ANALYSIS OF THE VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS AT THE HLPF2016

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Background Paper

1ˢᵗ ESDN Peer Learning Platform

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Table of Contents

Introduction

This background paper provides input for the **1ˢᵗ ESDN Peer Learning Platform**, entitled "**Policy coherence and cooperation for the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation**", which takes place in **Brussels on 13 October 2016**. This ESDN event is organized in cooperation with the Belgian Federal Institute for Sustainable Development.

In the context of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this ESDN Background Document provides an analysis and comparison of the reports written by the seven European countries (Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Montenegro, Norway and Switzerland) that took part in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the UN 2016 HLPF. These reports were analysed along four main categories to structure the most relevant content from the VNRs. The four categories that this paper focuses on are: 1) Basic information about the 2030 Agenda Voluntary National Reviews; 2) Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): rationale and involvement; 3) Means of implementation of 2030 Agenda and SDGs; and 4) Monitoring and evaluation. For each of these categories, several guiding questions were introduced to further understand and describe the governance mechanisms involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

This first **ESDN Peer Learning Platform** will try to offer policy-makers from all European countries, experts and selected stakeholders the chance to exchange experiences and learn from implementation practice.

The **platform will have the following objectives**:

- To provide the opportunity to exchange and discuss the needs of national policy-making with regards to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD, and to share experiences and perspectives on how to design policies and processes, and how to link them to national sustainable development strategies;

- Test the ESDN peer learning approach for future fine-tuning of this new mechanism for peer learning.

The **platform** will include an opening and orientating session, followed by four main 'Spaces for Exchange:

- **Space for Exchange 1**: Experiences and lessons learned from the 2016 HLPF Voluntary National Reviews;
- **Space for Exchange 2**: Policy coherence – Overcoming 'silo' thinking;
- **Space for Exchange 3**: Cooperation between the different policy levels;
- **Space for Exchange 4**: How to bring these ideas back home.

A full documentation of the keynotes, discussions and group work at the platform will be published in a report shortly after the event.

Analysis of European countries' Voluntary National Reviews at HLPF2016

We provide an analysis and comparison of the reports by the seven European countries that took part in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the UN 2016 HLPF, which consisted of Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Montenegro, Norway and Switzerland. We looked into these reports and used four main categories to structure our work: 1) Basic information about the 2030 Agenda Voluntary National Reviews; 2) Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): rationale and involvement; 3) Means of implementation of 2030 Agenda and SDGs; and 4) Monitoring and evaluation. For each of these macro-categories we used several further guiding questions that we will introduce and describe in the following four sections.

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2030 AGENDA VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

Table 2.1, below, shows the basic information on the VNRs of the seven European countries previously mentioned. The length of the reports varied, ranging from 28 and 29 pages of the Swiss and Norwegian reports respectively, to the 163 pages of the report from Montenegro.

In terms of the ministry, or ministries, responsible for drafting the VNR, we can see that each country followed a different way to approach this issue. While **Norway** and **Montenegro** assigned the responsibility to draft the report to their ministries that are in charge for Sustainable Development (Montenegro) or Foreign Affairs (Norway), the other countries used either an inter-ministerial working group, as in **Switzerland** and **France**, or showed a cooperative effort among different bodies, as in **Finland,** or **Estonia** with the involvement of the governmental office.

Table 2.1 Basic information on the Voluntary National Reports of 7 European countries

	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Montenegro	Norway	Switzerland
Title and link to the report	REVIEW ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA IN ESTONIA	National report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development FINLAND	Report on the Implementation by France of the Sustainable Development Goals	Report of the German Federal Government to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016	VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS AT THE HLPF 2016 MONTENEGRO	INITIAL STEPS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA	Switzerland's initial steps towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
Length of the report	60 pages	64 pages	53 pages	59 pages	163 pages	29 pages	28 pages
Ministry/ ministries responsible for drafting the Review Report	Strategy Unit of the Government Office coordinated the VNR (VNR ratified by SD Working Group and Estonia's Commission for SD)	- Secretariat General of Finnish National Commission on SD - Prime Minister's Office - Ministry for Foreign Affairs	Inter-ministerial Representative for SD General Commissioner for SD (tasked by the Prime Minister)	*- not clearly specified*	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Inter-ministerial working group

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS (VNRs): RATIONALE AND INVOLVEMENT

