



VERTICAL INTEGRATION IN THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

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Background  
Paper

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## Introduction

This Conference Background Paper provides input for the **ESDN Conference 2016**, entitled “**Vertical integration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Addressing the role of the sub-national and local levels**”, which takes place in **Bern, Switzerland on 10-11 November 2016**, in cooperation with the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE). The conference will be a 1.5 day event, bringing together policy-makers and experts from different stakeholder groups from all over Europe. The conference will provide an excellent chance to take stock of the current 2030 Agenda/SDGs implementation experiences, in general, and in the different European countries, as well as to discuss the role of, and activities on, the sub-national and local levels in the 2030 Agenda/SDG implementation. The conference will comprise of five sessions:

- Session 1: Current status of 2030 Agenda and SDGs activities at the UN;
- Session 2: National activities for implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs – update, future plans and vertical integration efforts;
- Session 3: Role and activities of the sub-national levels in the 2030 Agenda and SDGs implementation;
- Session 4: Vertical integration and cooperation between different political levels;
- Session 5: Recommendations for fostering vertical integration in the 2030 Agenda/SDGs implementation in different contexts.

In the context of the discussions on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SD) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this ESDN Conference Background Paper provides an outlook on the vertical integration mechanisms that are currently present in European countries and supporting SD policy-making within National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDSs). The Background Paper also offers an analysis and comparison of vertical integration mechanisms included in the High Level Political Forum 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, in order to structure the most relevant content from the VNRs. The Background Paper will show some of the work done by the ESDN-supported project known as the European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) as a platform for local initiatives for SD that have already been linked to the SDGs. Finally, the Background Paper will provide short information on the inputs that will be presented at the ESDN Conference 2016 during the interactive work of Session 3 with the intention to provide a general background of regional and local activities in the context of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

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

## Vertical policy integration

For **vertical policy integration** mechanisms, we describe the way countries deal with the challenges of coordinating and integrating SD strategies and policies **across different levels of governance**, from the European level, to the national and regional level, down to the local level. The chapter firstly looks into two crucial documents in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely: the Declaration itself, and the President's Summary of the High-Level Political Forum 2016. The chapter then provides an overview of the National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDSs) processes in European countries and how they address vertical policy integration. Finally, the chapter offers an outlook on the mechanisms of vertical integration included in the reports by the seven European countries that took part in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the UN 2016 HLPF, namely: Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Montenegro, Norway and Switzerland.

### THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SD ACKNOWLEDGES THE ROLE OF SUB-NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

The [2030 Agenda for SD](#) makes several references to the importance that the subnational and local level will play in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We list below the paragraphs in the 2030 Agenda for SD, "Transforming our World", with highlights that are particularly important for the ESDN Conference 2016:

34. We recognize that sustainable urban development and management are crucial to the quality of life of our people. We will **work with local authorities and communities** to renew and plan our cities and human settlements so as to foster community cohesion and personal security and to stimulate innovation and employment. We will reduce the negative impacts of urban activities and of chemicals which are hazardous for human health and the environment, including through the environmentally sound management and safe use of chemicals, the reduction and recycling of waste and more efficient use of water and energy. And we will work to minimize the impact of cities on the global climate system. We will also take account of population trends and projections in our national, rural and urban development strategies and policies.

45. We acknowledge also the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments. **Governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, sub-regional institutions, international institutions, academia, philanthropic organisations, volunteer groups and others.**

47. **Our Governments have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels**, in relation to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets over the coming fifteen years. To support accountability to our citizens, **we will provide for systematic follow-up and review at the various levels**, as set out in this Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council will have the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level.

52. "We the Peoples" are the celebrated opening words of the UN Charter. It is "We the Peoples" who are embarking today on the road to 2030. **Our journey will involve Governments** as well as Parliaments, the UN system and other international institutions, **local authorities**, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, the scientific and academic community – and all people. Millions have already engaged with, and will own, this Agenda. **It is an Agenda of the people, by the people, and for the people – and this, we believe, will ensure its success.**

79. **We also encourage member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels which are country-led and country-driven.** Such reviews should draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities. National parliaments as well as other institutions can also support these processes.

