# THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA:
## TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION BY POLAND

Better Policies Series




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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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# FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders at the United Nations on 25 September 2015, sets out an ambitious action plan to improve the lives of people everywhere. The agenda is universal, inclusive and indivisible and calls for action by all countries, irrespective of their level of development. Like other all OECD member countries, Poland is now looking for ways to best implement the Agenda and meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

On 14 February 2017, the Polish government adopted its Strategy for Responsible Development, which sets out over 700 actions to increase the income of Polish citizens and strengthen social, economic, environmental and territorial cohesion within the country. The Strategy defines a new model of development, along with a strategic vision, principles, objectives and priorities for Poland's development until 2020. It also includes perspectives up to 2030, meant to help Poland achieve the SDGs. This report has been prepared to support the Polish government in this endeavour by taking stock of where Poland stands relative to the SDGs and proposing policies that can help the country close performance gaps.

Poland has made impressive progress in raising the living standards of its citizens in recent decades, with GDP per capita rising from 37.6% of the OECD average in 1990 to 65.4% in 2016. Significant social achievements accompanied this economic progress, but the highly ambitious SDGs call for additional efforts. While the overall poverty rate is close to the OECD average, some population groups face significant risk of poverty and housing affordability remains a critical challenge. Labour force participation is low, especially among older people, and the labour market suffers from important dualities. The performance of the school system has been improving, as evidenced by Poland's rising scores in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment, but additional efforts are needed to improve the performance of the vocational education and training system and the university sector. This will also help to foster innovation and revamp productivity growth. Even though life expectancy has increased by a remarkable seven years since 1990, it remains three years below the OECD average.

Despite significant progress, the Polish economy remains one of the most carbon-intensive in the OECD. Greenhouse gas emissions per capita amounted to 10.1 tonnes of $CO_2$ equivalent in 2015, above the OECD Europe average of 8.3 tonnes. While energy access is good, the country's energy infrastructure needs to be modernised to reduce pollution. Water quality also remains an important issue, linked to insufficient treatment of wastewater and inadequate financial incentives to reduce pollution and use water more efficiently, including in agriculture. Meeting the SDGs will also require additional efforts to conserve the Baltic Sea and better protect the country's forests.

Public trust in government has risen considerably over the last decade, from 7% in 2006 to 38% in 2016, and the perception of government corruption has fallen. Still, satisfaction with public services is rather low in Poland. Achieving the SDGs also calls for a stronger commitment to partnerships and international co-operation. Achieving the optimal organisational set-up, systems, procedures and key capabilities for delivering aid remains an issue for Poland. Moreover, in the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda, there is much to be gained from promoting and enabling responsible business conduct.

With its Strategy for Responsible Development, Poland has taken an important first step towards tackling all these issues. But achieving the SDGs will be a long journey with many hurdles, during which Poland will regularly have to adapt its strategies, actions plans and policy measures and refresh the commitment of all stakeholders. Exchanging experiences with other countries throughout the process on what works and what doesn't can help the country successfully navigate this journey. The OECD looks forward to supporting the Polish government in this endeavour. Together, let us design, promote and implement better policies for better lives in Poland.



Angel Gurría
OECD Secretary-General

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ..... 1
SDG 1: No poverty ..... 4
SDG 2: Zero hunger ..... 5
SDG 3: Good health and well-being ..... 6
SDG 4: Quality education ..... 7
SDG 5: Gender equality ..... 8
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation ..... 9
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy ..... 10
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth ..... 11
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure ..... 12
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities ..... 13
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities ..... 14
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production ..... 15
SDG 13: Climate action ..... 16
SDG 14: Life below water ..... 17
SDG 15: Life on land ..... 18
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions ..... 19
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals ..... 20
How the OECD can help ..... 21
Further reading ..... 22

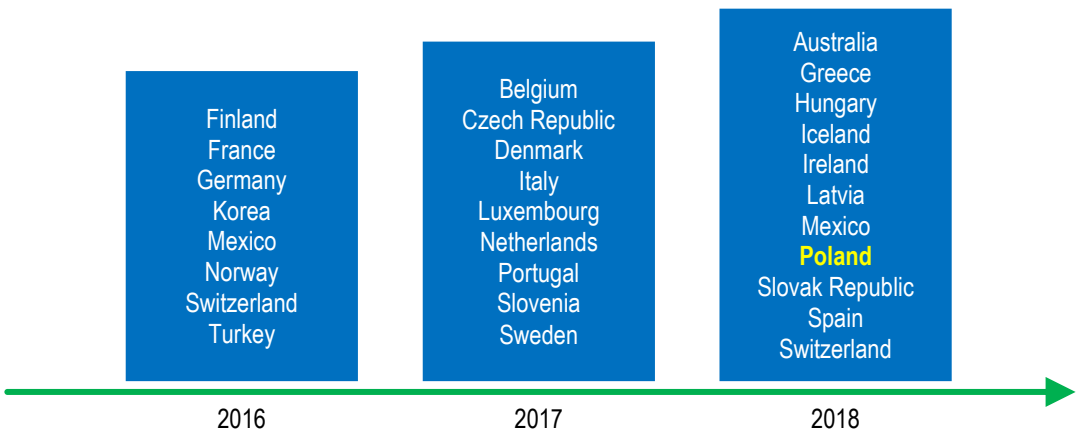
# INTRODUCTION

## THE 2030 AGENDA IS A PLAN FOR ACTION FOR HUMANITY AND THE PLANET THAT APPLIES TO ALL COUNTRIES ALIKE

Adopted by world leaders at the United Nations on 25 September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out an ambitious plan to achieve transformational shifts in five areas of critical importance for humanity: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. It aims to: 1) end poverty and hunger in all forms and dimensions; 2) protect the planet from degradation and take urgent action on climate change to support the needs of present and future generations; 3) ensure that all people can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature; 4) foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from fear and violence; and 5) mobilise the means to implement the 2030 Agenda with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people. The Agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are presented as "integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable". Marking a shift away from the outdated North-South lens for global progress, the Agenda is relevant to countries at all levels of development. Accordingly, OECD member countries such as Poland are now looking for ways to best implement the SDGs by 2030, in light of their national circumstances. Eight OECD countries reported on progress at the United Nations High-level Political Forum in 2016. Nine countries did so in 2017, and 11 other OECD countries, including Poland, are set to report in 2018 (see Figure). The OECD has prepared this report to assist the Polish government in this endeavour, investigating where Poland stands relative to the SDGs and proposing policies that can help the country to close any performance gaps.

**The 2030 Agenda sets out an ambitious plan for sustainable development, with the overarching objective of leaving no one behind. The Agenda is universal to all countries. Thus Poland is looking for ways to implement the Agenda and achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.**

**Poland will report on progress on the SDGs at the UN High-level Political Forum in July 2018**



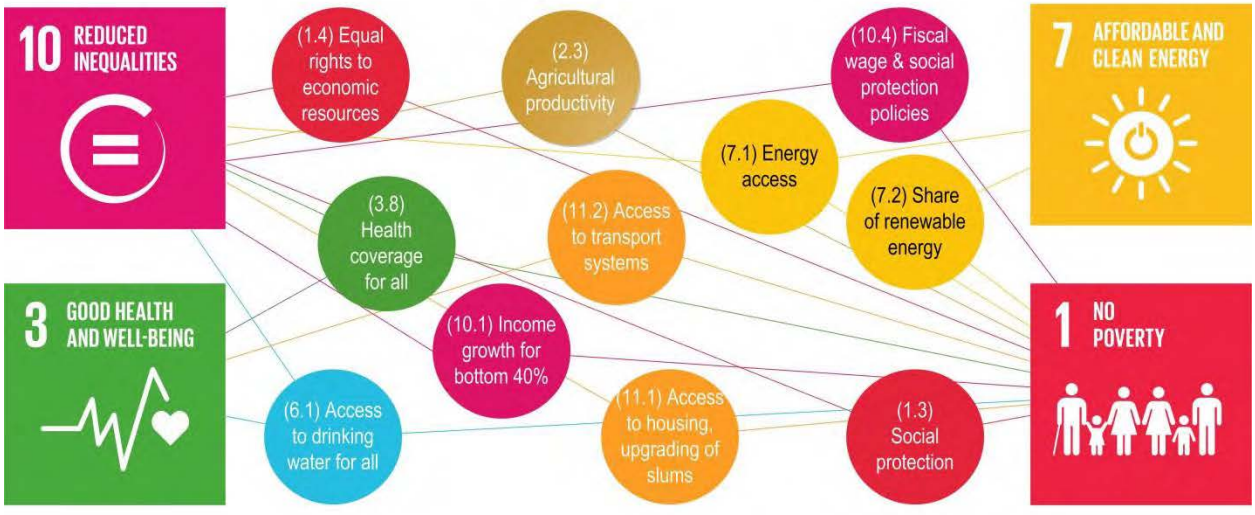

*Source: Voluntary National Reviews of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/.*

## NAVIGATING THE SDGS IS A COMPLEX UNDERTAKING THAT REQUIRES CLOSE CO-OPERATION AMONG ALL STAKEHOLDERS

**Implementing the 2030 Agenda is a highly complex process. The mix of challenges, the diversity of societal needs and preferences, and the interconnectedness between the 17 goals call for new approaches to national strategic governance and planning.**

Achieving the SDGs requires planning for the future, in order to support present needs and those of generations to come. The Polish government will have to anticipate and address many interconnected issues, from population ageing and urbanisation to disruptive technologies (such as digitalisation), increasing environmental risks and challenging geopolitical developments. It will have to identify and understand the resulting shifts in economic and social conditions and design and implement reforms accordingly. It will also need to consider more systematically how policy choices may lead to future problems within Poland and how they may affect other countries. The well-being of future generations depends on the stock of assets the current generation leaves behind, including economic, natural, human and social capital. Given the integrated nature of the SDGs, policy coherence is critical for the Polish government to capitalise on synergies among goals and targets. For example, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) is strongly linked to SDG 1 (no poverty): nine targets explicitly link the two, mostly though universal access targets on energy, water, health, housing and green space and equal access to resources (see Figure). Successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda is thus a complex task that requires decisive and persistent action and close co-operation across ministries and different levels of government, as well as with non-government stakeholders. To co-ordinate implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Poland, the government has created a special task force in charge of ensuring coherence across the SDGs.