In this category of our comparison, we aimed at understanding and analysing a number of important characteristics that the VNRs could share. We believe that such categories and contents could also **support other countries in the preparation of their reviews,** as well as towards the participation in future High-Level Political Forums. Additionally, we imagine that this comparison of VNRs, which is ultimately about the sharing of experiences, could **facilitate peer learning and the establishment and improvement of practices** in the context of the implementation of strategies and policies that further the cause of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

First and foremost, we analysed the seven VNRs to discern the **reasoning behind** such an exercise, the **expected use** that countries had imagined, and the **added value** that it could bring. In the majority of countries, the report was mostly aimed at describing **first steps and future plans** towards 2030 Agenda implementation that countries had started considering, were about to undertake, or were already employed. In **Montenegro**, for example, the VNR related especially to the **drafting** of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) and its corresponding action plan, adopted in July 2016 almost in conjunction with the HLPF. Countries reported about the added value and about a numerous of beneficial effects that the exercises brought to them. In **Finland**, for instance, the VNR clearly served as an **interim report** towards the realisation of the Finnish **national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda for SD** that will be prepared by the end of 2016. In **Estonia**, the VNR functioned as a **preliminary gap analysis**, while in **France**, the VNR worked as a first review for each SDG. In **Norway**, the main benefit can be summarised by the fact that the VNR acted as a **catalyst for the 2030 Agenda implementation**: the review, therefore, contributed to **greater political and public awareness** about the SDGs and gave **greater coherence and ownership of follow-up process** within the government. In several cases, the VNRs were seen as important exercises, because they promoted and supported a process of **mutual learning** and **experience sharing**. Additionally, VNRs were used as key tools to understand and identify **main issues and challenges** with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

We then tried to understand and compare the type of **participatory arrangements** that were undertaken in the preparation of the Voluntary National Reviews. To do so, we used three different 'lenses': first, we looked for the involvement of the administrative machinery at the national level, and inquired about the involvement of ministries. Then, we looked into the inclusion of stakeholders. And finally, we searched for the participation at the sub-national level. A main result of our analysis is that participatory arrangements in the preparation of VNRs are not always clearly specified in the different documents that were looked into: **in many cases, it was not possible to differentiate between these three levels of analysis**. It appears, however, that pre-existing mechanisms for consultation, most probably developed in the context of SD policymaking, were often used. **Switzerland** reported that existing mechanisms for **fostering policy coherence for sustainable development at the federal level** would be strengthened: "[t]he preparation of Federal Council decisions in consultation with various offices or in inter-ministerial working groups on specific topics is central to ensuring policy coherence at the federal level. These consultation and coordination processes examine the Confederation's initiatives in specific sectors to ensure that they are congruent with sustainable development. The task here is to make greater use of synergies between different policies and to mitigate any conflicting aims and negative side effects. The research and groundwork that is required to set up an observation system for the various aspects of foreign policy, and the relevant monitoring instruments, is currently under way". With respect to the involvement of ministries in

Switzerland and **Estonia** it was reported that there was **clear cooperation between them,** or there was cooperation that took place using **an 'inter-ministerial working group'**. In **Switzerland**, the **inter-ministerial working group was** comprised of representatives from federal offices and was led by Federal Office for Spatial Development and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In **Germany**, each coordinating ministry provided input on its respective goal(s). In **Montenegro**, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism conducted public consultations. With respect to the participation of **stakeholders**, broad consultations took place in almost all countries, especially with the **inclusion of civil society organisations**. Only in **Germany**, consultation of the **sub-national level** was clearly specified in the report, and saw, in particular, the inclusion of parliaments, federal states, and local authorities among others.