The [President's Summary of the HLPF 2016](#) also mentions several times that the subnational and local level will play a crucial role in a country's ability to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Awareness of the 2030 Agenda at the global level needs to be translated into action at the national level. **Creating ownership of the SDGs and their interlinkages will require building on national and local contexts, values and cultures, avoiding the use of blueprints. SDGs will have to be taken to the grass-root level**, with special focus on vulnerable groups.

**Local and sub-national level governments will be critical to the success of the SDGs. They are at the forefront of implementation, and have a leading role to play in securing the safety, wellbeing and livelihoods of communities, including by providing basic services.** They are also at the forefront for action in support of poor and vulnerable segments of the population. **Local and sub-national governments are developing roadmaps and guiding principles for multi-level coordination and monitoring and SDGs at the local level.** Multi-stakeholder partnerships engage diverse actors to create local ownership and mobilize stakeholders to contribute to the SDGs. Many cities engage citizens in planning and decision-making processes (for example, citizens' committees on air quality) and in local sustainability initiatives. **In some countries, local authorities voluntarily monitor and report on sustainable development matters. Citizen involvement in the implementation of the SDGs at the local level should be promoted.**

## **AN OVERVIEW OF VERTICAL POLICY INTEGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF NSDSs IN EUROPE**

This section provides an analysis and comparison of the information contained in the ESDN Country Profile section of the ESDN website with regards to **vertical policy integration** in connection to NSDSs. i.e. **those mechanisms that deal with the challenge of coordinating and integrating SD strategies and policies across different levels of governance**, from the European down to the local level. This is particularly important in the case of NSDSs, which are, in most countries, policy strategies that are only binding for the national government.

In general, NSDSs analyses show **three main mechanisms for vertical policy integration** that the majority of European countries used, especially during the preparation and revision of national SD strategies:

1. Consultation activities;
2. Mechanisms to increase cooperation and coordination; and,
3. Processes for raising awareness.

**Consultation activities are generally employed as elements of vertical policy integration in the form of workshops or seminars** (e.g. Finland, Greece), **roundtables discussions** (e.g. Austria), **meetings** (e.g. Germany), **dialogues** (e.g. Denmark), **forums** (e.g. Estonia) **and online activities** (e.g. Hungary). In these consultation activities, the sub-national level is usually given advice on how to implement certain parts of the NSDS or asked to provide information for the national level on regional processes and/or data.

Several countries started diverse **mechanisms to increase cooperation and coordination, both formally and informally, among the different levels of government and as a support for implementation**. Through these mechanisms, a better coordination of activities and implementation mechanisms between the different levels of government is envisaged (e.g. Austria, Finland, Germany, Switzerland). A good example in this regard can be found in Italy, where the overall coordination of policies at the national and subnational levels is ensured through a system of “permanent conferences”. On the one hand, a ‘State-Regions Conference’ allows regional governments to discuss issues related to the transfer of functions from the centre, while the ‘State-Local Authorities Conference’ discusses relations between state and metropolitan areas, municipalities and small communities. In addition, there is also a ‘Unified Conference’, which brings together the two conferences on issues pertaining to implementation of the 2001 reform of the Italian Constitution.