**Achieving the highly interconnected SDGs is a complex undertaking**




Note: The figure shows the explicit links through direct references in the targets. Physical and socio-economic considerations suggest that many more links between the goals are important for policy making. The full text of the targets and the 2030 Agenda is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

*Source: Based on Le Blanc, D. (2015), "Towards integration at last? The sustainable development goals as a network of targets", UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (DESA) Working Paper No. 141, UN DESA, New York, http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2015/wp141_2015.pdf.*

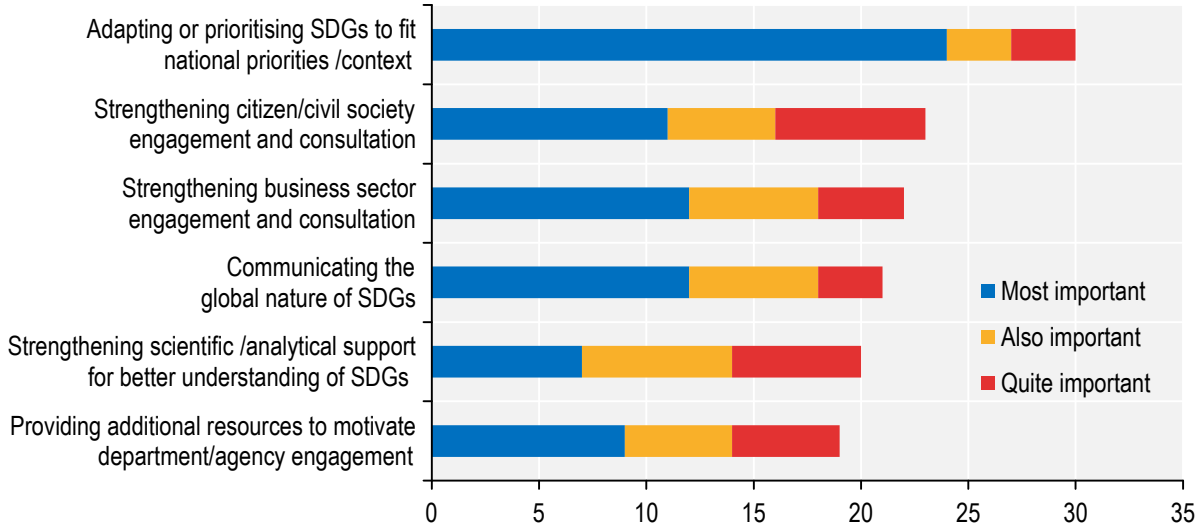
## WITH ITS STRATEGY FOR RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT, POLAND HAS TAKEN AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA

In early 2017, Poland launched its Strategy for Responsible Development (SRD). It contains over 700 actions to increase prosperity and cohesion in Poland, together with over 70 indicators to track progress. Led by the Ministry of Economic Development, which is also in charge of co-ordinating implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the SRD aims to align Poland's new development model with global challenges and goals. The SRD touches upon most areas of the 2030 Agenda, but some goals get much more attention than others. The bulk of actions are related to SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), particularly its growth-related targets. There is only marginal coverage of SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 14 (life below water), SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production patterns) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals). The other SDGs are reasonably well covered, but some of them in a rather narrow way. This is particularly the case for SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation). Also, only few of the Strategy's performance indicators are actually related to the SDGs. With 169 targets, some prioritisation in implementing the 2030 Agenda is clearly called for (see Figure), but the areas that get little attention in the SRD are not necessarily those where Poland already performs strongly. Moreover, the SRD pays little attention to the transboundary effects of national policies, which play an important role in the 2030 Agenda. So while the SRD is a good starting point, successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda requires a more balanced approach. In terms of the implementing actors, Poland has wisely chosen an integrated approach. To bring together various institutions and companies interested in working together towards the SDGs, the government has launched the Partnership for Effective SDG Implementation. It plans to create an online platform to enable discussions about implementation of the SDGs between the general public and the signatories of the Partnership and to set up a multi-stakeholder platform to share knowledge and best practices.

**Poland's Strategy for Responsible Development is a good starting point for implementing the 2030 Agenda. However, it is strongly focused on only a few SDGs. Adopting a more balanced approach may help the country in its ambition to meet all the SDGs by 2030.**

**It is important to prioritise the SDGs and adapt them to national priorities and context**

Number of countries considering a particular action as important




*Source: OECD (2016), OECD Survey on Planning and Co-ordinating the implementation of the SDGs: First results and key issues, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://www.oecd.org/gov/cob-sdg-survey-overview-of-results.pdf.*

# END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

## HAVING A JOB IS NOT ALWAYS ENOUGH TO LIFT PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY

**Overall, poverty in Poland is close to the OECD average, but risks remain for children, the jobless and single-earner families. Incentives for second-earners and solid safety nets for those who are out of work will be crucial in the event of economic downturns.**

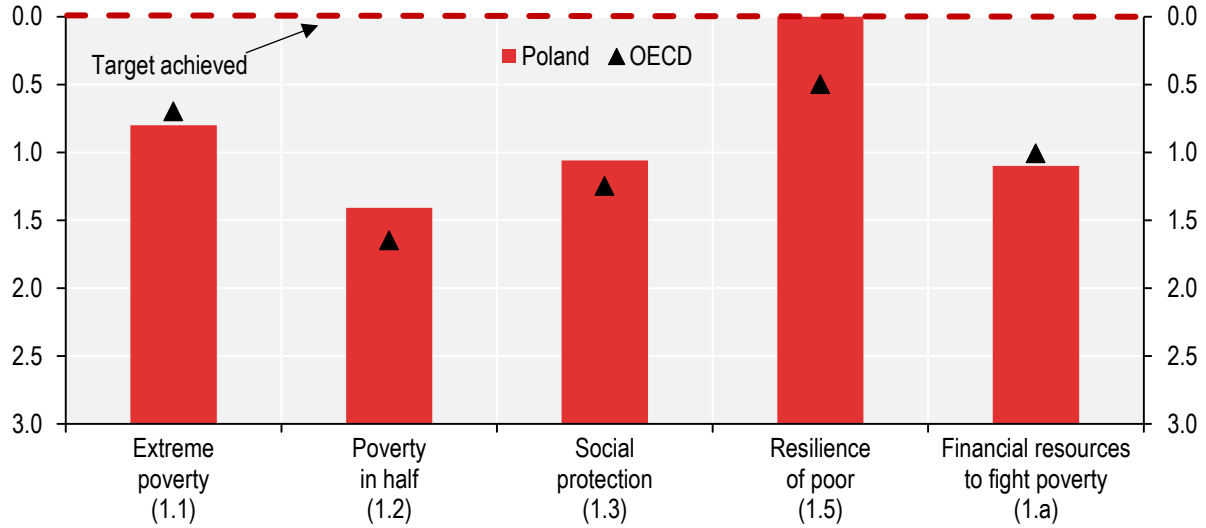
In terms of ending poverty, Poland's performance is similar to the OECD average (see Figure). About one person in ten has an income lower than half the median income in Poland, which is close to the OECD average incidence of income poverty. Children have the highest incidence (12.4%). This is a worrying outcome, as poverty during childhood can have long lasting consequences. Thanks to solid economic growth, few working-age adults live in jobless households (7% in 2014). But those who do experience a very high risk of poverty (37%), as Poland's replacement rate of benefits for the long-term unemployed is one of the lowest in the OECD. In Poland, 51.5% of poor adults live in households where there is a job (compared to the OECD average of 42%), with in-work poverty especially prevalent among single-earner families (23%). Low-wage earners, workers on temporary contracts and in informal employment are also at risk. Supporting female labour force participation (see SDG 5) will help reduce the risk of poverty. Incidence of poverty among the elderly is relatively low, but low employment rates among older workers mean that poverty could rise in the future, due to insufficient pension contributions. There is also a regional dimension to poverty, with poverty rates in Poland's rural areas on average twice as high as in large urban centres, and highest among farmers. Rural residents constitute nearly 60% of those in extreme poverty. Poland's Strategy for Responsible Development recognises poverty as an important issue, but its ambition to lower it falls short of the 2030 Agenda.

*OECD recommendation:*

- *In line with the Strategy for Responsible Development, strengthen efforts to improve access to quality and affordable childcare, to improve children's outcomes and encourage women's labour market participation (see SDG 5).*

**Poland still has some way to go to achieve SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

## POLAND COULD DO MORE TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN AGRICULTURE

Poland still has quite a long way to go on several targets relating to SDG 2 (see Figure). Agriculture in Poland has been expanding in recent years. During the period 2004-14, the annual growth rate of agricultural production was twice the average of OECD countries. This has been achieved through intensification, as the amount of land used for agriculture has decreased over the same period. The use of some inputs with potentially negative environmental impacts (such as phosphorus and energy) has decreased over time, but several challenges remain to ensure sustainable food production systems in Poland. The use of nitrogen fertiliser has increased at a faster rate than agriculture production, and biodiversity has decreased (as measured by farmland birds). In addition, some regions face problems of water scarcity (see SDG 6), and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have increased (see SDG 13), mainly due to higher methane emissions. Poland could also do better in terms of the nutrition of its population, as obesity is on the rise.