TABLE 2.2 VNR rationale and involvement

	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Montenegro	Norway	Switzerland
Reasoning, expected use and added value of the VNR	- Describes the **main measures and plans** for implementation - Functions as **preliminary gap analysis** of governments' policies relating to SDGs - Tracks implementation of SDGs and targets - Highlights **challenges** - **Shares positive examples**	Serves as **interim report** on Agenda 2030 implementation	- **First review of the implementation** of each of the SDGs in France - Identifies **main issues and challenges**, government courses of action, and good practices and model measures already in place - **Experience sharing**	- Describes **current and future plans** for 2030 Agenda implementation - Promotes and supports a process of **mutual learning**	- Relates to drafting of the NSSD (adopted in July 2016) and corresponding action plan	- Outlines **initial steps** to incorporate SDGs - Contributes to **greater political and public awareness** about the SDGs - Results in being a **catalyst** for 2030 Agenda implementation - Gives **greater coherence and ownership** of follow-up process within Government	Presents **first steps towards 2030 Agenda implementation**
Participatory arrangements in the preparation of VNRs: **Ministries involved**	**Cooperation** with several ministries and Estonian SD Commission	*- not clearly specified*	*- not clearly specified*	*- not clearly specified*	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism conducted the public consultations	**Each coordinating ministry provided input on its respective goal(s)**	**Inter-ministerial working group**
Participatory arrangements in the preparation of VNRs: **Stakeholders involved**	*- not clearly specified*	In the context of Finland's Gap analysis, a **participatory stakeholder process and expert assessments** was used to outline key themes requiring urgent attention	- **Consultations with civil society** (i.e. National Council for Ecological Transition, the National Council for Development and International Solidarity and the National Advisory Commission on Human Rights)	Broad discussion with stakeholders (i.e. NGOs, churches, local authorities, Academia, business community and trade unions) through the **'dialogue forum'** on the 2030 Agenda	- Public consultations - National Council for SD and Climate Change	- Business sector, CSOs and Sami Parliament participated in **informal consultations** with politicians and officials preparing the review - CSOs held meetings, submitting input to VNR preparation	VNR was discussed within **pre-existing participatory consultation mechanisms**
Participatory arrangements in the preparation of VNRs: **Sub-national levels involved**	*- not clearly specified*	*- not clearly specified*	*- not clearly specified*	Consultations with other governmental actors e.g. **parliaments, federal states, local authorities**	**Existing coordination mechanisms** of National SD Council enabled participation of interested parties at the national/local level (in NSSD preparation)	*- not clearly specified*	VNR was discussed within the **pre-existing participatory consultation mechanisms**

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF 2030 AGENDA AND SDGS

In this section we analyse which initiatives have started, are about to start, or are planned to start with regard to the **implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD and the related SDGs** within these seven countries. To do so, we set several categories that would help in understanding:

1) What is the leading ministry/institution in the 2030 Agenda implementation? Who is in charge? Who is responsible?
2) Are there any other ministries involved? If yes, which ones and how? Does it happen through coordination mechanisms?
3) Is the sub-national level involved? If yes, which ones (i.e. regions, municipalities)? And how?
4) Are stakeholders involved? If yes, which ones ((i.e. CSOs, business, academia)? And how?
5) Is there a link between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda/SDGs to existing SD policy strategy documents (i.e. National SD Strategy)
6) How are SDGs and targets approached and implemented? Is the country addressing all SDGs? Only a few? Is there some sort of prioritisation?
7) What challenges to implementation?

Leading ministry/institution in the 2030 Agenda implementation

With respect to which institution is in charge, leads, or coordinates the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we see that there is no common way to approach this matter. However, we see that **four out of seven countries have assigned the leading/coordinating role to a high political level, close to governments**: in **Finland**, the **Prime Minister's Office** coordinates the 2030 Agenda implementation as part of the secretarial duties of the Finnish National Commission on SD. In **Switzerland**, although implementation of the NSDS is primarily a matter for the federal offices concerned, the **political responsibility lies with the Federal Council**. In **Germany**, the **State Secretaries Committee for Sustainable Development** steers the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy that incorporates the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: such a Committee comprises representatives from all federal ministries and is chaired by the Head of the Federal Chancellery. In **Estonia**, the **Strategy Unit of the Government Office** is coordinating the work of both the **sustainable development working group** as well as the **Commission for Sustainable Development**.

France and Montenegro have established responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in **one ministry**. In **France**, the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea is in charge of SD. In **Montenegro**, the responsibility seems to be assigned to the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism. In **Norway**, the approach seems rather different, because individual ministries are responsible for follow-up on the SDGs, and they should coordinate amongst themselves.

Involvement of other ministries in the 2030 Agenda implementation

Apart from France, for which we were not able to meaningfully understand which ministries were involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda and how they were involved in implementing it, the remaining six countries touch upon this matter in their reports. The picture is different in each instance, but we can report at least one very indicative similarity: **four countries, Estonia, Finland**, **Germany** and **Switzerland, have established a type of coordination mechanism at the inter-ministerial level**. In **Switzerland**, for example, the implementation of the NSDS is coordinated by the Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC), which is comprised of representatives from all federal offices whose activities are of relevance to

