

Development of Italy's National Action Plan for PCSD

The Ministry of Ecological Transition (MITE) took the opportunity of the revision process of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) – due to be reviewed every three years by law – to engage the public administration at all levels and civil society in a strengthened dialogue to develop **Italy's National Action Plan for PCSD (NAP)** to be considered as the implementing agenda of the NSDS. This process was framed within in the context of the OECD-led Project “Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development: mainstreaming SDGs in the Italian decision-making” supported by the Technical Support Instrument of the European Commission – DG Reform started in June 2020. This process builds on a constructive dialogue created over the last three years by the MITE, with central administrations, regions, and autonomous provinces, and metropolitan areas and the civil society. Beyond the horizon 2030, described by the SDGs and the NSDS, the PCSD Action plan is intended as an enabler for sustainable development implementation by contributing to materialize government's commitment to PCSD to ensure that different parts and levels of the government take action for sustainable development across and at different levels of government. The formulation of the PCSD action plan takes into account international processes such as the development of a methodological monitoring framework to track progress on the OECD Recommendation on PCSD and the methodology for measuring SDG indicator 17.14.1 by UNEP. The PCSD Action Plan includes aspirational and immediate actions around three key directions:

- Connect complementary institutional mandates; filling the gap of an interministerial coordination group/committee/mechanism on NSDS and PCSD,
- Provide the Italian system with the instruments to steer policy coherence: i.e. aligning regulative tools and legislative processes across central and territorial administrations, building on the successful experiences developing policy coherence tools of the sub-national level and envisaging dedicated training programmes to foster a sustainable development culture across institutions.
- Strengthen the multi-stakeholder approach and build on the mechanisms established in the past three years of work within the NSDS with territories and non-state actors to make them permanent in the institutional framework and/or enhanced.

Italy's country profile provides a short overview of the country' efforts on enhancing PCSD as called for by SDG target 17.14 and the 2019 Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. The extended Italian PCSD Scan 2021 is available at: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/italy-governance-scan-pcsd.pdf>

Strategic vision, political commitment and leadership

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|  <p>Political Commitment</p> | <p>The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) is in the process of being revised after three years since its approval in 2017, as foreseen by law. Resulting from multi-stakeholders and multi-level consultations, the main novelty of the revised national strategy (NSDS 2021) is to include specific targets and indicators for the Strategic Choices and Objectives (NSOs) spelled out around the five dimensions of the 2030 Agenda (the 5Ps: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships). The NSDS 2021 has the ambition to clarify the country's determination to achieve SDGs by providing a framework for measuring policies' contributions towards the National Strategic Objectives (NSOs) and using the NSDS 2021 as the key document for guiding governmental decisions. In addition, the sixth area of the 2021 Strategy, dedicated to identify the enablers of the NSDS ("Vettori di Sostenibilità"), includes concrete actions to increase policy coherence throughout the policy cycle as identified in the "Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Action Plan" produced through a participative process supported by the OECD in 2021/2022. Resulting from a whole-of-government effort this advanced commitment to PCSD, could systematically introduce a sustainability lens throughout current practices for policy formulation, implementation and evaluation and accelerate the pace to achieving the SDGs in particular with public funding made available by the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).</p> |
|  <p>Strategic Long-term Vision</p> | <p>Italy's current capabilities related to strategic long-term vision and foresight appear to be mixed. Current key assets, including strong capacities for quantitative modelling and forecasting within the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and foresight capacities outside of government e.g., in the academia, could be further exploited to orient decision making.</p> |
|  <p>Policy Integration</p> | <p>Several efforts implemented by different branches and levels of the government have served to link policies and budget measures with the SDGs, the NSDS or other sustainability measurements. Most relevant experiences include: mapping the National Reform Programme (PNR) in the light of its contributions to the SDGs at national and at regional level realised by Tecnostruttura; NSDS/EU Cohesion Policies 2021-2027 Matrix realised by the Policy Cohesion Department (DPCoe) of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers; Power Bi matrix mapping links between the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and the NSDS realised by the Ministry for Ecological Transition in cooperation with Universities (MiTE/University Tor Vergata), etc. In addition, the Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA/VAS) undertaken by MiTE constitute good practices of integrating sustainability concerns into <i>ex ante</i> assessment mechanisms that could be further expanded. Finally, every year the MEF drafts a report annexed to the Economic and Financial Document (DEF) that measures <i>ex-post</i> and <i>ex ante</i> ($y+3$) the impact of budget measures on EWS indicators. The synchronisation of these experiences through common tools and practices would be essential to pursue the objective of using the NSDS as the reference framework during policy and finance documents formulation and implementation.</p> |