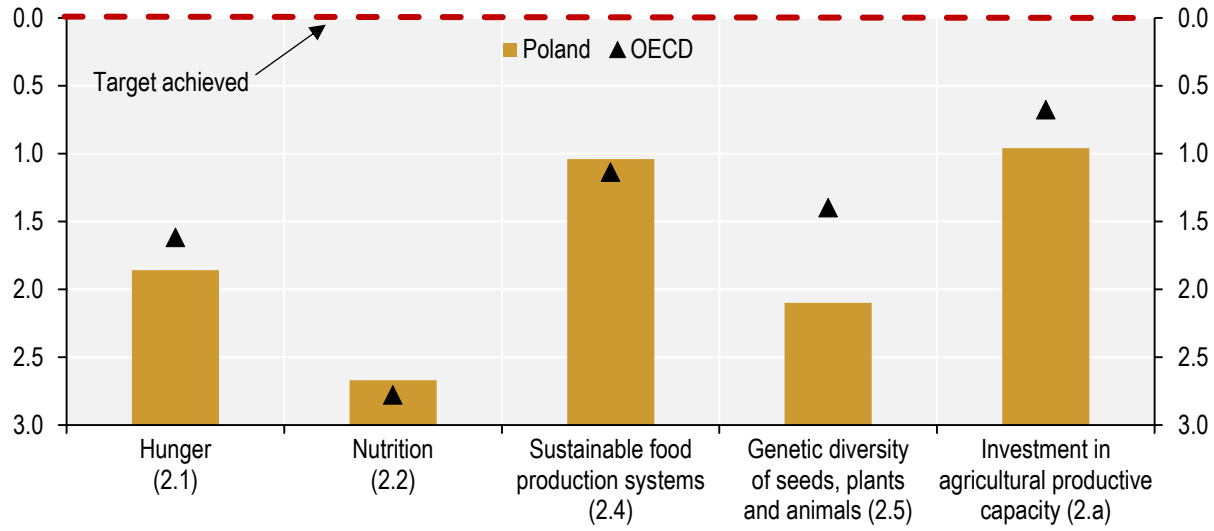
**Despite progress, the sustainability of Poland's expanding agricultural sector remains a concern. Using mineral fertilisers more efficiently, investing in innovation and better managing water would help reduce the sector's environmental footprint.**

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Work towards a more rational and efficient use of mineral fertilisers, including by investing in training on how to use them.*
- *Step up investment in innovation, as envisaged in the Strategy for Responsible Development, with a view to ensuring that appropriate technologies and practices are available (such as crop species suited to particular local conditions), in order to improve the environmental performance of the agricultural sector and reduce GHG emissions.*
- *Invest in improved water management practices, where water is already scarce or risks becoming scarce.*

**On several targets related to SDG 2, Poland is still performing relatively poorly**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

## EFFECTIVELY TACKLING CHRONIC DISEASES WILL IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES

**Poland needs to tackle the burden of chronic diseases more effectively in a sustainable way. This requires additional efforts to control behavioural risk factors and adapt service delivery to deliver co-ordinated care in the right settings.**

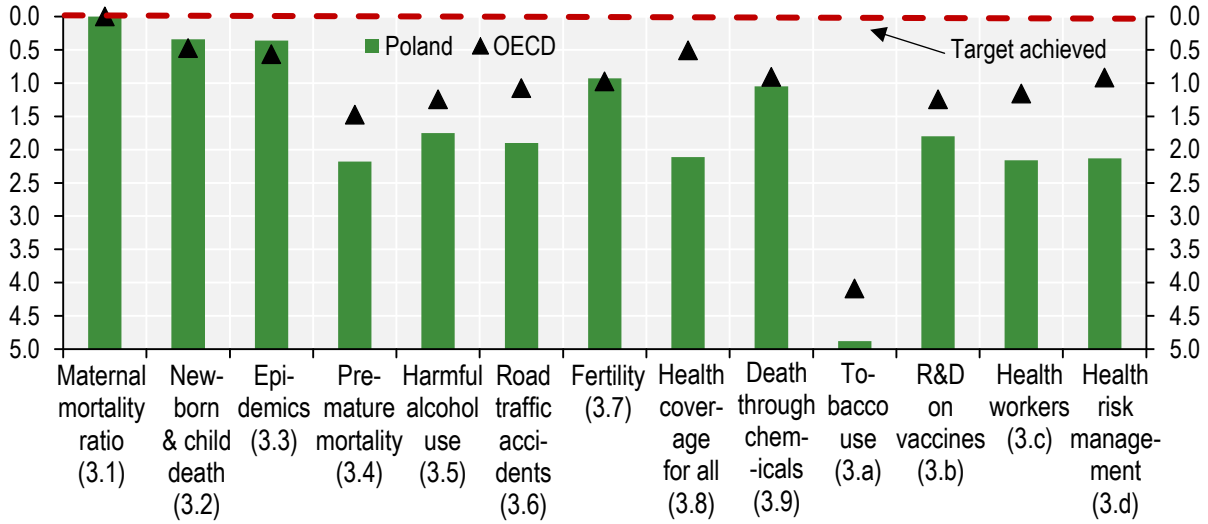
In 2015, life expectancy at birth in Poland was 77.6 years, 3 years below the OECD average. Health inequalities are high: the life expectancy gap between highest and lowest educated men is nearly 12 years (compared to the OECD average of 7 years). In Poland, people are about 60 % more likely to die from circulatory diseases than the average EU resident, and the reduction in cardiovascular mortality has been slower than elsewhere. Over a third of Poland's disease burden can be attributed to behavioural risk factors. Harmful alcohol consumption is on the rise, and tobacco use remains above the OECD average, although it is declining (see Figure). Access to health care is hampered by relatively low spending (6.4% of GDP in 2016, compared to the OECD average of 9%), high out-of-pocket spending and a shortage of health professionals. An effective and sustainable response to the burden of disease is further hampered by the relative weakness of primary care, underdevelopment of long-term and social care, fragmentation of the hospital system and lack of co-ordination in the system. Poland's Strategy for Responsible Development proposes a range of ways to develop the quality and effectiveness of the healthcare system, including measures to tackle health workforce shortages and to improve co-ordination.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Provide adequate funding to implement the public health policy action plan outlined in the 2016 National Health Programme and monitor implementation to determine whether the programme is achieving results.*
- *Address health workforce shortages, as envisaged in the Strategy for Responsible Development, and strengthen primary, long-term and social care to improve the capacity of Poland's health system to tackle the burden of disease.*
- *Sustain the planned reorganisation of the hospital system and networking of facilities, ensuring financial and clinical accountability, as well as monitoring and performance evaluation.*

**Better tackling behavioural risk factors can help Poland achieve SDG 3**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

## EFFORTS TO ENHANCE SCHOOL EDUCATION TO OTHER PARTS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM NEED TO BE EXPANDED

**The performance of Poland's school system has improved. Efforts are now needed to enhance the quality of tertiary education and improve the labour-market relevance of vocational education.**

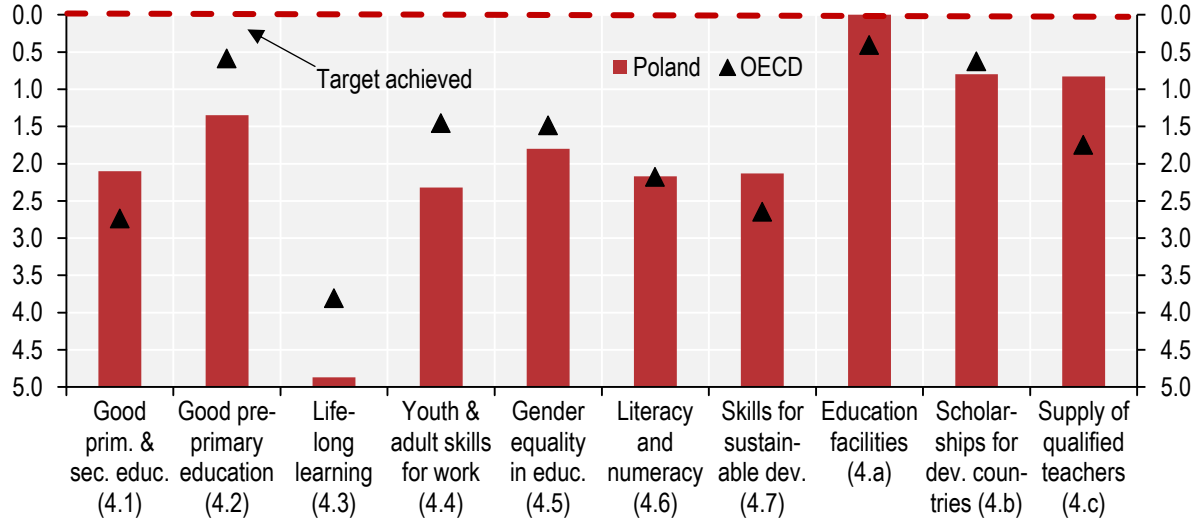
While the performance of Poland's school system has been improving, based on results of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the performance of the university sector and the vocational education and training (VET) system remain weak. A low share of Polish adults participate in formal and non-formal education and training (see Figure). Opportunities for continuing adult education are a particular challenge in rural areas, where many people have weak basic skills. Nevertheless, Poland's tertiary education attainment rate has grown in recent years and is now on par with the OECD average (43%). Furthermore, the first-time entry rate at tertiary level (75%) is higher than the OECD average (66%). But this expansion seems to have come at the expense of quality. The OECD Survey of Adult Skills reveals that a significant number of young university students and university-educated people do not have sufficient basic skills to succeed in the labour market. Work-based learning can be another way to equip young people with skills relevant to the labour market, but only around 8% of Polish VET students report being in apprenticeship programmes or receiving training with employers (well below the OECD average of 17%). It is vital to maintain quality in Poland's expanding tertiary education system and to make VET more responsive to labour-market needs. The government's intention to further strengthen links between the education system and employers, as expressed in the Strategy for Responsible Development, is therefore very welcome.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Expand offerings to improve basic and generic skills, and complement such initiatives with remedial courses to reach those already outside the training and education system.*
- *Scale up adult education programmes, as envisaged in the Strategy for Responsible Development, and put suitable incentives in place for employers to invest in on-the-job training.*

**Life-long-learning is a major bottleneck for Poland to achieve SDG 4**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

# ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

## POLAND COULD FURTHER PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

**To make further progress towards gender equality, Poland should advance policies that will help families balance work and family life and strengthen efforts to increase the number of women in leadership positions.**