sustainable development. The ISDC is chaired by the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC). In **Germany**, the State Secretaries Committee for SD is another example, in which representatives from all federal ministries are included: ministries are responsible for their own contributions to the NSDS and the 2030 Agenda, but must cooperate with other ministries. In **Estonia**, a **coordination system** includes the **Intra-Ministerial Sustainable Development Working Group** and the **Commission for Sustainable Development** (that is composed of NGOs). In **Finland**, as mentioned, the Prime Minister's Office set-up a **coordination secretariat** that is responsible for planning, preparing, coordinating and ensuring the national implementation of Agenda 2030. The secretariat is comprised of representatives from the Secretariat General of the **Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development**, the **Ministry for Foreign Affairs,** and the **Prime Minister's Office**. Also, consisting of representatives of other key Ministries, the **Sustainable Development Coordination Network** supports and guides the work of the coordination secretariat. This is very unique in Finland and it is also one of the key success stories concerning SD policymaking's enhancement of governance for SD: the network has been responsible for the coordination of SD between various administrative sectors for almost **twenty years**. It prepares, develops and coordinates SD efforts in Finland, with the **objective of increasing policy coherence with regard to mainstreaming sustainable development as part of Government policy**. Members of the coordination network act as contacts and people in charge of SD within their respective branches of Government. Each member of the network coordinates and integrates the views of their administrative branch with the National SD Plan and SD work. The network convenes around ten times a year. It is very important, with respect to the 2030 Agenda, the **national parliament and policy makers** participate in drawing up the implementation plan. Finally, the **National Commission on SD** and the **Development Policy Committee** play a key role in the national implementation, assessment and monitoring of Agenda 2030.

In **Norway**, each ministry coordinates with other ministries regarding the SDGs, and submits an account in its budget proposal for its respective goal(s); it is then the Ministry of Finance that sums up the main points in the national budget and presents it annually to the Parliament. In **Montenegro**, the process of drafting the NSDS until 2030 involved the work of an **expert team and a participatory process**, which included ministries, expert institutions, and institutions in the public sector, local self-governments, the parliament, academia, civil society organizations and the business community, which took an active part in the development of NSDS until 2030, which is focused on the SDGs

Involvement of the subnational level in the 2030 Agenda implementation

Regarding the **involvement of the subnational level**, the overview is not clear. In fact, only three countries specifically mentioned the subnational level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In **Finland**, **regions and municipalities will play a key role in the implementation of Agenda 2030**. To enhance participation in the preparation of the national implementation plan, a regional tour of Finland should disseminate information on Agenda 2030, while developing cooperation and regional implementation models in the spirit of Agenda 2030: regional tours are being planned in cooperation with cities, municipalities, regions, NGOs and signatories of the regional operational commitments to sustainable development. In **Germany**, the federal government is engaged in **regular dialogue with the 16 federal states** on matters relating to SD, and, in particular, on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The federal states, for example, participated in the new edition of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. In **Switzerland**, the sub-national level is involved

through **implementation partnerships between the Confederation, cantons, communes and stakeholders**.

Involvement of Stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda implementation

We then looked into whether and how stakeholders were involved or planned to be involved in 2030 Agenda implementation. **All countries involve and intend to keep involving stakeholders**. However, it seems that **different grades of involvement** are expected **from a consultation typology to a more institutionalised and structured** kind of involvement. For instance, in **France**, **consultative workshops** on the implementation of the SDGs are organised whilst a **committee of international experts** was set up to inform government thinking. In **Germany**, citizen and various interest groups are involved especially **through the updating of the NSDS** i.e. **via Internet** and **through hearings**.

At least three countries seem to use a **more structured way to involve stakeholders**: in **Switzerland**, stakeholders are included **through implementation partnerships** between the Confederation, sub-national level and representatives of business, civil society, politics and academia. In **Estonia**, NGOs are included in Estonia's **Commission for SD**, and the so-called "**Code of Good Engagement**" works to involve interest groups and the general public on decisions that would affect them. In **Finland**, broad-based participation of stakeholder groups in preparing the implementation plan and then implementing 2030 Agenda is a key objective through i.e. **creation of partnerships**, **institutional arrangements**, **open internet surveys**, **mobilisation of private sector resources**, **long-term and integrated approach to SD in early education/schools/universities**, **involvement of a broad spectrum of Finnish citizens**.

Awareness raising initiatives and **outreach activities** were also specifically mentioned: for instance, in **Estonia**, the report talks about a SD Forum and the European Sustainable Development Week[1].

