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 States\(^1\) 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.

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\(^1\) The 56 UNECE member States are listed as follows. They include 17 countries in which the Regional UNDG (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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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY:</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
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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?

The Swedish government already functions through a well-established whole of government approach. All decisions are thus taken by the government as a whole and this provides a good basis for coherent decision making in support of implementation of the Agenda.

The government intends to appoint a committee/delegation to promote Swedish implementation of 2030-agenda. The first step in the process is to identify the areas where action and measures need to be taken.

The government intends to give a number of government agencies the assignment to, within their respective field, contribute to the identification and analysis of how Sweden today relates to the goals and objectives of the 2030-agenda and the Swedish condition for implementation. The government intends to send a translation of the 2030-agenda to a wide range of stakeholders in order to give them an opportunity to also contribute to the work.

The delegation will, with help from the agencies and other stakeholders, submit a proposal for a comprehensive action plan for Sweden’s implementation of the Agenda. In this work and in the action plan the intention is to use existing structures.

Sweden will also adopt a new aid policy framework which has been fully brought in line with the objectives of the 2030-agenda.

**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?

The starting point for Sweden is the integrated and indivisible nature of the Agenda. Sweden will not be adopting a cherry picking approach to its national implementation efforts. Nor do we hope that other countries do so.

However, should there be a political decision taken that some SDGs take precedence in the Swedish national context this would be presented in the action plan for Sweden.

Most likely there will be bigger challenges related to specific targets but if and how specific SDGs will be prioritized is not yet decided. It is however stated in the recent Budget Bill that for the environmental dimension the Swedish Environmental Objectives will be an important point of departure.

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”)?

This will be done within the process of adapting an action plan for Sweden. The dialogue between government ministries, government agencies and authorities and civil society actors has already been initiated. There is a substantial interest from local governments to engage with and to implement the Agenda. This dialogue which focuses on engaging all of Swedish society in implementation will be crucial for achieving “nationalization” in its true form.

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?

Not at present. The entire Government is responsible for the implementation of the 2030-agenda and the SDGs.

Three ministers have been given specific responsibilities for the implementation of the Agenda. In short, the Minister of Public Administration is responsible for the national implementation, the Minister for International Development Cooperation is responsible for the international aspects of the implementation and the Minister for Strategic Development and Nordic Cooperation is responsible for identifying strategic actions.

**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?

Of great importance for the achievement of the objectives in the 2030-agenda is that it is implemented at local and regional level, where municipalities, county councils, and other government agencies operate and interact with the local business community, social partners and civil society. This will be one of the important tasks for the Delegation. It is also emphasized in the guidelines for the delegation’s work that stakeholders should take part in the work and be included in the whole process of implementation.

Sweden has also expressed interest in participating in the Global partnership to end violence against children as a so called “pathfinder country”. As such, Sweden expects to contribute to sharing of knowledge and expertise on global arenas, as well as local, on the prevention of all forms of violence against children.
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 region\(^2\) in assisting with SDG planning and implementation? Please highlight possible areas of improvement as well as any suggestions you may have.

The UN system will be crucial as a “score keeper” of SDG implementation. No other international actor has the same legitimacy and credibility. We thus expect that the UN will be able to assist those countries that so desire with data gathering and compilation with the objective of a) establishing solid base lines, and b) measuring progress/implementation throughout the 15 year period.

We would also hope that the UN system could be helpful in providing assistance as regards intra-regional cooperation and peer learning. Best practices in implementation should be shared and the UN needs to be a convener and an honest broker for such sharing to take place.

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?

\(^2\) UNECE, R-UNDG, regional or subregional offices or units of UN entities, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, UN Country Teams active in the region.
In Sweden the government intends to assign the task to elaborate proposal for national indicators for follow-up to the government agency Statistics Sweden. This will be done in a close dialogue with the stakeholders who will be given the possibility to participate through for example consultations.

The Delegation’s proposal for comprehensive action plan for Sweden's implementation of 2030-agenda will also contain proposals for effective forms of monitoring of the implementation at local, regional and national level in Sweden. These proposals shall, wherever possible, be based on existing statistics and established monitoring structures and forms of consultation.

Availability and accessibility to reliable information and data will be particularly challenging in many developing countries. Sweden has excellent and well documented expertise in working in the area of statistics in our development programs. Statistics Sweden has cooperated with Sida for many years. This work will continue with the aim of promoting better statistics availability especially in LDCs.

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?

The Delegation’s proposal for comprehensive action plan for Sweden’s implementation of Agenda 2030 will also contain proposals for effective forms of monitoring of the implementation at local, regional and national level in Sweden. These proposals shall, wherever possible, be based on existing statistics and established monitoring structures and forms of consultation.

It’s important with a multi-stakeholder approach at all levels, with broad participation from civil society, private sector, trade unions and academia, to ensure a successful implementation and follow-up of the agenda.

Sweden will participate in the voluntary reviews during HLPF at least twice during the 15 year cycle. Our aim is for the national review to be an inclusive process that
encourages discussions on best practices and lessons learnt both nationally and internationally.

**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?

Sweden envisions sharing the results of the national review regularly through regional reviews, including peer-reviews, follow-up in other fora such as the OECD, and during the HLPF. We are also open to innovative ways of displaying progress such as through online platforms and other useful communication tools.

**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 region\(^2\) in SDG follow-up and review?

The UN system will be crucial as a “score keeper” of SDG implementation. It should provide guidelines on follow-up and review to ensure progress can be compared between countries and regions and provide assistance to the work of the HLPF. Likewise, the UN system has an important role in safeguarding the integrated aspects of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the implementation. The UN
system will also provide an important arena for continued development of the indicator framework.

It is important, however, that the resources of the UN, when it comes to supporting national implementation, are directed towards the countries that need it the most.

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:**
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?

We think it’s important that the follow up and review is be based on existing statistics, whenever possible, and established monitoring structures and forms of consultation.

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