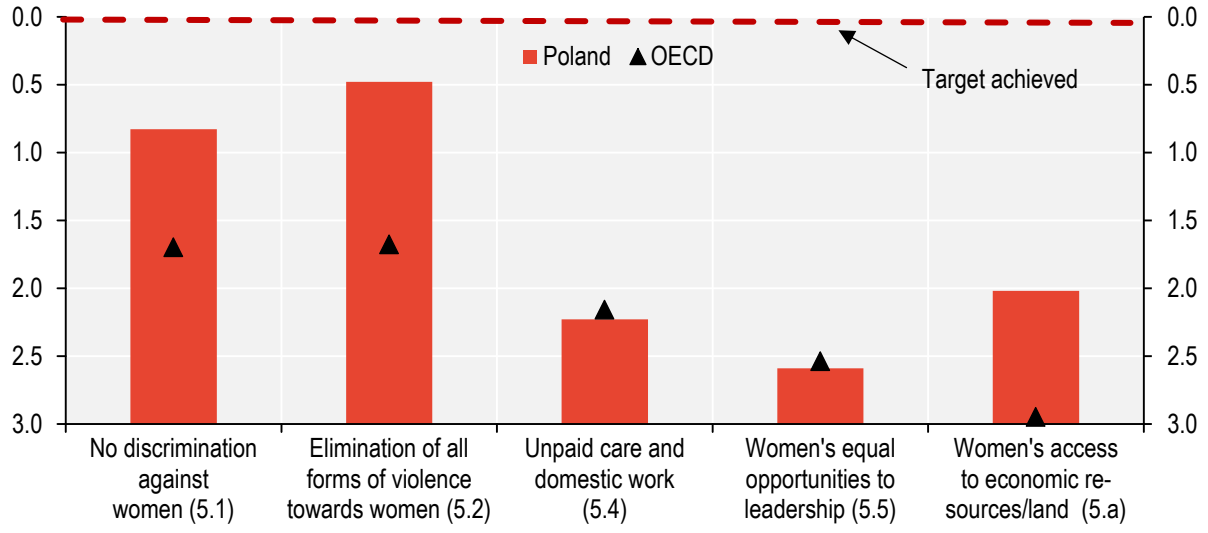
In response to low fertility rates and to enhance gender equality, Poland has increased the duration of parental leave and has made paternity leave more flexible. The government has invested in pre-kindergarten education and, in 2014, just over 74% of 3-5 year-olds were enrolled in pre-primary or primary education (compared to the OECD average of 84%). But more could be done to meet the demand for care of children aged 0-2: only 11% of them are enrolled in formal care. Full-time work has become more common among working women in Poland, with an increase of 7 percentage points during 2004-14. As in most OECD countries, women in Poland still do more unpaid work in the home, adding 32 minutes of extra work to their days compared to men. The gender wage gap was 11% in 2014 (below the OECD average of 14%), and female labour force participation was 62% in 2016 (below the OECD average of 68%). Tackling stereotypes and making work arrangements more flexible for both men and women can support more balanced sharing of paid and unpaid work. Poland also has room to improve women's access to leadership positions. Poland is one of the few countries that reach gender parity for senior managers in the public sector, but the share of board seats held by women in the largest publicly listed companies is only 20% (equal to the OECD average), and the share of seats in parliament held by women is only 27% (compared to the OECD average of 29%).

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Invest in affordable childcare facilities, design the tax benefit system so that both parents have broadly similar financial incentives to work and promote the sharing of household work.*
- *To further close the gender pay gap, consider reporting requirements to improve pay transparency.*
- *Consider setting targets, disclosure rules or quotas to improve representation of women on boards of directors as well as in parliament, the judiciary and other public institutions at all levels.*

**Poland performs better than many OECD countries, but more is needed to achieve SDG 5**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# ENSURE AVAILABLILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

## POLAND NEEDS TO MOVE TOWARDS MORE SUSTAINABLE USE OF WATER

Poland has fewer freshwater resources than most OECD countries. Although groundwater abstraction levels are relatively low, the intensity of water use is about twice the OECD average. Increased investment in infrastructure has extended access to water services and helped to reduce pollution and provide good quality drinking water. But the connection rate for public wastewater treatment plants is below the OECD average. Moreover, access to the water supply network and sewage and water treatment facilities remains much lower in rural areas of Poland than in urban centres. Insufficient treatment of sewage, saline water discharged from coal mines and pollution from diffuse agricultural sources continue to affect water quality (see Figure). More than two-thirds of surface water bodies failed to meet the 2015 good-status objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive. The principles of user pays and polluter pays were laid down in the Water and Environmental Protection laws. But revenue from charges on water pollution and water abstraction remains insufficient to cover the cost of water and sanitation services, and major water users are exempt from abstraction fees. The 2017 Water Law Act introduced water management instruments, including costs for water services and other water fees. The law removed abstraction fee exemptions for large farms, the energy industry, beverage manufacturers, fish farmers and other entrepreneurs who use large amounts of water for production. However, other exemptions remain in place, such those as for farmers who use less than 5 000 litres a day. The transboundary effects of any water and sanitation-related activities also call for greater international co-operation.

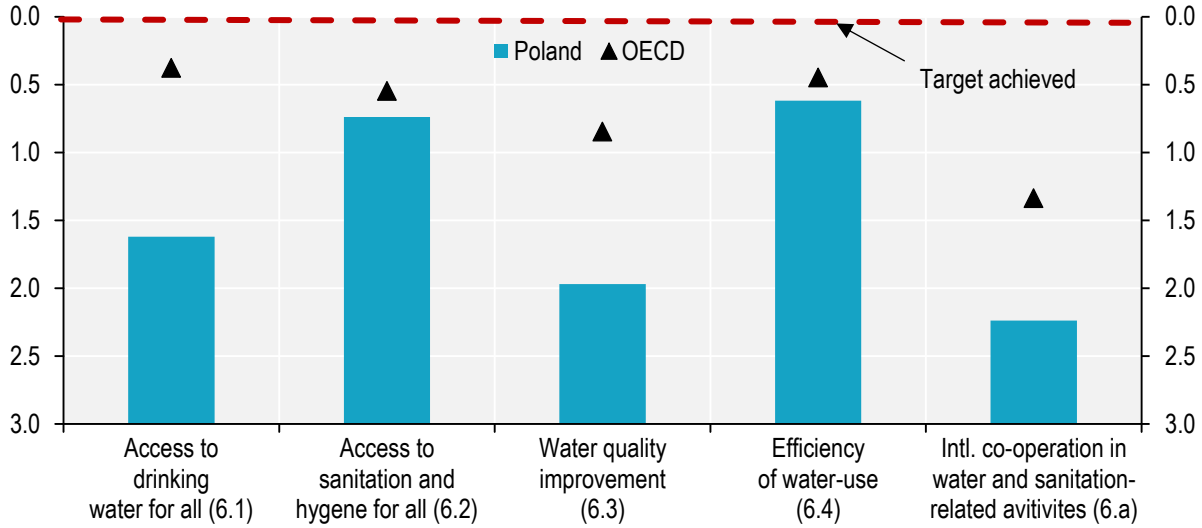
**Water quality remains an issue in Poland. Poor water quality is related to insufficient treatment of wastewater and inadequate financial incentives to reduce pollution and use water more efficiently.**

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Continue to review environmentally related taxes and charges to recover the costs of water and sanitation services and provide incentives to reduce pollution and use water efficiently.*
- *Consider the costs and benefits of remaining water abstraction fee exemptions, and ensure that the newly appointed council of the municipality works towards jointly providing water infrastructure and reducing fragmentation of the water supply and sanitation sector*

**Poland has more work to do to achieve SDG 6 than many other OECD countries**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

## POLAND NEEDS TO MODERNISE ITS ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Electricity access in Poland is good, but the generation stock is ageing, offers little spare capacity and is heavily reliant on coal. Renewal of the stock provides an opportunity to choose cleaner options, including renewables. Greater investment in energy efficiency would also be valuable.**

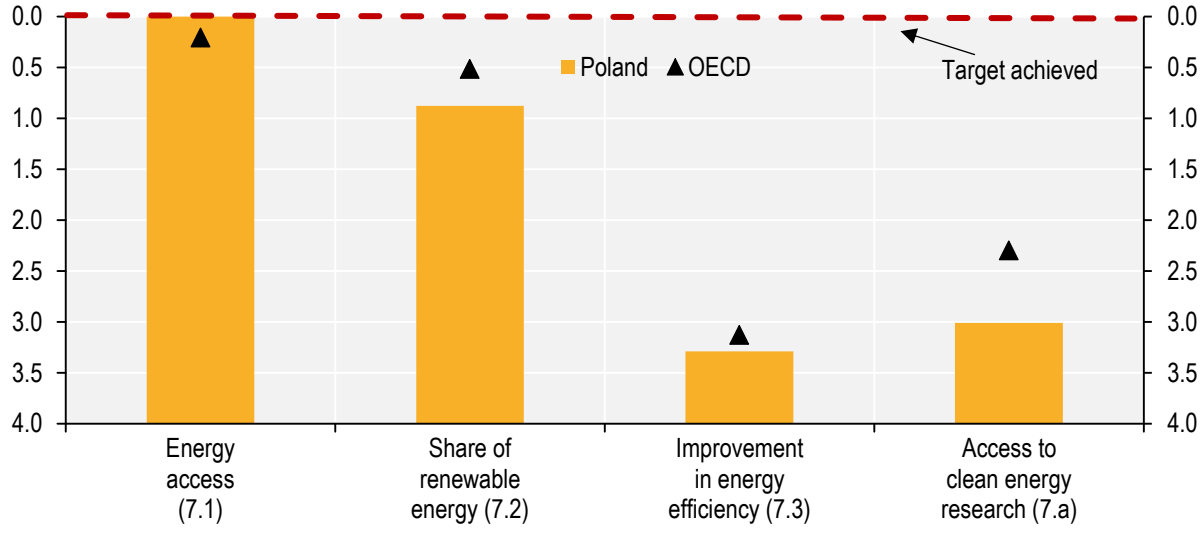
In Poland, energy access is good (see Figure), but rather expensive given the general price level in the country. Structural changes have improved energy productivity, but the economy is highly reliant on coal, with many old and polluting coal-fired power plants. Coal remains the source of 81% of total generation, although this has declined in recent years (from 92% in 2005), compensated by a rapid rise in renewable electricity generation. Inefficient household heating contributes to high levels of air pollution from fine particulate, causing serious health damage. Replacing coal-fired plants and inefficient boilers represents an opportunity to reduce environmental externalities of the energy sector. The share of renewable sources in the energy mix has increased, but it remains modest (14% in 2015), to a large extent based on co-firing biomass with coal in existing power plants. Regulatory uncertainty, administrative burdens, insufficient interregional and international trade capacity (Poland is one of the least connected EU countries in terms of electricity infrastructure) all hamper the development of renewables. There is also significant potential to improve energy efficiency. The development of smart or intelligent grids would allow network operators to modulate electricity demand during peak times and to lower electricity consumption by improving consumer awareness. Poland's ambition to enhance energy efficiency and raise the share of renewables is welcome, but the Strategy for Responsible Development foresees that coal will remain a core part of the energy mix in the long term.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Develop a long-term energy strategy that balances energy security and environmental, social and economic needs, consistent with EU and international climate targets.*
- *Ensure competition between electricity generation technologies and closer integration with neighbouring markets.*
- *Introduce a stable market-based support scheme for high-efficient combined heat and power investments in biofuels, waste and gas to replace small heat boilers and ageing thermal plants.*