Link of 2030 Agenda/SDGs to existing SD policy strategy documents

All countries but Norway **linked the implementation of 2030 Agenda and SDGs to existing SD policy-strategy documents in a clear direct way**. Most countries **have revised or about to revise their national SD strategy to incorporate 2030 Agenda**:

- In **Finland**, *Society's Commitment to SD* – the Finnish NSDS – was **updated in April 2016** to better correspond to the principles, SDGs and targets of 2030 Agenda: its vision, principles and eight strategic objectives serve as a political framework for SD work among various administrative branches and societal actors, and are now related to all SDGs;

- In **Montenegro**, the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development until 2030* **adopted in July 2016** seems already to establish the basis for the integration of SDGs into other relevant national policies, plans and programs;

- In **Germany**, the revision of the NSDS is scheduled to be completed in **Autumn 2016**, and will reflect the 2030 Agenda and SDGs;

- In **Estonia**, the Estonian NSDS will be reviewed by **Autumn 2016** to incorporate 2030 Agenda;

- **France** is in the **planning stages of its new strategy** that will incorporate the SDGs.

Also in **Switzerland**, the NSDS is mentioned and is thoroughly described, because it consists of a **concrete action plan**, structured into nine thematic areas of action that relate to all the SDGs within the Swiss context.

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[1] The ESDW is a European-wide initiative to stimulate and make visible activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It takes place every year from 30 May until 05 June.

In the Swiss case, there will be a **transition phase** from 2016 to 2017, during which the alignment of the Swiss sustainability policy to the 2030 Agenda will be developed further through the following measures: (i) preparation of **baseline study and gap analysis** to identify and define future areas for implementing the 2030 Agenda; (ii) developing **future processes** to implement the 2030 Agenda; (iii) definition of **internal structure and responsibilities** within the Federal Administration; (iv) **expansion of the existing sustainable monitoring system** (MONET); (v) determining ways in which **stakeholder participation can be enhanced**; (vi) preparation for the **2018 HLPF Swiss' VNR**.

Some countries also clearly refer to the development of an **'Action Plan' or 'Implementation Plan'**, such as in **Finland**, where a national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda is set to be completed **by the end of 2016**. In **France**, a national action plan will also be developed, working with all players at each stage (definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and regular reviews). Although **no separate implementation plan** for its NSDS is foreseen in **Estonia**, the integration of SDGs into various thematic development plans is guaranteed via a **strategic planning system**. In fact, government regulations require that when drawing up development plans, the SDGs must be taken into account. Reaching the goals is achieved via various thematic development strategies and their implementation plans, such as the Action Programme for 2015-2019 or the State Budget Strategy 2017-2020. In **Norway**, no direct mention of any SD policy-strategy document is made in the VNR. However, the report affirms that the Norwegian Government already developed a **plan for national follow-up of the SDGs**, which is **linked to the budget process**.

Approach to SDGs and targets implementation

In terms of the **approaches used towards SDGs and target implementation**, we tried to understand if countries considered the 17 SDGs and targets as a whole, or only considered a few, or if there was a prioritisation of certain goals.

In general, we can see that the **majority of countries took all the SDGs**, and went a step further by showing in their reports how **each SDG was individually addressed and broken down into specific issues within the national context and how to address them**. Some countries performed **gap analyses** to understand how the country could relate to all SDGs and targets. For instance, in **Estonia**, estimations show that about one third of the 169 targets are covered either partly or via international cooperation. However, the adaptation of the SDGs and targets to national contexts also showed, that not all targets and international indicators are to be incorporated in the national SD strategy due to the national context, and partly countries have their own objectives and targets in some areas that are even more ambitious than the 2030 Agenda, which was the case for Germany In some other cases, priorities are set. In **Norway**, for instance, although priority is given to 'ensuring quality education and employment', especially for young people and those at risk of marginalisation, each of the 17 goals has been identified for follow up by the respective ministries.

Challenges to implementing 2030 Agenda and SDGs

With regards to **challenges**, the majority of countries identified SDG-specific related challenges. The most common relate to the use of natural resources, resource efficiency, economic development, inequality, and unemployment. In **Germany**, for example, challenges are outlined in relation to each SDG and avenues to overcome them are provided.

Four out seven countries reported about **general implementation challenges**, the most common being: (1) increasing awareness and ownership; (2) development of indicators for SDGs, measuring and reporting on progress; (3) consideration of the Agenda 2030 as a new paradigm, and therefore adapting it into national policies and strategies; (4) inter-linkages between SDG areas.

