



# DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION TIPS TOOLS INSIGHTS PRACTICES

## In practice

# ITALY'S STRATEGIC APPROACH TO POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Key messages

Italy's innovative approach to mainstreaming policy coherence for sustainable development within its policy-making processes is already bearing fruit. Its [National Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) includes a set of tools to anticipate, assess and address the domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Results include more coherent ways of working across ministries and levels of government; engagement by non-state actors; and better information flows, staff capacity and public awareness.

### Keywords

[Institutional arrangement](#) | [Policy coherence](#) | [Civil society](#)

### Key partner

[Italy](#)

### Challenge

[Coherent and integrated policies for sustainable development](#) are key for achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet few countries conduct systematic assessments of the impact of their non-development co-operation policies (e.g., trade, environment, migration, security) on developing countries and development co-operation efforts.

To improve its policy coherence, Italy set out a [National Action Plan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) (NAP PCSD) in 2022. It aims to strengthen governance tools and mechanisms; improve the dialogue between central and local administrations, civil society and other stakeholders; ensure coordinated action for sustainable development; and promote systematic analysis and monitoring of policy impact and synergies across all relevant sectors and stakeholders.

### Approach

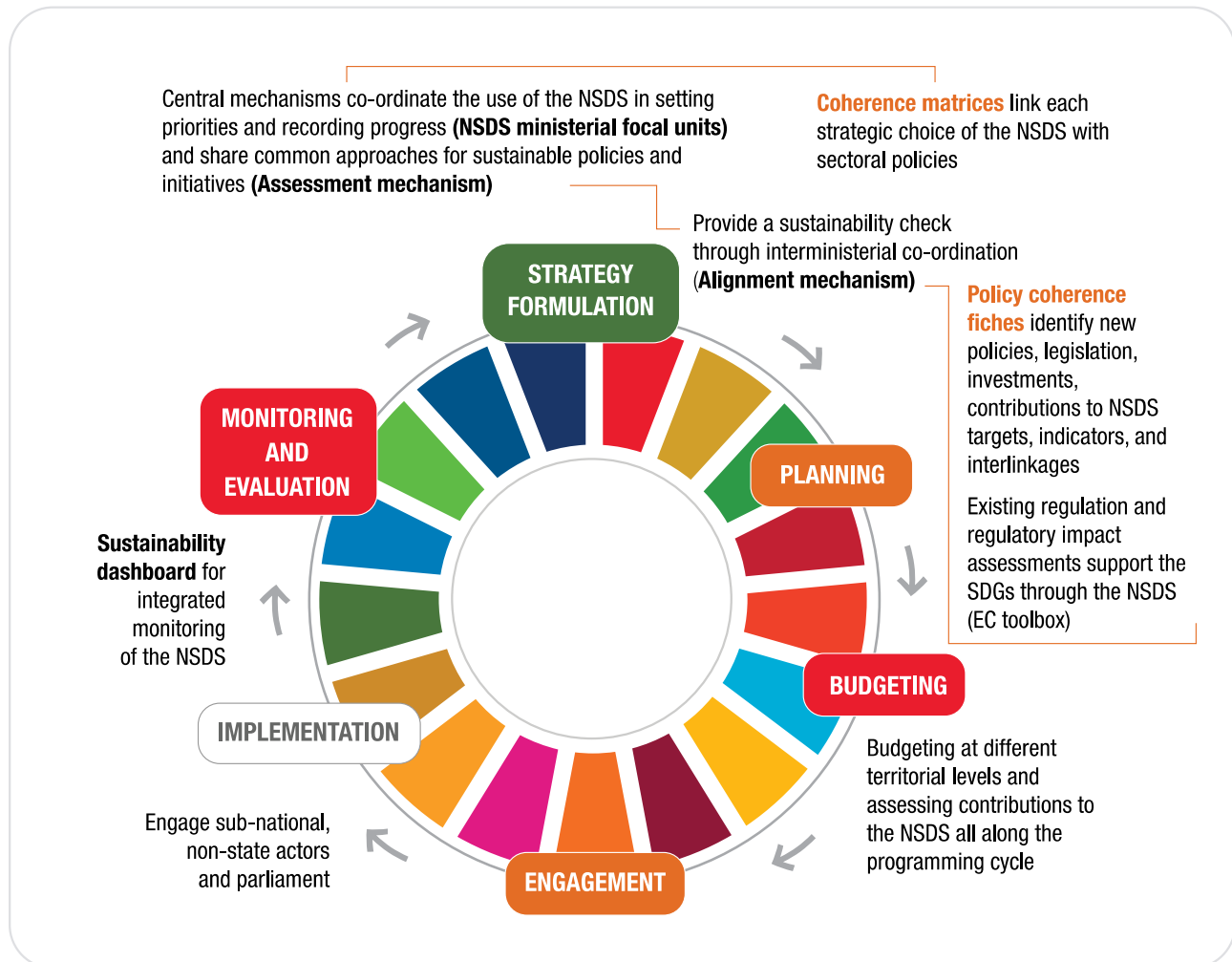
The NAP PCSD is the result of a project to mainstream the SDGs within the Italian decision-making process launched by the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security in 2019. It was supported by the OECD Directorate for Public Governance and the European Commission's Technical Support Instrument.