**Several countries also established processes for raising awareness and for experience and information exchange** (e.g. Hungary, Lithuania). This last mechanism is the weakest among the three in terms of coordination for actual implementation. The majority of countries use these processes, **especially during the preparation or revision** of national SD strategies. However, in several countries, some of these processes have been planned and applied on a regular basis. Several countries were also able to **institutionalise some of these mechanisms** through the formation of councils, commissions, and other bodies. For instance, in **Switzerland**, vertical integration mechanisms are relatively strong. Linkages between the federal, regional (cantons) and local levels of government are managed within the framework of the ‘Sustainable Development Forum’. The Forum was set up in 2001 as an initiative of the Federal Office for Spatial Development. Forum events involve representatives from cantons and cities and takes place once a year. The Forum is dedicated to exchanging information on current SD projects and plans, starting up new SD projects, monitoring, and on promoting participation possibilities. The intensity of vertical cooperation among the various participants has increased on various issues (i.e. sustainable tourism), but also on methodical approaches (i.e. development of new indicators), resulting in the introduction of new instruments in cantons and cities (i.e. Sustainability Assessment). In other cases, vertical policy integration has been **formalised within legal acts, such as** in Croatia and Slovenia.

In the most recent [ESDN Quarterly Report no.42<sup>1</sup>](#), an analysis and a 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 was performed. This section outlines only those provisions that more directly relate to the issue of vertical integration.

### Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): rationale and involvement

In the majority of countries, the report was mostly aimed at describing **first steps and future plans** towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda that countries had started considering, were about to undertake, or were already employed. In **Montenegro**, for example, the VNR focused on 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 several beneficial effects that the exercises brought to them: i.e. serving as an **interim report** towards the realisation of the **national implementation plan**, as a **preliminary gap analysis**, or as a **catalyst for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda** contributing to **greater political and public awareness** about the SDGs and to **greater coherence and ownership of the follow-up process**. In several cases, the VNRs were seen as important exercises, because they promoted and supported a process of **mutual learning** and **experience sharing**.

### 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: from our ESDN Quarterly Report no.42 we hereby present only the following findings as they are relating the most with vertical integration.

- 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?

#### 1) 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 (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Switzerland)**: as an example, 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. Differently, France and Montenegro have established responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in **one ministry**. In **Norway**, the approach seems rather different, because individual ministries are responsible for follow-up on the SDGs, and they should coordinate amongst themselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Pisano, U., E. Mulholland & G. Berger (2016) Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for SD and the SDGs in Europe: Stock-taking to share experiences and support peer learning, ESDN Quarterly Report 42, October 2016, ESDN Office, Vienna.



## 2) 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).

## 3) 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 in **implementation partnerships between the Confederation, cantons, communes and stakeholders.**

## 4) 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. 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](#)<sup>2</sup>.

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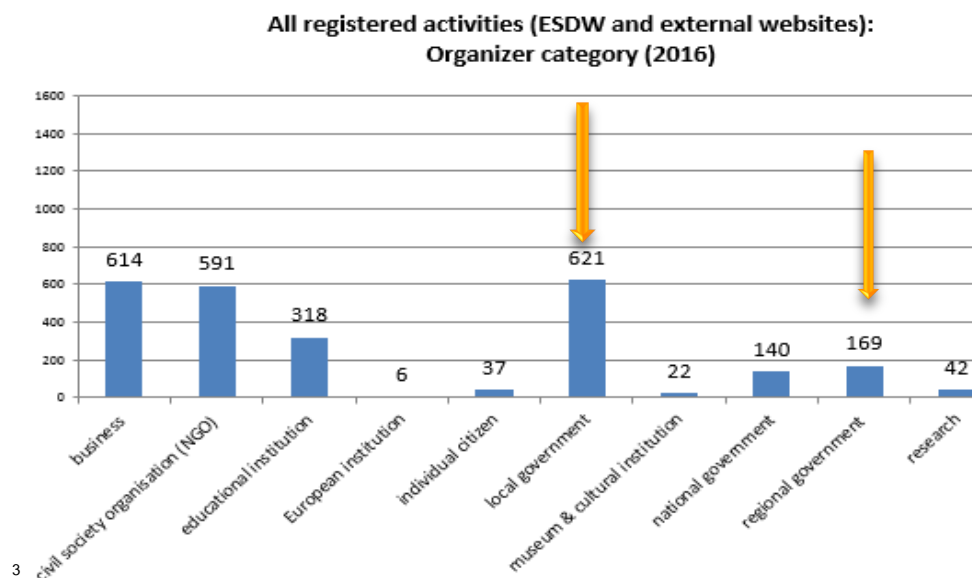
<sup>2</sup> The ESDW is a European-wide initiative to stimulate and make visible activities, projects and events that promote sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It takes place every year from 30 May until 05 June.