Finland appears to be the one country that put the largest attention regarding the challenges of implementation. We report such challenges in their entirety, as they seem to offer interesting points for reflection and discussion:

1) Long chronological perspective of 2030 Agenda in relation to other political cycles;
2) Ensuring policy coherence;
3) Strengthening ownership and commitment and the Government's facilitating role;
4) Ensuring the synergy of implementation in execution at various levels;
5) Achieving transformation and in-depth changes;
6) Transforming abstract objectives into tangible, practical activities;
7) Strengthening the discourse on SD (content and operating models);
8) Mobilisation of resources of various administrative branches and stakeholder groups;
9) Developing operating models for the use of indicators and the monitoring of implementation;
10) Integrating the various dimensions of SD, requiring the creation of a new mind-set;
11) Understanding the relationships between various goals;
12) Defining a suitable set of means of implementation;
13) Ensuring the correct timing of measures;
14) Bringing SDGs closer to citizens and making them tangible enough.

TABLE 2.3 Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Montenegro	Norway	Switzerland
Leading ministry/institution in the 2030 Agenda implementation	**Strategy Unit of the Government Office**	**Prime Minister's Office** coordinates 2030 Agenda implementation	**Ministry of the Environment, Energy and the Sea** is in charge of SD	**State Secretaries Committee for SD** steers implementation of NSDS incorporating 2030 Agenda/SDGs	**Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism**	**Individual ministries are responsible for follow-up on the SDGs**	**Political responsibility lies with the Federal Council**
Involvement of other ministries involved?	A **coordination system** includes: - **Intra-Ministerial SD Working Group** - **Commission for SD**	- **Coordination secretariat** (in the Prime Minister's Office) - **SD coordination network** - **National Parliament** and **policy makers** - **National Commission on SD** and **Development Policy Committee**	- *not clearly specified*	- **Representatives from all federal ministries** are included in the State Secretaries Committee for SD - Ministries are responsible for their own contributions to the NSDS and the 2030 Agenda, but must cooperate with other ministries	The process of drafting the NSDS until 2030 (which is focused on the SDGs) involved the work of an **expert team and a participatory process**, including ministries, experts, public sector institutions, local governments, parliament, academia, CSOs and business	- **Each ministry coordinates with other ministries** regarding SDGs, and submits an account in its budget proposal for its respective goal(s); - **Ministry of Finance** sums up the main points in the national budget and presents it annually to Parliament	The **Interdepartmental SD Committee (ISDC)** coordinates NSDS implementation
Involvement of the subnational level	- *not clearly specified*	The **regions and municipalities** will play a key role in 2030 Agenda implementation	- *not clearly specified*	Federal government engages in regular dialogue with the 16 federal states on SD issues, and in particular on 2030 Agenda implementation	*Please see above*	- *not clearly specified*	Sub-national level is involved through **implementation partnerships between Confederation, cantons, communes and stakeholders**
Involvement of stakeholders	- NGOs are in Estonia's **Commission for SD** - **Code of Good Engagement** - **Awareness raising initiatives** (i.e. ESDW)	**Broad-based participation of stakeholder groups** to prepare implementation plan and in 2030 Agenda implementation is a key objective	- **Consultative workshops on SDGs implementation** - **Committee of international experts** was set up to inform government thinking	**Citizen and interest groups** are involved especially through NSDS updating i.e. via the Internet and through hearings	*Please see above*	**Relevant stakeholders will keep engaging in a constructive dialogue with the Government** on implementation and follow-up of the Agenda	**Stakeholders are included through implementation partnerships** between the Confederation, sub-national level, business, civil society, politics and academia