**The barrier to achieving SDG 7 is access to clean energy**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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## CREATING HIGH-QUALITY JOBS FOR ALL IS KEY FOR INCLUSIVENESS

The Polish economy has grown strongly in recent years, and living standards continue to catch up with the rest of the OECD. However, total factor productivity has fallen from above 4% on average during 2000-06 to just over 2% during 2010-16. This is linked to infrastructure bottlenecks, low business investment in innovation (see SDG 9) and low basic skills among many adults (see SDG 4). Weak labour force participation, particularly among older workers and women (see SDG 5), hampers future economic development in the context of rapid ageing: fewer than one in two older persons are economically active. Earlier pension reforms limiting early retirement and gradually raising the statutory pension age to 67 helped increase participation among older workers, but the reversal of that reform in 2017 carries social and financial sustainability risks. In its SRD, the government plans to promote employment by seniors through measures such as flexible work arrangements, upskilling programmes and fighting discrimination. Excessive use of temporary contracts undermines inclusive growth. In 2016, more than one in four employees had a temporary contract, compared to one in nine across the OECD. Such contracts, which are especially prevalent among the young and the low-skilled, are associated with lower earnings, higher labour-market insecurity and weaker access to training. They also offer poor prospects of moving to a permanent job and are often in violation of labour laws. The government's ambition to promote more stable forms of employment is, therefore welcome, as it would help to improve working environments (see Figure).

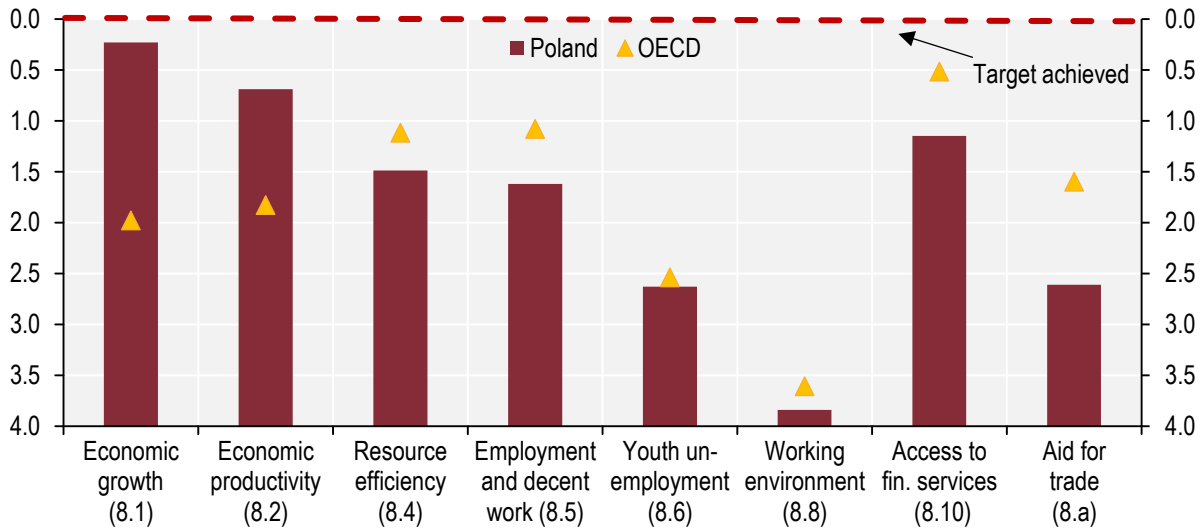
**Falling productivity growth threatens Poland's continued catch-up in living standards with more advanced countries. In addition, low participation in the labour force, especially among older people, and excessive use of temporary contracts hamper sustained and inclusive growth.**

*OECD recommendations:*

- *If the lowering of the statutory pension age to 60 for women and 65 for men is not reversed, promote working beyond the statutory pension age and inform workers of the consequences on pension income.*
- *Strengthen enforcement of labour laws, provide more balanced employment-protection provisions across contract types, monitor the effects of the 2017 reform limiting the maximum (cumulative) duration of temporary contracts and consider a probation period for open-ended contracts.*

**Promoting good working environments is important to make progress towards SDG 8**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALISATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION

## POLAND DOES NOT SUFFICIENTLY LEVERAGE THE POTENTIAL OF INNOVATION

**Stepping up investment in innovation and boosting usage of digital technologies are crucial steps for sustainable development and growth. In addition, Poland needs to continue enhancing its transport and communication infrastructure.**

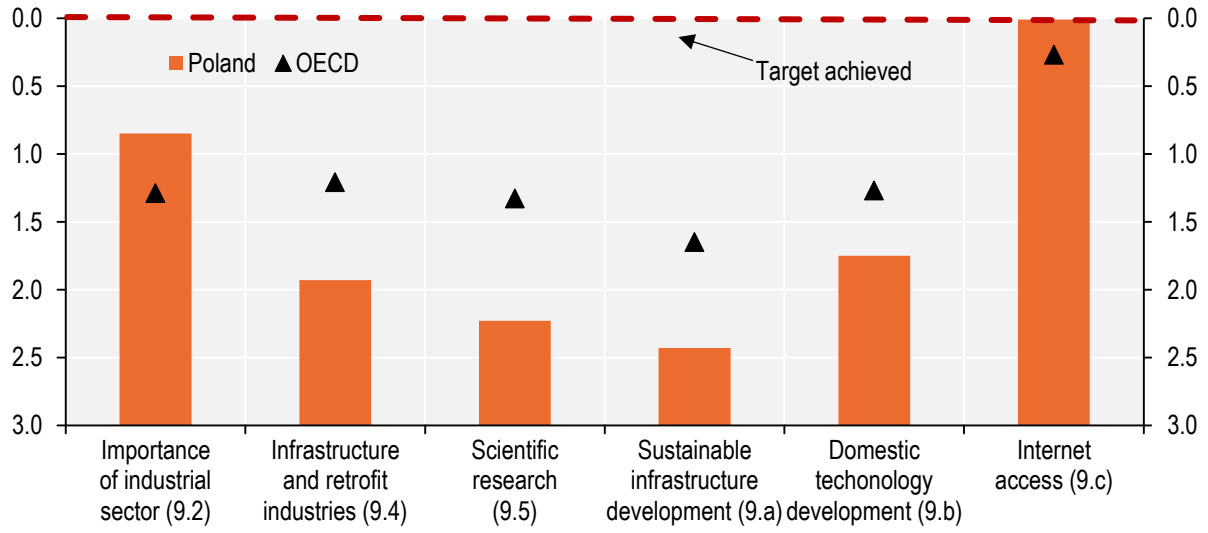
Innovation is a powerful tool for countries to boost productivity and societal well-being. Poland currently still lags behind on many targets related to innovation (see Figure). Gross expenditure on R&D as a share of GDP is 1% (well below the OECD average of 2.4%), and the share of researchers in the labour force is only about 60% of the OECD average. Moreover, while access to mobile Internet is ubiquitous in Poland, actual usage of digital technologies is low. Only 25% of individuals use the Internet daily for communication and information searches, compared to over 51% in Norway, the best-performing OECD country. Polish businesses similarly lag behind: only 6% of firms perform big data analysis, compared to 19% in the Netherlands. Data is still not used as a strategic asset in public administration. Poland remains below the OECD average on open government data availability, accessibility and reuse. Investing more in innovation and enabling firms and individuals to harness digital technologies more widely, both strongly emphasised in the SRD, could boost higher value added activity and help implement new solutions to achieve Poland's sustainability goals. Strengthening the quality of public infrastructure, including ICT and transport, is also essential to support sustainable economic development.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Improve the quality of education to boost skills in science, engineering and technical problem-solving, and promote lifelong learning opportunities to enable people to harness digital technologies.*
- *Encourage the use of digital technologies and organisational change in firms, including investments in data and other knowledge-based capital.*
- *Promote government data availability, accessibility and reuse to enhance citizen participation, better services and business opportunities.*
- *Improve infrastructure selection, including by systematically publishing sufficiently detailed cost-benefit analyses and making independent evaluation mandatory for projects above a certain size.*

**On many targets related to SDG 9, Poland lags well behind the OECD average**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

## POLAND'S SOCIETY IS UNDER PRESSURE OF FUTURE INEQUALITIES

**Persistent disparities in social and economic development pose a significant threat to Poland's future well-being. Several groups at the margins of the labour market are at risk of vulnerability and threaten social cohesion. Making taxes and transfers more progressive would help to reduce inequality.**