The NAP PCSD, annexed to the 2022 [National Sustainable Development Strategy \(NSDS\)](#), sets out a collaborative path for all stakeholders to contribute to consistent and coherent policies by using co-ordination mechanisms and tools across the entire policy cycle (Figure 1). It includes a set of responsive and adaptive tools to anticipate, assess and address domestic, transboundary and long-term impacts of policies to advance the SDGs, in line with the [2019 OECD Recommendation](#) on PCSD and [SDG 17.14](#).

Key elements of Italy's approach include (see also Figure 1):

- **Institutional architecture for policy coherence.** Three inter-ministerial decision-making mechanisms (the Committee for Development Co-operation-CICS, the Committee for Economic Programming and Sustainable Development-CIPESS, and the Committee for Ecological Transition-CITE) assess implementation of the NAP PCSD, supported by working groups. Meanwhile the National Forum for Sustainable Development and the National Council for Development Co-operation ensure multi-level and multi-stakeholder engagement.
- **Coherence tools.** Policy coherence matrices, fiches and labs enable the evaluation of the likely impact of policies on the NSDS and promote inter-institutional dialogue during strategy formulation.
- **Training.** This is designed to strengthen public officials' capacities in sustainable development, as well as in policy foresight and behavioural public administration.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** A "whole-of-society" and "whole-of-government" approach is taken to monitoring the implementation of the NSDS, with results published in an annual report, including measures of progress on implementation of the NAP PCSD.
- **A sustainability dashboard.** The dashboard contains real-time data on Italy's progress towards implementing its NSDS within an integrated and multi-level monitoring and assessment framework, including measures to monitor SDG indicator 17.14.1 on PCSD.

**Figure 1** Mainstreaming policy coherence in Italy's National Sustainable Development Strategy



Source: Author's adaptation based on the [Voluntary National Review of Italy](#) (2022).

## Results

- o **Improved information flows**, through policy coherence labs and across central administrations via the Inter-ministerial Committee for Development Co-operation (CICS). This is helping to produce more integrated policies and introduce operational tools (e.g., matrices and fiches) to map and assess the policy coherence for sustainable development of existing and future policies.
- o **Strengthened sustainability capacity among public officers across government.** Targeted training is helping staff to better identify interlinkages among policies and their contribution to the SDGs, as well as to examine their economic, environmental and social impacts. Over half of all Italian regions and provinces offer SDG and PCSD training programmes.
- o **More systematic multi-stakeholder consultation** through the National Council for Development Co-operation and the National Forum for Sustainable Development. Consultation involves civil society organisations (CSOs), local and regional authorities, ministries, the Italian Agency for Development Co-operation and academia.
- o **Greater coherence between the NSDS and sub-national strategies** through collaborative roundtables (*Tavoli tecnici di confronto con Regioni e Province Autonome e con Città Metropolitane*) and by

supporting co-ordination and sectoral integration among different policy areas at the territorial level (*Cabine di Regia Territoriali*).

- **Improved awareness of sustainability across society through [global citizenship education](#).** Formal and non-formal educational initiatives have been promoted within regions, autonomous provinces and metropolitan cities, as well as within research and awareness-raising projects. The funds allocated by the Italian government to the Global Citizenship Education initiatives have increased to EUR 20 million (from EUR 7.1 million in 2017).

### Lessons learnt

Based on experiences to date, the following elements have been critical for advancing PCSD in Italy:

- **High-level political commitment** and inter-ministerial co-ordination underpinning the NAP PCSD and the new NSDS, linking sustainable development to PCSD and making the latter a key enabler of the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- **A [legal commitment](#)** to make the utmost effort to guarantee that Italy's policies, even when not directly linked to development co-operation, are consistent with the objectives of development co-operation.
- **A two-year participative consultation process** with CSOs, local administrations, and other relevant stakeholders to formulate the NAP and the NSDS. This was key to securing buy-in across society.
- **A reference framework** and a method of work to reunite the domestic and international dimensions of the 2030 Agenda.
- **Multi-level governance of sustainable development.** This was essential to advance PCSD at the national level, and provides a safe environment to test coherence tools and sustainable development budgeting.

### Further information

Ministry of Environment and Energy Security and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (2022), *Voluntary National Review: Italy 2022*, [https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR\\_2022\\_Italy\\_Report.pdf](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR_2022_Italy_Report.pdf).

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Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, National Strategy for Sustainable Development website [in Italian]: <https://www.mase.gov.it/pagina/strategia-nazionale-lo-sviluppo-sostenibile>

### OECD resources

OECD (2022), *Mid-term Review of Italy's Development Co-operation*, [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/AR\(2024\)3/12/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD/DAC/AR(2024)3/12/en/pdf).

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**To learn more about Italy's development co-operation see:**

OECD, "Italy", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/37f92091-en>.

See more *In Practice* examples from *Italy* here: <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=italy#search>.

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