## The European SD Week (ESDW): SD activities linked to the SDGs

The **European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW)** is an initiative to **facilitate the organization of activities that promote sustainable development and make these efforts visible on a common platform**. The ESDW contributes to the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs by **promoting the organisation of bottom-up activities that have a thematic link to, and support, the SDGs**. As such, the ESDW **aims to raise awareness for the 2030 Agenda in Europe** and calls upon local stakeholders to actively engage with sustainable development, in general, and the SDGs, in particular.

In 2015, during the first ESDW with a total of 4,116 activities in 29 European countries were organized. In its second year running, the ESDW 2016 achieved 4,212 activities in 38 countries. The ESDW will also take place in 2017, once again from 30 May-5 June.

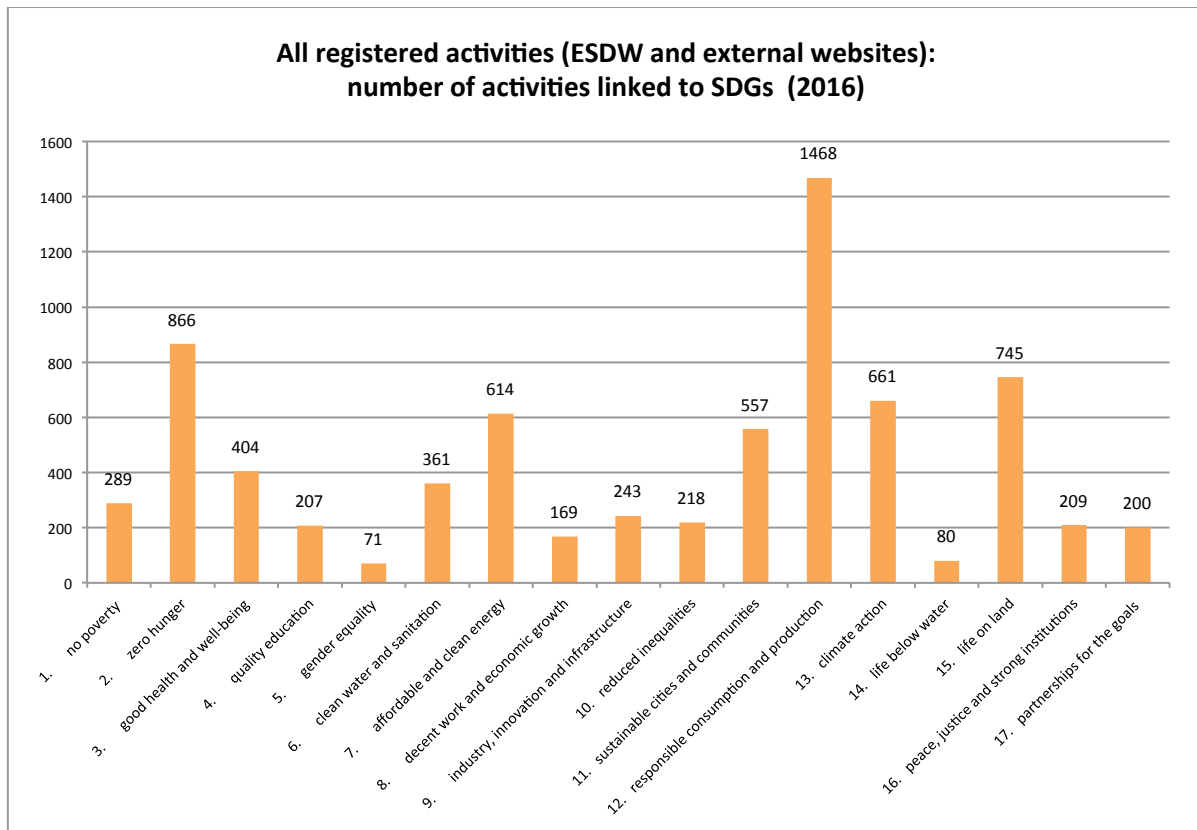
The **types of organisers of activities** during the ESDW website were: businesses, civil society organisations, educational institutions, European institutions, individual citizens, museum/cultural institutions, research, local governments, regional governments, national governments, and other (for our purposes, we have excluded 'other' from the table below). **Figure 1** below shows the **distribution of different organisers of the ESDW activities**. The **most common types of organisers** participating in the ESDW were **local governments** (621 activities), businesses (614), civil society organisations/NGOs (591), educational institutions (318), and **regional governments** (169) – **national governments** organized 140 activities. In 2015, the most common organisers were local governments (1,029), civil society organizations (989), businesses (608), education institutions (268), and national governments (161). This shows that **local governments, with the addition of regional governments, continued to be one the main organisers of events of the ESDW**.