Coordinated action across sectors and government levels

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|  <p>Policy Coordination</p> | <p>According to the law, the Presidency of the Council of Ministries (PCM) oversees and coordinates the implementation of the NSDS with support from MiTE for domestic aspects and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) for the external dimension. In 2021, the newly established Inter-ministerial Committee for Ecological Transition (CITE) has been mandated to approve the NSDS revisions and oversee its implementation. As the CITE is chaired by the Prime Minister, and steered by the Minister for Ecological Transition, it illustrates the government's high-level commitment to the path to sustainable development. The Inter-ministerial committee for Economic Programming and Sustainable Development (CIPESS), which is in charge for assessing sustainability of public investment, is also placed within the PCM. These existing inter-ministerial committees are potentially well-placed to catalyse coherence, but additional efforts will have to be placed to make sure that their mandates, interactions and instruments really become complementary.</p> |
|  <p>Local and Regional Involvement</p> | <p>Italian regions and metropolitan cities have territorialised the NSDS into local strategies. MiTE played a crucial role in promoting the NSDS at local level through capacity building and by establishing a permanent platform that provides spaces for dialogue on vertical coherence as well as related financial support. Significant results have been achieved at territorial level: all Italian regions have engaged in developing their own regional SD strategies and, in general, sub-national administrations established SD steering committees for drafting and implementing their strategies. Importantly, local CSOs fora have been created contributing to disseminating awareness and spurring local initiatives around the 2030 Agenda. Policy coherence tools and capacities have been built through technical assistance (CReIAMO PA) to mainstreaming the SDGs and the NSDS into regional and local policies and budgets, including finding the linkages between the EU Cohesion Funds objectives and projects and the NSDS.</p> |
|  <p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> | <p>The NSDS has proven a powerful tool for dialogue with the civil society and non-government stakeholders. The National Forum for Sustainable Development (NFSD), is an open-membership fora articulated in five working groups around the 5Ps and considered the permanent platform for NSDS in Italy, in connection with the National Council on Development Cooperation (CNCS- Working Group 1 on 2030 Agenda). The interplay between the NFSD and CNCS is allowing Italy to enhance civil society's attention to PCSD, including the aspects related to transboundary issues. The MiTE has constituted the NFSD as a space for dialogue and facilitates CSOs involvement in the decision-making process for the NSDS, including by: providing input to the revision of the national strategy, expressing CSO's views on the impact of the strategy, reporting annually on Civil Society's contribution to the implementation of the NSDS, fostering information exchange and networking among sustainability actors at all level, promoting joint initiatives between civil-society and institutional actors for sustainability. The Forum is highly involved in the revision process of the 2021 NSDS. In addition, Regional Forum</p> |

for Sustainable Development are established in sixteen regions involving civil society, Metropolitan Cities, association of municipalities and the private sector.

Source: Italy Governance Scan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2021).

Impacts and informed decision-making

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|  <p>Policy and Financing Impacts</p> | <p>Italy has invested considerable efforts in building statistical frameworks for evaluating sustainability and well-being. Twelve Equitable and Sustainable Well-Being (BES/ESW) indicators contribute to monitoring the impact of budget measures on multi-dimensional well-being. Since 2019 the multi-level round-table on NSDS indicators convened by MiTE defined 43 indicators for monitoring the implementation of the NSDS including linking the NSDS indicators to the ESW/BES framework and key ISTAT-SDGs indicators. The 43 indicators have been verified for their feasibility and data availability at regional level. Going forward a Sustainability Dashboard has been foreseen in the PCSD Action Plan formulated with OECD support, to sync sustainability-relevant monitoring frameworks collecting information ex-ante and ex-post on key SDGs outcomes (context indicators) as well as linking the policies to their impact on the NSDS (performance indicators).</p> |
|  <p>Monitoring, Reporting & Evaluation</p> | <p>The NSDS Annual Report is compiled every year by the MiTE and from 2022 it will be presented to CITE. The report will include a section on monitoring the implementation of the PCSD Action Plan according to process indicators as well as a section on the transboundary impact of domestic policies. Italy aims to potentiate the accountability of the NSDS implementation by making it a true whole of government exercise. Several parliamentary committees are expected to discuss the report: the Comitato Parlamentare permanente per l'attuazione dell'Agenda 2030 per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (SD Parliamentary Committee), the parliamentary budget committee. This discussions are supported to involve the Forum for Sustainable Development and the Court of Audits.</p> |

Source: Italy Governance Scan for Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (OECD, 2021).

