current (even preliminary) thinking of your Government regarding possible modalities for reporting on SDG progress at the national level in your country, what are the constraints, and what should be the channels used to share these national reports internationally?

National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030 in its chapter 4.5.4 defines mechanism of reporting on implementation of NSSD and it defines that pilot reporting according the proposed mechanism and set of indicators will be done in 2019.

Process of development as well as sharing of the document is defined in accordance with principles of transparency and accountability. NSSD also defines establishment of web platform for collecting data as well as sharing data publicly in order to make trends visible to broader stakeholders. This approach, together with regular translation of data

in English language, will make reports easy to access and share with all interested parties on national, regional and global level.

NSSD defines structure of the system for monitoring and reporting of the progress in implementation of sustainable development policy as well as measures for improvement of IT system and databases as well as gradual improvement for reporting system of the progress of the implementation of the sustainable development policy.

Specific set of measures within the chapter Governance for sustainable development in NSSD is dedicated to the researches and analysis that needs to be done in order to improve existing programs that are realized by the official Statistical Organization of Montenegro regarding data collection system and monitoring.

UN role in follow-up and review

In addition to providing a possible regional platform (see question 11), the role of the UN in SDG follow-up and review could include statistical support, synthesis of national reports, preparation of thematic reports and other services.

Question 10:

What are the expectations and needs of your Government regarding the role and services of the UN system in the region² in SDG follow-up and review?

See the answer under question 6.

Regional platform

The 2030 Agenda highlights the opportunities of follow-up and review at the regional level for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. Regional reviews should draw on national-level reviews and build on existing review mechanisms. Member States are encouraged to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage, supported by the Regional Commissions.³ Earlier, the General Assembly had invited the Regional Commissions to hold annual meetings in preparation of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF).⁴

Question 11:

³ See outcome document of UN Sustainable Development Summit “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, paras 80 and 81.

⁴ A/RES/67/290, para 13.

How could a regional platform for follow-up and review be designed that integrates national experiences and existing review mechanisms and channels the findings to the global level in a coherent manner?

Our expectation is that all the countries of the region will establish their own national reporting systems in recent time. As we have explained in answers 7 and 9, Montenegro has started the process of establishing its own system in 2016 and it is planned to be operational in 2018. We suggest exchanging of experience in monitoring and evaluation practices within the countries of the region in order to be able comparability of national progress and to be able to report on the progress of implementation of the Agenda 2030 on regional level.
