

## Italy

**Italy's 2017 National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) provides a long-term vision for SDG implementation and balances long- and short-term objectives.** The NSDS provides for concrete activities on the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: “People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership” as well as a set of “sustainability vectors” – crosscutting, transversal areas of action that are essential to guiding, managing and monitoring the integration of the SDGs into national policies, plans and projects. It also identifies a knowledge-based approach, improved data collection and management, as well as data analysis as crucial for identifying cross-sectoral policy interactions, addressing trade-offs and harnessing synergies.

**Local and regional involvement is a cornerstone of Italy's strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda and mobilise resources at all levels of government.** The NSDS calls on regional and local authorities to take part in the implementation of the Strategy according to their specific institutional mandates and competencies. The strategy was endorsed at regional and local level, through the adoption of the document in the State and Regions Conference. Following the legislative decree no. 152/2006 and subsequent amendments, the Regions are now drafting their own sustainable development strategies, in the frame of the NSDS. Since the adoption of the 2014 Law on International Development Cooperation, local authorities play an active role in the definition and implementation of international cooperation projects, increasing awareness and ownership of the SDGs.

**Engagement with academia and civil society provides evidence informed input for national strategies and fosters the emergence of a national consensus on sustainable development.** The Italian government involved a number of national public research institutes (namely the CNR, ISPRA, ENEA, and ISTAT) in the definition and implementation of its strategies and policies to ensure an approach based on scientifically founded information. More than 400 Universities, research centres and NGOs were contacted for their factual and prospective inputs. A “Sustainable Development Forum” will be launched by the end of 2018, to stimulate an active contribution to the implementation of the NSDS by the civil society. The National Conference on

### **Box 1. Issue-based approach enables Italy to identify synergies in guidelines on energy and development**

In 2018, the Italian government adopted guidelines for cooperation initiatives on energy and development. In order to support policy elaboration in the domain of development cooperation and sustainable energy, key stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, research institutions and academia were involved in drafting the guidelines within the framework of the ‘Multi-stakeholder platform [on Sustainable Energy]’, established in 2016. The cross-sectoral approach to the implementation of SDG7 (affordable and clean energy) helped identify synergies between sustainable energy, economic development, food, water, health, climate change, gender equality, local empowerment and humanitarian aid. The process enabled the government to define clear, comprehensive and coherent implementation guidelines that integrate the objectives of the 2030 Agenda into concrete activities, strengthening SDG implementation and vertical policy coherence.

Development Cooperation further encourages engagement key stakeholders and helps to identify common challenges and align SDG-related actions. Italy experienced positive results with stakeholder participation on specific issues in particular (Box 1).

**Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Italy**

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Political commitment	Italy's National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was approved in 2017 with policy coherence for sustainable development as one of the main pillars of the "external dimension". Policy coherence is also enshrined as an overarching principle in the Reform Law 125/2014. According to Art. 2, Italy makes the "utmost effort to guarantee that its policies, even when not directly linked to development cooperation, shall be consistent with the purposes and founding principles of this Law, so that they might foster the achievement of the development goals."
Policy integration	The implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) is closely linked with the existing national programming documents, namely the National Reform Programme and the Economy and Financial Document, as well as with the binding objectives set by the European Semester (i.e. EU 2020 targets). The NSDS provides for concrete SDG activities on the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: "People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership" as well as a set of "sustainability vectors" – crosscutting, transversal areas of action that are essential to guiding, managing and monitoring the integration of the SDGs into national policies, plans and projects. These vectors include: Improved knowledge on: (i) natural ecosystems and ecosystem services, (ii) the qualitative and quantitative status and use of natural, cultural and landscapes resources, and (iii) equality, human dignity and social inclusion, as well as an (iv) integrated system of knowledge to formulate and evaluate development and an (v) improved availability and access to data and information. Furthermore, the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda have been integrated into the 2017 National Action Plan by including national quantitative targets, baseline values, and providing for monitoring, review mechanisms and models to measure domestic and international policy impacts.
Intergenerational timeframe	The NSDS is a long-term strategy aiming to translate the 2030 Agenda into action in a way that goes beyond the scope of electoral cycles. The establishment of a Permanent Forum for Sustainable Development, comprised of stakeholders from civil society, local authorities and SDG experts, aims to further strengthen accountability and policy continuity. In addition, the Ministry of Finance assesses the long-term impacts of the budget on national well-being on a yearly basis.
Policy effects	Italy has not yet adopted any policy impact assessment legislation. However, environmental assessments of plans, programmes and projects provide information on transboundary effects on environmental issues. Within the Italian development cooperation system, mitigation of potential negative spill-overs of domestic policies on international cooperation activities are addressed by a coordination mechanism centred around the Deputy Foreign Minister with International Cooperation portfolio, who "is invited to participate, without the right to vote, in the meetings of the Council of Ministers dealing with subject matters that may directly or indirectly affect the coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation policies".
Coordination	The Presidency of the Council of Ministers has the lead in coordinating and managing the NSDS, with the support of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, for the domestic and external dimension respectively. The Ministry of Finance is tasked with creating strong synergies between the NSDS implementation and national economic policies as well as coordinating policy evaluation. The government will provide an annual review of the NSDS implementation as well as an assessment of interim-results. To incorporate the SDGs into the national institutional and administrative structure, a "Permanent Committee on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and of the Sustainable Development Goals" was established within the Chamber of Deputies in 2015. Regarding the external dimension of the NSDS and international cooperation in particular, the government established a coordination mechanism to prevent and resolve conflicts between aid and non-aid policies. The mechanism seeks to ensure alignment of the development activities with the structure and overall strategic objectives provided for by the 17 SDGs as well as the government's Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document.
Local involvement	The government promotes local and regional authorities to be active and take part in the implementation process through the State and Regions Conference. The NSDS has been endorsed at regional and local level, through the adoption of the document in the State and Regions Conference. Italy's legal system allows for local authorities to be an integral part of Italian development cooperation and play an active role in its definition and implementation.
Stakeholder participation	The government involved a number of national public research institutes (namely the CNR, ISPRA, ENEA, and ISTAT) in the definition and implementation of policies to ensure an approach based on scientifically founded information. More than 400 Universities, research centres and NGOs were contacted for their factual and prospective inputs. Similarly, broad stakeholder participation was guaranteed during the drafting process of the Policy Planning Document of Italian Development Cooperation, which is structured along the 17 SDGs and is an integral part of the NSDS. In addition, Italian Law provides for a National Conference on Development Cooperation that strongly encourages engagement with civil society and other key stakeholders.
Monitoring and reporting	The Italian statistics office is in charge of analysing the available indicators and for improving their coverage and significance in order to identify relevant trends in SDGs achievement, national well-being and sustainable development. Drawing on the collected data, an implementation report on the NSDS is published on a yearly basis. Development cooperation activities are assessed in a distinct annual report, measured by a system of qualitative and quantitative indicators in accordance with the effectiveness indicators developed by the OECD-DAC.

*Source:* OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>, 2018<sup>[2]</sup>); Italy (2017<sup>[3]</sup>, <sup>[4]</sup>); and Piattaforma Nazionale Multi-attoriale "Energia e Sviluppo" (2018<sup>[5]</sup>)

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