Italy's institutional mechanisms towards PCSD

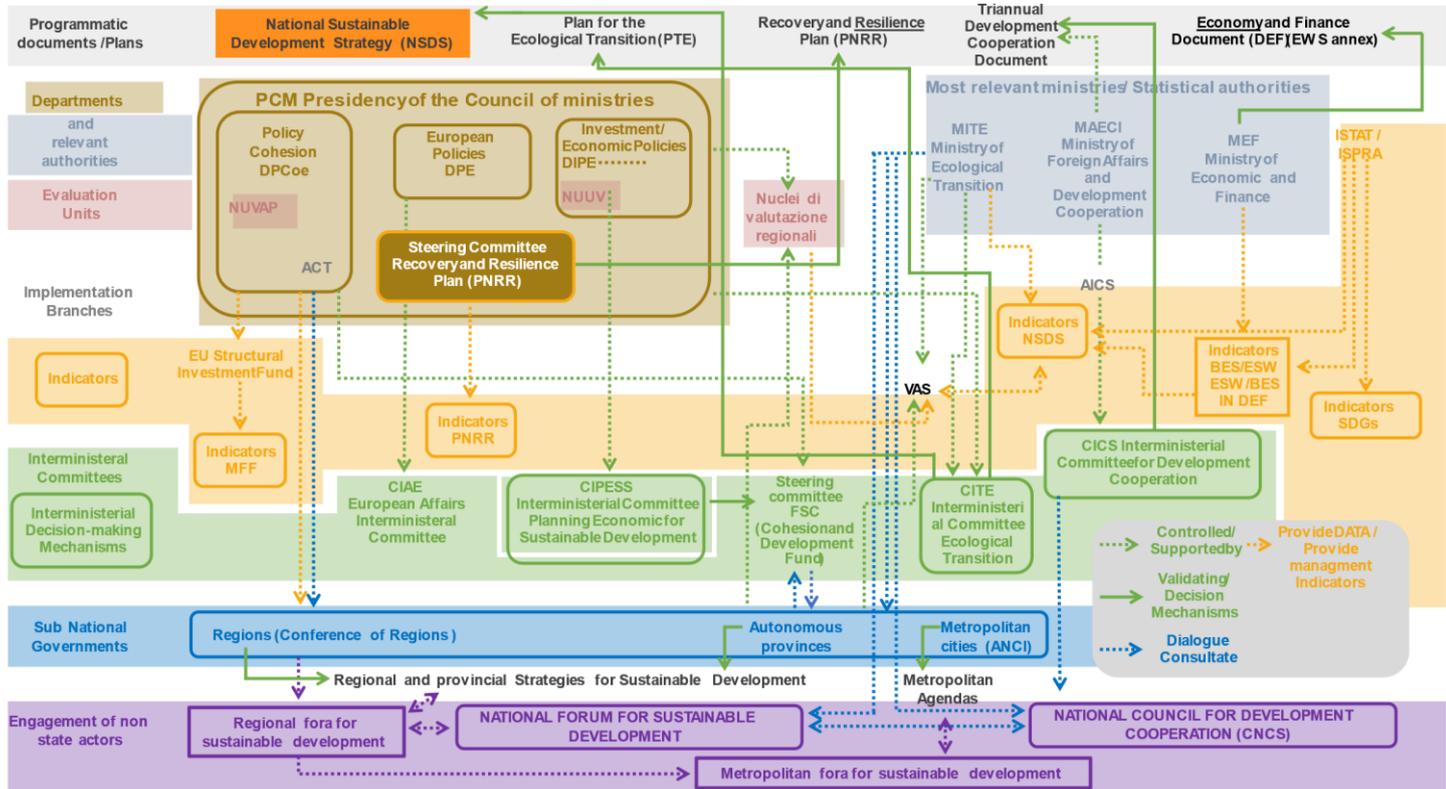


Figure 1. Italy's governance map towards Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Further Information

- OECD (2019): [Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Toolkit](#).
- OECD (2019): [Country Profiles: Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD](#)
- OECD (2017-2019): Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development [2017](#), [2018](#) and [2019](#).