PUBLIC GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE

Public consultation on the draft Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

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JT03450005

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1 Introduction

The 2030 Agenda calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). Governments across the globe are increasingly recognising the need to break out of policy and institutional silos to effectively achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the implementation of the SDGs as an integrated set - taking account of the synergies across sectors, while avoiding costly trade-offs and negative impacts beyond borders - still represents a major challenge to all countries. To date very little international guidance exist to address the complex challenge of overcoming policy and institutional silos in SDG implementation, and enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. To address this gap, the OECD has embarked on an inclusive process to revise its 2010 Recommendation on Good Institutional Practices in Promoting Policy Coherence for Development [OECD/LEGAL/0381] as part of its efforts to make its standards more SDG-relevant.

Building on more than two decades of experience in promoting policy coherence for development, the draft Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development aims to reflect the universal, integrated and transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It aims to provide guidance that will help equip policy-makers and key stakeholders with the necessary institutional mechanisms and policy tools to enhance PCSD and accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

Objective of the public consultation

Consistent with the universal and inclusive spirit of the 2030 Agenda, the OECD launched a public consultation to reach government officials, civil society organisations, international organisations and interested citizens and stakeholders from all over the world. The purpose was to evaluate the relevance and applicability of the guidance and definitions included in the draft Recommendation. Throughout the public consultation, the OECD also aimed at:

- improving the substantive content of the draft Recommendation and enhancing its legitimacy;
- strengthening the visibility of the OECD’s role as a standard-setter on this area, and highlighting the important contribution it can make to strengthen one of the key means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs;
- raising awareness about the draft Recommendation in advance of its adoption;
- reaching out to non-Members as well as key stakeholders, increasing the potential for their subsequent alignment with the draft Recommendation and possible adherence once it is adopted by the Council.

After three rounds of consultation involving a number of OECD Committees and bodies, the draft Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development was open for public consultation and available from 13 to 28 June 2019 as an anonymous online survey (see Annex A). Participants were also given the opportunity to suggest good practice examples from their own experiences that could be included as practical material for the accompany guidance note that will support the implementation of the draft Recommendation. The OECD encouraged delegations in the relevant committees and National Focal Points for Policy Coherence to invite the participation in the public consultation of their relevant
stakeholders. It also reached out specifically to relevant United Nations (UN) bodies and other international organisations with expertise on policy coherence for sustainable development. Respondents were informed that the draft was work in progress and that all inputs would be taken into account to finalise the draft, and that comments collected would be considered public and might be published unless requested otherwise (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Website for the online public consultation on the draft Recommendation on PCSD

www.oecd.org/governance/pcsd/onlinepublicconsultationonthedraftrecommendationonpolicycoherenceforsustainabledevelopment.htm

Note: The link to the website is the following:
http://www.oecd.org/governance/pcsd/onlinepublicconsultationonthedraftrecommendationonpolicycoherenceforsustainabledevelopment.htm
Participation

422 people accessed and tried to answer the survey. From that total, 81 participants provided feedback on the draft Recommendation. Participants came from 33 different countries and territories, including 21 OECD Members, 12 non-Members and 3 participants who did not specify their nationality (Figure 2). A diversity of stakeholders provided feedback, including government officials at the national and subnational levels, UN bodies, private sector, academia and civil society (Figure 3).
Main Results

All participants provided feedback on the three pillars of the draft Recommendation as well as on the eight principles:

- 91% of participants agreed to the proposed definition of policy coherence for sustainable development (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Do you agree with the PCSD definition?

- 65% of participants rated as “very important” the third objective of PCSD in the context of the 2030 Agenda: “Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries”.

Figure 5. Which element of the PCSD definition would be a priority for your country? (percentage of respondents)

- Fostering synergies and maximising benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas
- Reconciling domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives
- Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries
Feedback on the three pillars of the revised draft Recommendation and eight principles

First pillar: “develop a strategic vision for achieving the SDGs in an integrated and coherent manner”

- 63% of participants rated as “very useful” the three main provisions under the first pillar of the draft Recommendation (Figure 6).
- 25% of respondents indicated that they would use the recommendations under the first pillar “to foster a whole-of-government/society approach to the implementation of the SDGs”, while other 25% found that the recommendations would be most useful to “develop guidelines and criteria for integrating sustainable development in policy and planning”.
- Some of the specific comments included:
  - Peer learning mechanisms on policy coherence, such as the one in the G20, could be included as a good practice example;
  - Gender equality is a very important element and is well covered in the draft Recommendation. However, other cross-cutting elements such as human rights, vulnerable population, including youth and disabled people, are not considered in the recommendations;
  - The draft Recommendation should explicitly mention the responsibility of Adherents towards policy coherence for sustainable development.

Figure 6. How useful are, in your view, the following recommendations in your country context / organisation?
Second pillar: “establish effective and inclusive institutional mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions between levels of government”

- 60% of respondents considered “very useful” the second pillar of the draft Recommendation (Figure 7), while 37% rated as “useful” the provisions under this pillar.

- 25% of respondents indicated that they would use the recommendations under this second pillar to “to improve collaboration between different levels of governments as well as vertical coherence”, while 22% would use them to “engage effectively stakeholders in initiatives to enhance PCSD”.

- Some of the specific comments included:
  - The 6th recommendation on “engaging stakeholders effectively” should mention higher education specifically, as the main stakeholder nationally and internationally, not just to support but inform policy-makers with research.
  - The draft Recommendation should explicitly mentioned the duty of advanced economies to take into account impacts on developing countries and to assist them in their efforts to reach the SDGs.
  - Regular consultations with civil society, private sector and academia is key to achieving the SDGs. Stock-taking and progress reports should be part of the coherence mechanisms.