**Local and regional governments have, therefore, played a crucial role in the continuing realisation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in Europe.**

<sup>3</sup> This table excludes the results that were marked 'other', as it provides non-telling statistical data.

ESDW activities were linked to the new global **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and its **17 Sustainable Development Goals**. When registering an activity, up to 3 SDGs that this particular activity is contributing to could be selected. **Figure 2** below shows the number of activities linked to the individual SDGs: Activities were linked most frequently to **SDG 12 ‘responsible consumption and production’** (1,468 activities); **SDG 2 ‘zero hunger’** (866); **SDG 15 ‘life on land’** (745); **SDG 13 ‘climate action’** (661); **SDG 7 ‘affordable and clean energy’** (614); and **SDG 11 ‘sustainable cities and communities’** (557).



## Regional and local activities in the context of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

With the intention to offer the participants of the ESDN Conference 2016 important background information, this chapter offers a brief summary of the regional activities that will be presented at the conference during session 3. Session 3, through an activity called '**ConverStations**' will present an opportunity for all participants to learn, in detail, about sub-national activities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for SD and the SDGs.

The ConverStation process is an innovative format that enables a small group of 8-10 participants to attend 3 case-study presentations from a choice of 8 and then to be involved in a discussion. Each ConverStation lasts 30 minutes. Eight ConverStations will run in parallel and for 3 rounds. Each participant has to make a choice on which 3 ConverStations she/he will attend. There will be an initial presentation of no more than **10-12 minutes** in each

ConverStation, followed by a **15-18 minutes discussion** that will respond to the interests of the group. Please find below background information on seven of the ConverStation cases.

## **(1) ACTIVITIES IN NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA TO IMPLEMENT THE 2030 AGENDA**

The State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the largest German state in terms of population and GDP, adopted its first Sustainability Strategy: “Act now—working together towards sustainable development in NRW” in June 2016.

The strategy is the result of a close cooperation between all State Ministries, civil society, businesses, municipalities and scientific institutions. It actively addresses upcoming challenges and creates a viable framework for ecologically, economically and socially balanced politics.

The Sustainability Strategy serves as the framework for NRW’s contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The State Government has identified 19 fields of action, covering the three traditional dimensions of sustainability. For all fields of action, sustainability goals for 2030 and correspondent indicators are set. This set of 70 indicators will make it possible to continuously monitor and measure progress.

The next step is the implementation of the strategy. Instruments, such as a “sustainability check” for regional legal acts and programmes and an inter-ministerial coordination group, have been established to successfully put the strategy into practice.

The presentation will give an overview of NRW’s Sustainability Strategy, describe the underlying political decision making process, as well as the key learnings from drafting the strategy.