	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Montenegro	Norway	Switzerland
Link of 2030 Agenda/SDGs to existing SD policy strategy documents	Review of the Estonian NSDS "Sustainable Estonia21" will incorporate Agenda 2030 (Autumn 2016)	**- Society's Commitment to SD** (April 2016-update to better correspond to 2030 Agenda) - End of 2016: **National Plan to implement 2030 Agenda**	**Planning stages of its new strategy to incorporate SDGs** **- National action plan will be developed**,	Revision of NSDS will reflect 2030 Agenda and SDGs (Autumn 2016). 2030 Agenda implementation linked to Federal Government budget	**National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) until 2030** establishes basis for SDGs integration into relevant national policies, plans and programs	**Plan for national follow-up of the SDGs**, linked to the budget process (<u>no direct mention of SD policy strategy document</u>)	- **NSDS 2016-2019**: concrete action plan funded via budgets approved for individual federal offices - **Transition phase** 2016-2017 to further align Swiss SD policy to 2030 Agenda
Approach to SDGs and targets implementation	Each SDG is individually addressed and broken down into specific issues within the national context and related measures to address them - **Gap analysis** of Estonian governments' policies and SDGs - **Preliminary comparative analysis** with SDGs and targets - **Mapping** of policy measures	- By end of 2016, decision on how SDGs will be phased as part of the preparations for the National Plan to implement 2030 Agenda - Update in April 2016 aligned Finland's SD policy fairly well with 2030 Agenda. Its eight objectives **include all SDGs** and involve **extensive implementation of 11 SDGs**	Each SDG (and related target) has been adapted to the French context and will be considered in the development of the upcoming national action plan	- Each SDG is individually addressed and broken down into specific issues within the national context and related measures to address them - **Not all targets** and international indicators are to be incorporated in the NSDS due to the national context, and partly because Germany's own objectives and targets in some areas are more ambitious	**Prioritisation was carried out in NSSD**, as follows: improving the state of human resources and strengthening social inclusion, support to values, norms and behavior patterns important for the sustainability of society, preservation of natural capital, introduction of green economy, governance for SD, and financing for SD	- Each SDG is individually addressed and broken down into specific issues within the national context and related measures - Each SDG was identified for follow-up by respective ministries; - **Priority is given to** 'ensuring quality education and employment', especially for young people and those at risk of marginalisation	- **Addressing all SDGs** - **SDGs are integrated into nine thematic areas of action within the Swiss context**
Challenges to implementation	- **Challenges relate to SDGs and targets** (i.e. developing an energy- and a resource efficient economy, lowering CO2 emissions per capita) - **General implementation challenges identified**	- SDG-specific challenges relate especially with combating climate change and the use of natural resources, and economic development and employment trends - **General implementation challenges identified**	- **Challenges relate to SDGs and targets**: Reduce inequalities, Maintain healthy ecosystems, Manage sustainably natural resources; Reduce unemployment, especially among young people	**Challenges are outlined in relation to each SDG and provides avenues to overcome them**	- **Challenges relate to SDGs and targets** (i.e. maintain macroeconomic stability, accelerate economic growth by introducing green economy, strengthening resource efficiency)	- **General implementation challenges identified** - SDG-specific challenges relate especially with SCP, health and education, equality, employment, and migration	**General implementation challenges identified**

In terms of the quantitative aspect of SD monitoring, **indicators and monitoring** are approached with strong interest, especially when one considers the fact that each country has already set its system, or framework, of SD indicators and has been developed through the years, such as the Swiss SD monitoring system known as MONET, which was recently amended in May 2016 with approximately 75 indicators, or the Finnish FINDICATOR, with its 39 sustainable development indicators. All countries are, therefore, facing the **challenge to adapt, amend and translate the SDGs indicators into their national contexts**.

For instance, in **Norway**, the proposed global indicators are seen as a good starting point, but there is the necessity to start adapting indicators that are most relevant for Norway's national context and, at the same time, define other indicators that would better ensure a comprehensive follow-up. Also, in **Germany**, there is the idea that a number of indicators would need to be developed to better correspond to the goals set out in the German NSDS. In **Estonia**, an **initial overview** of the 231 global SDG indicators found that approximately 14% of these indicators would already be measurable. Similarly, in **Finland**, according to a **preliminary expert assessment** conducted during the **gap analysis**, basic data for 42% of the SDGs indicators would be found, while 43% of them would require separate data collection.

All seven countries **have amended, are in the process of reviewing, or are about to start the revision of their national SD indicators in light of the SDG indicators**, as proposed by the UN Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) in March 2016. For instance, in **Finland**, the national sustainable development indicators will be revised in autumn 2016 to correspond to the national sustainable development policy (Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development – updated in April 2016), and the national 2030 Agenda implementation plan; the indicators should be completed by the end of 2016[2]. In **Montenegro**, a platform was established for translating SDGs and SD indicators into the national context. In **Estonia**, in cooperation with an inter-ministerial working group, the Estonian Statistics Office and the Estonian SD Commission, SD indicators will be renewed in 2016 with the intention to take the SDGs into account and to reflect Estonia's challenges in fulfilling the SDGs. In **France**, the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) is conducting a **feasibility study** on the SDG indicators.