Figure 7. How useful are, in your view, the following recommendations in your country / organisation?
Third pillar: “develop a set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies”

- 56% of participants rated as “very useful” the recommendations under the third pillar of the draft Recommendation.
- 23% participants found useful the recommendations under this pillar to better inform decision-making on potential trade-offs or transboundary impacts of policies, while a similar percentage of respondents indicated that they would use these recommendations to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems (Figure 8).
- Some of the specific comments included:
  - We would recommend that a comprehensive set of indicators be agreed and monitored so that progress by all countries can be tracked and compared.
  - Disaggregating data by sex is a good option, but other criteria should be included when relevant. It should not be limited to desegregation by sex only.
  - Reference to developing countries should be made earlier in the recommendations and be given more emphasis.

Figure 8. How would you use these recommendations to enhance the implementation of the SDGs in your country / organisation?

Next steps

The input received helped to enhance the relevance and quality of the draft Recommendation. With around one third of the respondents coming from non-Members, the draft Recommendation has benefited from diverse perspectives. A revised draft Recommendation on PCSD taking into account the comments received [ADD REFERENCE] was transmitted to the Development Assistance Committee and Public Governance Committee for approval and transmission to the Council for adoption. The submissions, in particular the examples provided by respondents, will also be helpful to develop case study material to be included in the accompanying guidance note that will support implementation.
Annex A. Survey for the public consultation on the draft Recommendation on PCSD

Profile of the respondent

Country:
Which stakeholder group do you belong to?

☐ Government / National Administration
☐ Private sector
☐ Government / Subnational Administration
☐ Academia
☐ Intergovernmental Organisation (UN body)
☐ Civil society organisation
☐ Intergovernmental Organisation (other)
☐ Other. Please specify: ______________________________
☐ EU Institution / Agency

1.1. Do you agree with the following definition?

*Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD):* an approach to integrate the dimensions of sustainable development throughout domestic and international policy-making. Its objectives in the context of the 2030 Agenda are to ensure an integrated implementation of the SDGs by: (i) Fostering synergies and maximising benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas; (ii) Reconciling domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives; and (iii) Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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1.2. Which elements of this definition would be a priority for your country? Using a scale 0 = Not important to 4 = Very important, please rate the following main elements of the PCSD Definition:

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<th>Not important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
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<tr>
<td>(i) Fostering synergies and maximising benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas</td>
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<td>(ii) Reconciling domestic policy objectives with internationally agreed objectives</td>
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<td>(iii) Addressing the transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, including those likely to affect developing countries</td>
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2.1. How useful are, in your view, the following recommendations in your country context / organisation?

RECOMMENDS that Members and non-Members having adhered to this Recommendation (hereafter the “Adherents”) develop a strategic vision for achieving the SDGs in an integrated and coherent manner, in particular by:

1. **Building a strong political commitment and leadership** at the highest political level to foster whole-of-government action for PCSD.

2. **Defining, implementing and communicating a strategic long-term vision that supports policy coherence** and orients the government and stakeholders towards common sustainable development goals.

3. **Improving Policy Integration** to better incorporate sustainable development into policy and finance, and capitalise on synergies and benefits across economic, social and environmental policy areas as well as between domestic and internationally-agreed goals.

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2.2. How would you use these recommendations to enhance the implementation of the SDGs in your country / organisation?

- To foster a whole-of-government/society approach to the implementation of the SDGs
- To improve decision-making processes for SDG implementation
- To develop guidelines and criteria for integrating sustainable development in policy and planning
- To define priority areas for action on PCSD
- All of the above

Other, please specify:

2.3. If you have additional good practice examples that could be included in the subsections of these recommendations, please add them below:
3.1. How useful are, in your view, the following recommendations in your country / organisation?

RECOMMENDS that Adherents develop effective and inclusive institutional mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions between levels of government, in particular by:

4. **Ensuring whole-of-government coordination** to resolve divergences between sectoral priorities and policies, including external and domestic policies, and promote mutually supporting actions across sectors and institutions.

5. **Involving regional and local authorities** to align priorities, ensure coordinated actions and enhance coherence across levels of governments for sustainable development.

6. **Engaging stakeholders effectively** to sustain broader support for PCSD and its implementation.

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3.2. How would you use these recommendations to enhance the implementation of the SDGs in your country / organisation?

- To strengthen existing coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation
- To improve capacities to anticipate and address policy trade-offs and divergences
- To improve collaboration between different levels of governments as well as vertical coherence
- To engage effectively stakeholders in initiatives to enhance PCSD
- All of the above

Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________

3.3. If you have additional examples or good practice examples that could be included in the subsections of these recommendations, please add them below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
4.1. How useful are, in your view, the following recommendations in your country / organisation?

RECOMMENDS that Adherents develop a set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies, in particular by:

7. Analysing and assessing policy and financing impacts to inform decision-making, increase positive impacts and avoid potential negative impacts on the sustainable development prospects of other countries, in particular on developing countries.

8. Strengthening monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems to collect evidence on the impact of policies and financing, and report progress on PCSD.

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4.2. How would you use these recommendations to enhance the implementation of the SDGs in your country / organisation?

- To use more proactively ex-ante and ex-post impact assessments in enhancing PCSD
- To improve the understanding of your contribution towards global efforts for achieving the SDGs
- To strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems
- To better inform decision-making on potential trade-offs or transboundary impacts of policies
- All of the above

Other, please specify:

4.3. If you have additional examples or good practice examples that could be included in the subsections of these recommendations, please add them below:


5. Are there other provisions or recommendations beyond those included in the draft Recommendation, that you deem important to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development? Are there any general comments you would like to make?