## **(2) THE 2030 AGENDA: TRANSFORMING CATALONIA, IMPROVING THE WORLD**

*Information will be provided at the Conference.*

## **(3) TRANSITIONING TO SDGs IN GIRONDE**

### **Accountability as the key word in Gironde for the year 2016**

The departmental council of Gironde (area of 1.5 million inhabitants) acts towards sustainable development since 1999, following up Rio 1992 and launching a voluntary local agenda 21 in 2004. Since then, the Gironde pays attention at acting locally while thinking globally, placing its actions as contributions to answer international stakes. The departement is for instance engaged in a process of Social Responsibility of its organisation, or today, in the SDGs.

**« SDGs are magic ! », the deputy head of the agenda 21 mission in Gironde said.** Thinking of the accountability of the departement towards national and international engagements, making everyone aware of the SDGs has come to be the 1st step, working with the elected council of the departement, the administration and the agenda 21 departmental network. As an example, Vice presidents of the departmental council, administration directors and technicians have been involved to build the mandatory Report of Sustainable Development [mandatory

in France for public authorities with more than 50 000 inhabitants]. How do main objectives and projects led by the Gironde contribute to the SDGs? Participative review of policies based on the SDGs revealed a quick comprehension of the 17 goals by the stakeholders.

Going further, how can the SDGs bring leverage for the transformation of public action? How to gauge the contribution of local actors in answering global stakes? How can the national level encourage further action from the local level? Here are some questions we'll have a chance to explore together.

#### (4) WELSH GOVERNMENT – LEGISLATING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Since its establishment as a devolved Government within the UK in 1999, the Welsh Government has operated under a statutory sustainable development principle. In light of international learning, and their own experience over 16 years, the Welsh Parliament recently passed the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. This sets an overarching legal framework for public bodies in Wales, including the Welsh Government itself, designed to maximise social, environmental, economic and cultural well-being. The Act also established the Future Generations Commissioner, Public Service Boards and Local Well-being Planning. The Act was accompanied by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which put the resilience of ecological systems for long term well-being as the principal aim of environmental policy. The paper will introduce the legislation, the intentions behind it, and their initial learning.

#### (5) THE SD INITIATIVES IN TYROL

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##### **Background:**

Focal point of this Conver Station is discussing SDG initiatives in Tyrol / Austria; Land Tyrol is trying to initiate and realize SDG activities in its province.

The Department Regional Development and Sustainable Strategy / Division Future Strategy and Sustainability is responsible for sustainability coordination, sustainability strategy as well as implementing SDG's in Tyrol. Working basis is a director's mandate to "check SDG implementation on state level".

The Governor of Tyrol (Austrian People's Party) is politically liable for future strategies. Concerning sustainability, Vice-Governor (The Green Party) is reliable. So far, there is no explicit political mandate to implement SDG's in Tyrol, but a benevolent feedback on current work was given.

##### **Plans, Initiatives and Measures:**

The Division Future Strategy and Sustainability is currently conducting a gap analysis / an inquiry on state level. The Departments of the Tyrolean State Government have been asked to convey their existing strategies, studies, reports and projects referring to SDG Goals as poverty, innovation, education, food, and so on. As a result existing activities in the Tyrolean State Government are shown and further projects and cooperations with other departments can be planned.

Another important issue for SDG implementation is the Tyrolean Sustainability Strategy "Future Living – Sustainable positioning of Tyrol" (2012) as well as the Tyrolean Sustainability Report "Sustainable Development in Tyrol" (2016). A political mandate exists to extend the Sustainability Strategy towards social sustainability as well as one to revise

the report and publish the next Sustainability Report in 2020. Both, strategy and report, will be combined with SDGs, as common topics as education, energy, climate change, work, innovation, integration, gender and so on are ideal for combining. Furthermore grants could be adapted, perhaps with yearly topics such as education, food, poverty, integration, and so on.

## (6) THE NEW WALLOON SD STRATEGY

In Belgium, the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions are on equal footing, but have a shared responsibility regarding the implementation of the 2030 SD Agenda and the SDGs, which takes into account their respective competencies.