With respect to the qualitative side, **Evaluation and Review** are clearly specified in all countries, excluding France and Norway. The remaining countries clearly refer to reviews, regular updates or progress reports that evaluate SD policies and strategies. For instance, the update carried out in April 2016 aligned **Finland**'s SD policy fairly well with the 2030 Agenda: its eight objectives appear to include all 17 SDGs and involve the **extensive implementation of 11 SDGs**. The review of the **Estonian** NSDS - in light of 2030 Agenda – should be completed in fall of 2016. In addition, the Estonian Government Office, in co-operation with the Inter-ministerial SD Working Group, has initiated a compliance analysis related to the global SDGs. In **Switzerland**, the Federal Council will produce an evaluation report on NSDS implementation in 2018, and it will serve as a proposal for the following NSDS 2020-2023. In **Germany**, the next progress report of the NSDS is envisaged for 2020. In **Montenegro**, an **upcoming two-year period review** of the national

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[2] Finland, however, reports that, as the proposed 231 SDGs indicators by IAEG will likely be completed in several years, the Finnish gap analysis project used two available, indicator-based comparisons: (a) Preliminary Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index (published by Jeffrey Sachs' working group in spring 2016); (b) comparison published by the Bertelsmann Foundation in 2015 (Kroll 2015).

institutional system should confirm and elaborate mechanisms and measures set out in its NSSD in relation to the SDGs and indicators in the national context.

Finland considers **transparent monitoring and reporting on the 2030 Agenda** as prerequisites for accountability towards citizens. In Finland, SD national status and its strategic implementation were already evaluated in 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2012. In Switzerland, Federal Offices are required to include SD and work on the SDGs in their own reports, and **regular updates** on target achievement and implementation of measures should be foreseen under the NSDS Action Plan.

With reference to the UN system, some countries are already planning a **second review** in future High-Level Political Forums. **Germany** plans to participate with a second Voluntary National Review at the 2021 HLPF, while **Switzerland** foresees a second VNR in the 2018 HLPF based on the findings from the *transition phase*. **Finland** says it could report to the UN approximately every four years, although the reviews should be preceded by a general, national discussion of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with Parliament playing a key role in the debate.

Table 2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Montenegro	Norway	Switzerland
Indicators and monitoring (Quantitative)	- Initial overview of 231 global SDG indicators: approximately 14% are already measurable - SD indicators will be renewed in 2016 and take SDGs into account) to reflect Estonia's challenges in fulfilling the SDGs.	- Government responsibility to monitor 2030 Agenda implementation is to be defined in national implementation plan for 2030 Agenda (end of 2016) - National SD indicators will be revised in autumn 2016 to match NSDS and 2030 Agenda plan of implementation	The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) is conducting a feasibility study on the SDGs Indicators	- Some indicators will be developed to better correspond to goals set out in the NSDS - The next indicator report on the strategy will be published in 2018	The NSSD established a platform for translating SDGs and SD indicators into the national context, in order to link them, already in the initial stage and to the monitoring of progress in the implementation of measures defined in the NSSD Action Plan until 2030	- The proposed global indicators are seen as a good starting point - Start adapting indicators that are most relevant for Norway's national context - Define other indicators of its own as required to ensure comprehensive follow-up	- Swiss SD monitoring system (MONET) - Approximately 75 indicators (amended in May 2016)
Evaluation and review (Qualitative)	- **Review of the Estonian NSDS in light of Agenda 2030 (Autumn 2016)** - Additionally, the Government Office, in co-operation with the Inter-ministerial SD Working Group, has initiated a compliance analysis related to the global SDGs	- SD national status and its strategic implementation were evaluated in 2003, 2007, 2008 and 2012 - In preliminary discussions, Finland could report to the UN approx. every four years (but preceded by a general, national discussion of the implementation of Agenda 2030, with Parliament playing a key role in the debate) - Transparent monitoring and reporting of 2030 Agenda are seen as prerequisites for accountability towards citizens	- *not clearly specified*	- Next progress report on the NSDS is envisaged for 2020 - Germany plans to participate in the VNR at the 2021 HLPF	**Upcoming two-year period review** of the national institutional system to confirm and elaborate mechanisms and measures set out in NSSD in relation to SDGs and indicators in the national context	- *not clearly specified*	- Federal Offices are required to include SD and work on SDGs in their own reports - **Regular updates** on target achievement and implementation of measures under the NSDS Action Plan - Federal Council will produce an evaluation report on NSDS implementation in 2018 (as proposal for next NSDS 2020-2023) - Based on findings from transition phase, Switzerland will present at 2018 HLPF