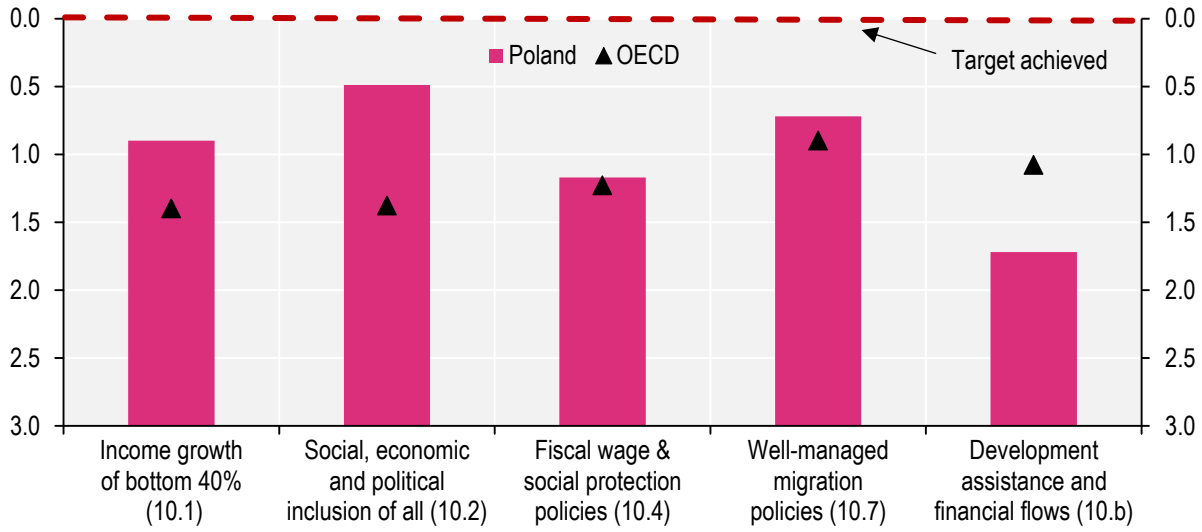
On several targets related to the SDG on reducing inequalities, Poland already performs better than the OECD average (see Figure), but further progress is needed to achieve its goals. The richest 20% earn 5 times the income of the bottom 20% (below the ratio of 5.5 across the OECD), but wage dispersion is high due to large earnings gaps between the high- and low-educated, and between permanent and fixed-term workers. The gender gap in labour-force participation is the tenth largest in the OECD (see SDG 5). As in other OECD countries, foreign-born workers are more likely to be unemployed than the native born: in 2016, the gap in unemployment rates was 2 percentage points (compared to the OECD average of 3.4 percentage points). A lack of economic diversification in rural areas and the persistence of a dual economic structure in agriculture have led to heightened territorial inequalities, as recognised in the Strategy for Responsible Development. While the tax and transfers system in Poland reduces inequality, the share of total public social transfers going to the richest fifth of the working-age population surpassed the share going to the poorest fifth in 2014, raising concerns about progressivity of the system. The design of social transfers, with low replacement rate and coverage of unemployment benefits, partly explains this. Poland's tax wedge for low-wage workers on regular contracts is also above the OECD average.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Continue recent efforts to improve the progressivity of taxes and transfers.*
- *Create a transition plan to converge the social insurance plan of Poland's farmers with regular social insurance, along with support for job creation in rural areas to help accelerate the adjustment of many households out of unproductive farms.*
- *Better align rural development and cohesion policies, and increase support for rural development outside of agriculture, as envisaged in the Strategy for Responsible Development.*

**Poland performs reasonably well on SDG 10, but fully reaching it calls for more work**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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## CITIES IN POLAND NEED TO PROVIDE BETTER HOUSING AND CLEANER AIR

**Rapid urbanisation has been accompanied by policy efforts to make cities more sustainable. But housing affordability and air pollution remain critical policy challenges.**

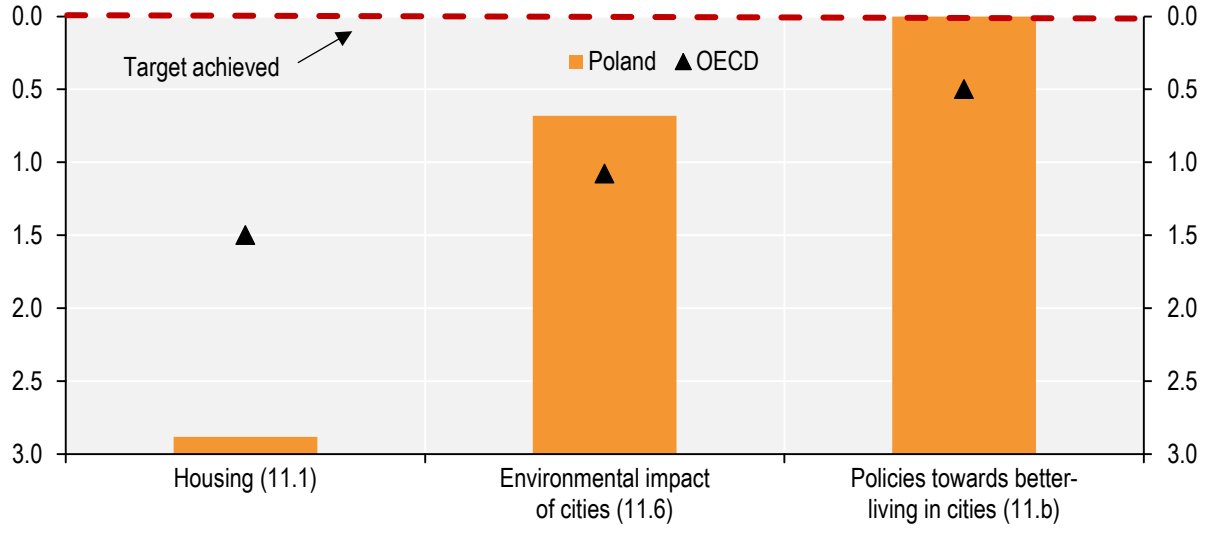
Poland has experienced a process of rapid urbanisation and urban sprawl over the past 20 years, with 65% of its population now living in urban and intermediate areas. In 2015, Poland adopted the National Urban Policy 2023, to strengthen the capacity of cities to pursue sustainable development and job creation. But housing affordability remains a critical challenge, as acknowledged in the Strategy for Responsible Development. Despite significant progress in reducing the official housing deficit through national programmes (e.g. VAT refunds and support to home ownership) and municipal initiatives (e.g. construction of social housing), the proportion of households living in overcrowded dwellings and the share of poor quality housing remain large. In addition, more could be done to reduce the environmental impact of cities. A relatively high share of the population is exposed to air pollution in metropolitan areas (16.4% in 2013, compared to the OECD average of 11.0%), weighing on health outcomes (see SDG 3). The government's aim to make cities more resident-friendly, including through cleaner air, is thus welcome. Metropolitan areas in Poland perform better than the OECD average in terms of access to green spaces (577m² per million inhabitants in 2013, compared to the OECD average of 500m$^2$).

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Complement housing policy indicators to assess not only housing deficits but also housing affordability (e.g. housing expenditure as a share of income and housing cost overburden rates) and housing quality (e.g. overcrowding, availability of basic facilities).*
- *Provide incentives for targeting housing development in the urban core, to control urban sprawl and limit the costs of providing infrastructure for cities.*
- *Reduce air pollution and carbon emissions in cities, through co-ordinated action between the national government (e.g. fuel standards, carbon taxes) and city governments (e.g. land use regulation, public transport investment), while carefully monitoring their distributional effects.*

**Better access to housing is key for Poland to achieve SDG 11**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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## POLAND HAS ROOM TO FURTHER REDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT OF CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Primary production of raw materials, processing of materials into products and ultimate disposal of the waste material has major environmental impacts. Poland is among the most resource- and carbon-intensive countries in the OECD, due to its relatively large mining and industrial sectors and heavy reliance on coal. The government's Strategy for Responsible Development aims to decrease the country's resource and material intensity, but it provides few details on related actions. Waste management in Poland has been transformed with the adoption of EU legislation, but further steps are needed to establish a comprehensive and coherent framework. Poland generates below the OECD average of municipal waste per capita, but less than half of its waste is recycled or composted (see Figure). In the SRD, the government reiterates its ambition to improve waste management, with a concrete action plan included in the National Waste Management Plan 2022. In the pursuit of the SDGs, there is also much to be gained from promoting and enabling responsible business conduct. The National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises is a key institution in this regard.

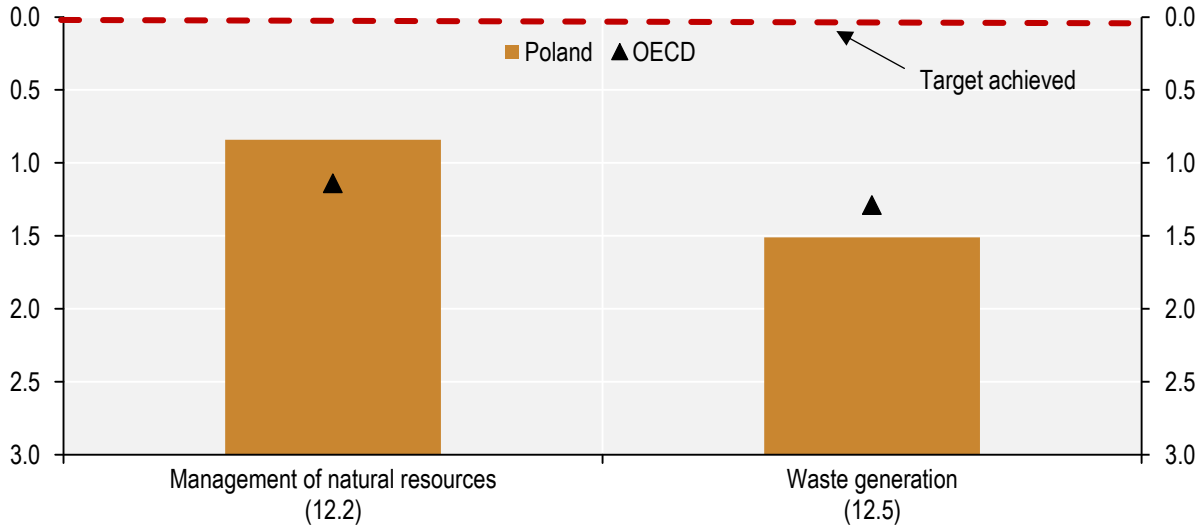
**Achieving SDG 12 requires moving towards a society where more value can be created with fewer natural resources, to not compromise the needs of future generations. Reducing waste and improving material productivity will help Poland to transition to more sustainable consumption and production patterns.**

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Improve resource efficiency and material productivity at all stages of the material lifecycle, reinforce implementation of the Strategy for Innovative and Efficient Economy and monitor progress.*
- *Ensure a strong national framework for sustainable consumption and production that is integrated into national and sectoral plans to promote sustainable business practices.*
- *Improve public awareness of waste management and resource productivity issues, make greater use of economic instruments to support more efficient management of waste, enhance material productivity and support the financial sustainability of waste utilities, including by strengthening the incentive effect of the tax on mineral extraction.*

**Raising the recycling rate of municipal waste would help improve performance on SDG 12**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

## ENERGY-RELATED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REMAIN HIGH IN POLAND

**Despite significant progress, the Polish economy remains one of the most carbon-intensive in the OECD. Further progress in reducing emissions requires fundamental changes to the energy and transport sectors.**