In 2013, the Walloon Government adopted a decree that foresees the elaboration of a Walloon sustainable development strategy in every legislature. The second Walloon sustainable development strategy was adopted on July 7, 2016 after a public consultation.

This second strategy aims to establish some paths of transition, and contributes to the implementation of the 2030 SD Agenda and the SDGs. It also aims at improving the social responsibility and the nature of the public services in Wallonia.

The strategy includes 4 chapters:

- The first chapter provides a long-term vision by 2050 around the following four axes: living in Wallonia, living in the world, living beyond 2050 and governance. It gives direction to all the Walloon actors to continue the transition to develop more sustainably in Wallonia.
- The second chapter consists of a diagnosis, describing the current situation in Wallonia using 40 indicators.
- The third chapter deals with short and mid-term objectives. Given the international agenda, the SDGs are used in this framework.

The fourth chapter includes a focused action plan, which complements other existing and future plans. It is comprised of 100 actions related to the shift in consumption and production patterns in food, energy and resources, as well as to cross-cutting tools, such as participative dynamics, information and awareness raising, education and research, social responsibility of private and public organisations, sustainable public procurement, and involvement of Wallonia at the international level.

The follow-up of the implementation of the strategy is ensured by the Sustainable development department that was set up in July 2012 under the General Secretariat of the Walloon Administration.

## (7) LOCALIZING THE SDGs: THE CASE OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Agenda 2030 is its commitment to promoting the territorial dimension and to its adaptation at regional level. The role of sub-state governments (regional and local), multilevel governance, respecting the principle of subsidiarity, and the planning and implementing synergies at all government levels emerge as fundamental. The institutional architecture underpinning this global agenda shall, therefore, include the logic of multilevel government and the framework of accountabilities shared between the different levels of government.

The Basque Country wishes to be part of common international commitment reflected by the SDGs to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to show, yet again, that it is at the forefront of the challenges of the international agenda. It is therefore working on 4 lines of work that can facilitate the arrival of the SDGs at sub-state level:

- 1- Public opinion awareness-raising.
- 2- Bringing not only NGOs, but also the representatives of the different sectors of society (companies, education, health,...) into the debate.
- 3- Harmonisation of public policies with the SDGs.
- 4- Roadmap with specific compliance commitments and effective and solid mechanisms for their assessment.

The aim of the presentation will be to showcase the Basque Country's current position regarding the last two points above.

## **(8) REGIONAL HUBS FOR SD STRATEGIES IN GERMANY: FOSTERING VERTICAL INTEGRATION AND A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH**

The German Bundestag is making 10 million euros available over a period of five years to establish four Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies (RENN). The German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), a multi stakeholder body mandated by the Federal Government, developed the concept and is asked to implement the grant.

Networking civil society action on the sub-national and regional level adds a new governance feature to Germany's institutional architecture for sustainable development. It is part of the transformative governance agenda and improves the debate on sustainability strategies on all levels.

The aim of the regional hubs is to link up the sustainability initiatives at federal, Länder and municipal level supra-regionally and thus drive vertical integration. A further aim of the network hubs is to establish new forms and fora for sustainable development actors from civil society, academia, the private sector, and local authorities to exchange views and develop cooperation.

The German Council for Sustainable Development after consulting with the Länder authorities has selected appropriate institutions, helped to get the hubs up and running, and will be advancing the work of the hubs.

The four RENNs currently resort to a network comprising 18 partners from 15 Länder. They (1) connect actors, (2) assist in the sharing and exchange of ideas, innovation strategies and projects, (3) provide impetus for social transformation and (4) promote the flow of information between sustainable development actors at municipal, Länder and federal level. Each individual RENN sets its own thematic focal points.

The German Council for Sustainable Development hosts the coordination centre. The Council provides service to the four hubs, organizes collective action and PR. The coordination centre also advances the nationwide impact of the project and evaluates – at the request of the grant provider – how the work at the four RENNs is progressing.