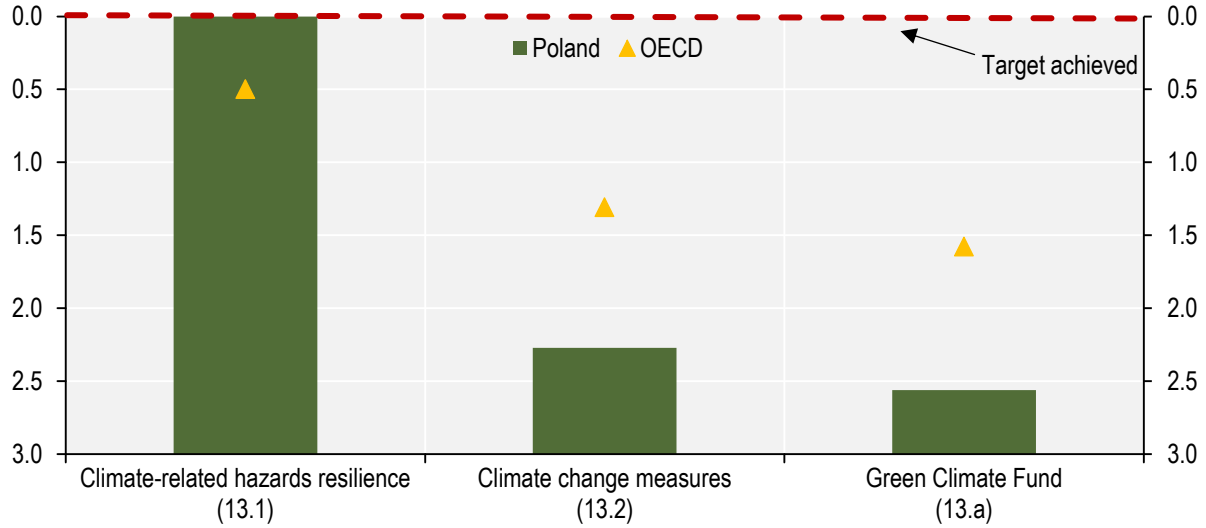
Energy efficiency improvements in heavy industry and structural changes in the economy have enabled Poland to meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. The country ratified the Paris Agreement and is on track to respect its 2020 target of limiting the rise in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions outside the EU emissions trading system. Still, meeting the SDG on climate action requires additional work (see Figure). Significant changes will be needed to the power and transport sectors to further reduce emissions in the long term. Despite falling emissions, the energy sector accounts for a high share of total emissions (42.5% in 2015, well above the OECD average of 27%) and is still largely shielded from internalising the cost of air-polluting emissions. The transport sector is the fastest growing source of GHG emissions and now accounts for 12% of the total, partly due to significant investment in road infrastructure and insufficient support for less carbon-intensive transport modes. The government's plan to promote low-emissions public transport solutions, as stated in the SRD, is therefore highly welcome. With respect to risks related to climate change, Poland is taking precautions including, through its 2013 National Adaptation Strategy, the development of urban adaptation plans for large cities to evaluate sensitivity and vulnerability to climate change and the use of environment impact assessments.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Develop a long-term climate policy, as part of the energy strategy framework for 2050, to reach the 2030 and 2050 GHG reduction targets, in line with EU climate policy and the Paris Agreement.*
- *Account for the full economic, social and environmental cost of options when planning transport and energy investment, and review and revise transport taxes and charges to better internalise the environmental impacts of various transport modes.*
- *Increase incentives for rail infrastructure investment by increasing competition, enhancing private-sector involvement, reinforcing the sector regulator's independence and setting prices to recover the cost of operations, maintenance and investment.*

**Meeting SDG 13 requires further action to reduce GHG emissions**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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## POLAND IS DOING WELL IN SOME, BUT NOT ALL AREAS OF PROTECTING LIFE BELOW WATER

As home to about half of the inhabitants of the Baltic region, Poland is a contracting party to the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea to address pollution from land, shipping, waste and exploration activities. The main risks to biodiversity in the Baltic Sea are eutrophication, overfishing and by-catch, pollution by contaminants and oil, and the introduction of non-indigenous species (although this is not the sole responsibility of Poland). To help fishers adapt to sustainable fishing, create jobs in the fisheries sector and diversify economies in coastal communities, Poland is implementing operational programme PO RYBY 2014-2020. The programme is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which co-finances the objectives of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy. The levels of nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea from Poland have declined with investment in wastewater treatment, but Poland remains a large contributor to pollution in the Baltic Sea. Environmental pressures from nutrients have not been decoupled from agricultural production and remain a threat to water quality. Even though 36% of Poland's marine areas are protected (above the Aichi biodiversity target of 10%) (see Figure), further efforts will be required to complete the Natura 2000 network of nature protection areas. The Polish fish-processing sector remains one of the largest in Europe. Better knowledge of the status of habitats in the Baltic Sea and coastal zones remains important.

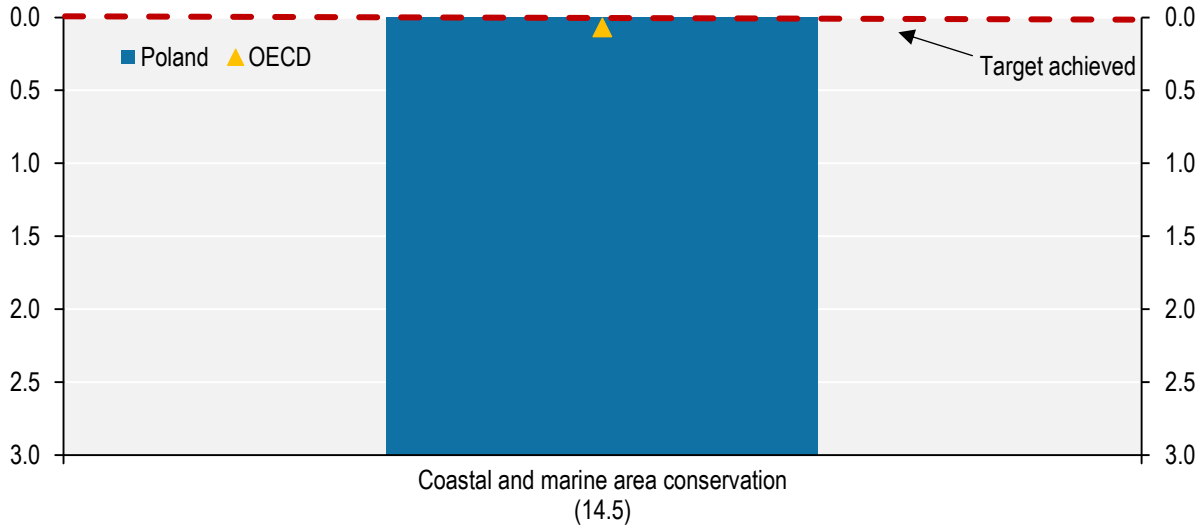
**Despite progress, Poland could do more to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources. In particular, further efforts are needed to lower nutrient inputs to the Baltic Sea and monitor the status of habitats in the Baltic Sea and coastal zones.**

*OECD recommendation:*

- *Complete the designation and ensure effective management of marine protected areas within Natura 2000.*

**Poland protects a higher share of coastal and marine areas than required by the Aichi target, but SDG 14 requires additional efforts to reduce marine pollution and avoid overfishing**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF LAND, HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

## POLAND HAS HIGH AMBITIONS TO PROTECT NATURE BUT FACES CHALLENGES IN EFFORTS TO HARMONISE POLICIES

**Poland is among the countries with the largest forest areas in the region. About 40% of forests administered by the State Forests are included in the European Network, Natura 2000. Better implementation of Natura 2000 and forest management plans is vital to improve biodiversity.**

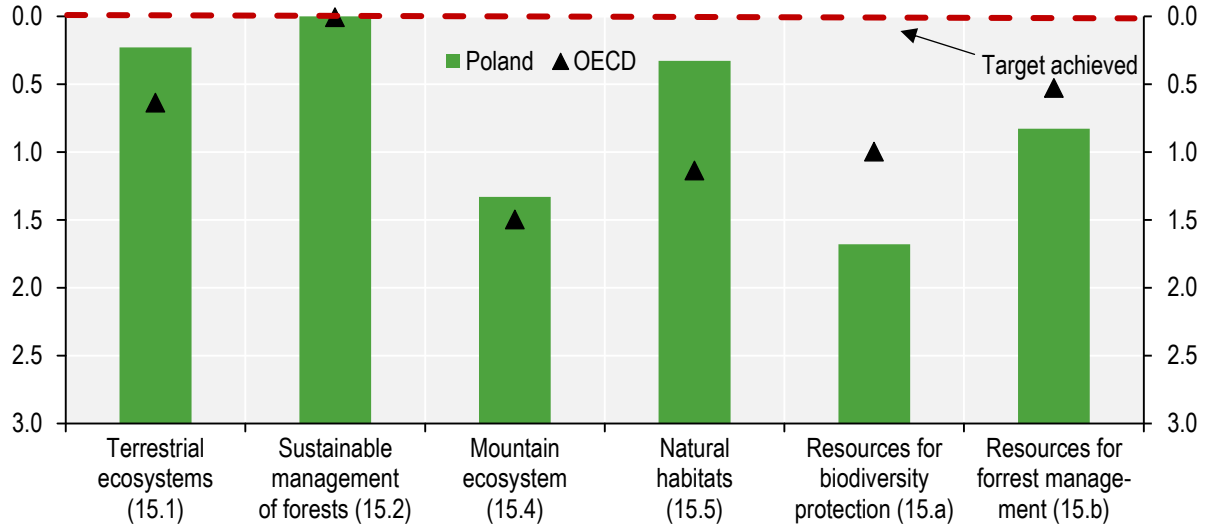
Nearly 40% of Poland's territory is under protection, and about 30% is covered by forests, and the government is planning to further expand forest areas in its Forest Cover Augmentation Programme. Sustainable forestry practices have allowed timber harvesting to increase without compromising Poland's natural capital. Populations of several protected forest mammals have increased, but, while improving, Natura 2000 forest habitats must be further protected. Nowadays, there are discussions about logging in Białowieża due to the need to preserve one of Europe's most important natural and cultural heritages. Increasing forest habitat protection will require coherent forestry and biodiversity policies and adequate financing (see Figure). While the bulk of the resources will have to come from the central budget, the national environmental fund and EU sources, complementary mechanisms can help fill the financing gap. These include wider use of access charges and the development of payment for ecosystem services, which until now has not received much attention. The current practice of issuing construction permits in the absence of a land use plan contributes to encroachment in forests and degradation of protected areas. The state forest management agency has a good knowledge base to support forest management and monitoring of forest biodiversity.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Ensure effective implementation of Natura 2000 and forest management plans.*
- *Make the development of local land use plans obligatory and consistent with Natura 2000 provisions.*
- *Prepare comprehensive assessments of forest biodiversity and the economic value of ecosystem services provided by forests.*
- *Use access charges more widely, and develop payments for ecosystem services.*

**More coherent forestry and biodiversity policies and adequate financing are needed to meet SDG 15**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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## STRONG INSTITUTIONS ARE KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Perception of government corruption in Poland has fallen over the past decade, while trust in government has risen. Currently, 61% of the population consider corruption to be widespread across government (see Figure). 43% are satisfied with the health system (compared to the OECD average of 51%) and 49% are satisfied with the judiciary (compared to the OECD average of 55%). Poland has substantially improved its system for evidence-based law making, but still faces implementation challenges. Minimum periods for public consultations on planned laws and regulations are not always respected. Poland may also extend its online public consultation system to conduct consultations for major policy initiatives at an early stage in the policy process. Steps taken in 2014 to introduce ex-post evaluation of regulations are encouraging and could be further enhanced to ensure laws achieve their objectives without imposing unnecessary costs on society. The government plan to improve the effectiveness of institutions and the quality of public services is welcome. However, the actions proposed in the SRD could be made more ambitious and broader in scope by examining the culture and functions of public administration as a whole. With respect to the justice system, Poland has developed important measures, such as alternative dispute resolutions and e-justice systems. It is important that reforms to the criteria for appointment, tenure and dismissal of judges are in compliance with international standards, become more transparent and take social factors into account.

**Satisfaction with public services is low in Poland. More can be done to strengthen consultations with citizens and businesses on policy options in a systematic manner.**

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Invest in building a culture of integrity in the Polish civil service by developing the capacities of ethical advisers to mainstream integrity in the whole public administration.*
- *Extend online public consultation, and consult the public more systematically early in the policy process.*
- *Systematically conduct ex-post evaluation of laws and regulations, and further enhance the methodology.*
- *Continue the reforms of the Polish judiciary, ensuring compliance with international standards.*

**Stepping up the fight against corruption is vital for Poland to progress towards SDG 16**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)




*Note: The full text of the targets is available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.*
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# STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

## POLAND SHOULD WORK TOWARDS THE SDGS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A REVITALISED GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

**It will not be possible to achieve the SDGs without a revitalised and enhanced global partnership. In supporting developing countries, technology transfer, trade and capacity building are just as important as financial assistance.**

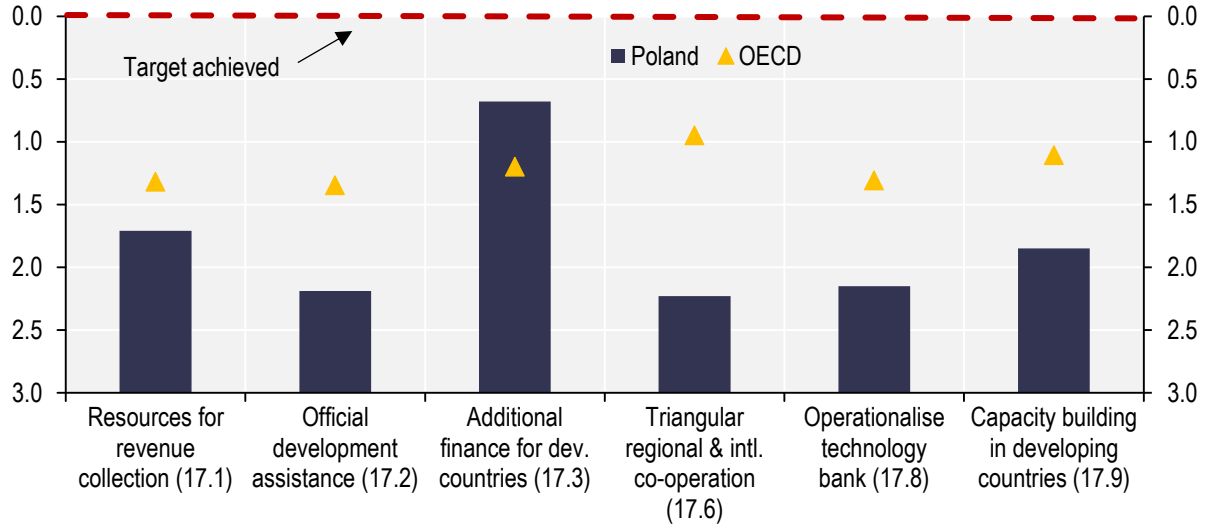
Achieving the SDGs calls for a stronger commitment to partnerships and international co-operation (see Figure). The targets under Goal 17 are both financial (such as taxes and official development assistance [ODA]) and non-financial (such as technology and capacity building). Poland's net ODA measured as a percentage of gross national income has been on the rise. But at 0.15% in 2016, it is still well below Poland's commitment to reach 0.33% by 2030. The recipients of Poland's bilateral aid are not always priority countries listed in the government's Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2016-20. In Poland, the Ministry of Economic Development is in charge of co-ordinating national implementation of the 2030 Agenda, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for ensuring that development co-operation is aligned with the SDGs. It will be important to ensure co-ordination of internal and external implementation. More generally, achieving the optimal organisational set-up, systems, procedures and key capabilities for delivering aid remains an issue for Poland.

*OECD recommendations:*

- *Clarify institutional roles, responsibilities and mechanisms to deliver policies that are aligned with the aspirations of developing countries.*
- *Define a strategic approach to meeting the needs of different partner countries in a way that adds value and complements the support provided by other development partners.*
- *Analyse risks and opportunities to achieving development results, and have these analyses inform Poland's choice of partners and aid modalities.*
- *As Poland increases ODA to meet its commitments, allocate more resources to the bilateral budget, and focus bilateral aid, including loans and scholarships, on priority countries and themes.*

**More active contribution to a global partnership for sustainable development is needed to reach SDG 17**

Normalised distance to target (a higher bar denotes better performance)



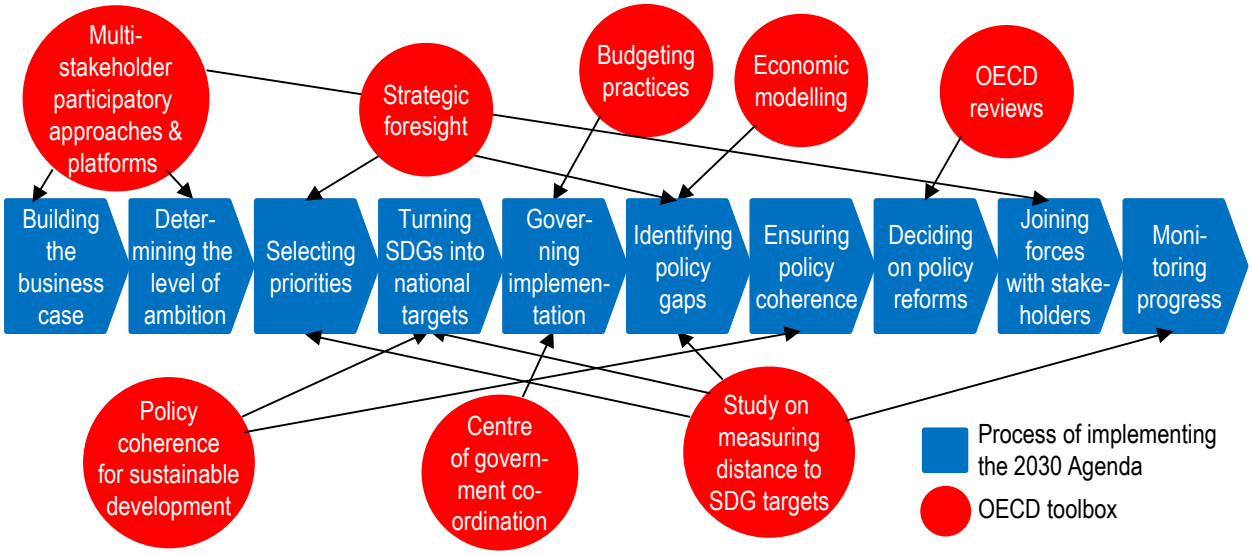

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*Source: www.oecd.org/std/OECD-Measuring-Distance-to-SDGs-Targets-Metada.pdf.*

## THE OECD IS COMMITTED TO BEING A "BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR" IN THE UN-LED 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The OECD can play an instrumental role to help Poland's realise its commitments to sustainable development. The organisation has a wide range of tools available to support countries in all stages of the process (see Figure). For instance, the OECD can support countries in building the business case for the SDGs among government and non-government stakeholders, and it can help countries determine their level of ambition. Through its strategic foresight unit, the OECD can also support governments in prioritising policy efforts – with 17 goals and 169 targets, some prioritisation is clearly called for. The OECD also has tools available to assist governments in translating the global SDGs into national goals to make the 2030 Agenda operational at the country level. The OECD's thematic reviews can shed light on the best policy mechanisms for achieving the SDGs, and its work on modelling long-term economic trends and measuring distances to the SDG targets can help countries to identify policy gaps, assess the impact of different policy reforms on achieving the SDGs and track progress over time. Since a complex agenda like the SDGs requires mainstreaming implementation, the public sector needs to work across all sectors and all levels of government. To this end, the OECD can support countries in determining the role of specific institutions, integrating long-term strategies into the budget process and developing a whole-of-government approach. The OECD's Framework for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development offers a range of tools to help governments capitalise on synergies among goals and targets, which is critical due to the integrated nature of the SDGs. Finally, the OECD can assist governments in involving various stakeholders in planning, measuring and implementing the 2030 Agenda to maximise relevance, legitimacy and effectiveness.

**The OECD is uniquely placed to support Poland and other countries in achieving the SDGs. It can help them map the 2030 Agenda with national strategies to verify whether they are SDG-aligned and put in place appropriate governance structures for effective implementation. It can also provide evidence-based recommendations to help countries develop coherent reforms across the entire policy spectrum.**

**The OECD can help Poland and other countries in all stages of the SDG implementation process**




*Source: OECD (2017), Making the Most of the SDGs: Selected OECD Tools and Experiences in Support of National Implementation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://community.oecd.org/docs/DOC-114560.*

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The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

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