



A National Action Plan built around priority clusters allows for identification of synergies and trade-offs in SDG implementation as well as effective monitoring and reporting. In March 2017, Denmark presented its national action plan for incorporating the SDGs into its domestic policies. Striving for the achievement of 37 specific targets organised in four clusters – ‘Growth and Prosperity’; ‘People’; ‘Environment and Climate’; and a ‘Peaceful and Safe Society’ – the new plan shows the government’s commitment to identify synergies and trade-offs to foster policy coherence for sustainable development. Concrete indicators established for measuring progress on each of the 37 targets allow for effective monitoring and facilitate the task of the Ministries of Finance and of Foreign Affairs to coordinate national and international SDG activities. Annual progress reports, including a more comprehensive status report every fourth year, enable the government to assess implementation and make adjustments if needed (2017^[1]).

Existing framework for legislative impact assessment is expanded to assess consequences of new legislation on SDG implementation. As part of the national action plan, the Danish government will establish a new mechanism to assess legislative proposals in terms of their cross-sectoral consequences for the SDGs within the framework of its new action plan. Legislation submitted to Parliament will be assessed in relation to the SDGs, if the impact is expected to be significant and relevant. This will be in addition to the customary analysis of the impact on the economy, environment and gender equality (2017^[2]).

Broad stakeholder engagement in HLPF preparation, participation and follow-up helps to identify common challenges and priorities. Denmark has a tradition for inclusion and involvement of stakeholders and strives for a broad stakeholder engagement at all levels of policy making (Box 1). The Ministries of Finance and of Foreign Affairs held a number of meetings with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from civil society, business and investors, municipalities, youth organisations, academia and the independent national human rights institutions to discuss the process leading up the HLPF in 2017 and 2018. Members of parliament and other relevant stakeholders were invited to participate in the Danish Delegation to the meeting. In addition, the government included contributions from a broad range of stakeholders in its 2017 VNR (2017^[2]).

Box 1. Engaging the private sector to achieve the SDGs

Targeted measures to encourage the private sector to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs complement broad stakeholder involvement. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda, Denmark aims to involve actors across society in the implementation of the SDGs. To encourage SDG implementation by the private sector, the Danish government, in collaboration with partners, hosts a series of workshops aiming to accelerate companies’ engagement with the SDGs. Several large companies are currently working to integrate the SDGs into their business models, strategies and investments, including by implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and actively engaging in the UN Global Compact.

Source: OECD (2017^[3]; 2018^[4])

Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Denmark

PCSD Building Blocks	
Political commitment	The government is committed to foster policy coherence, taking an integrated perspective of national and global challenges for sustainable development. In 2017, the government launched a National Action Plan containing 37 concrete (mostly) national targets on SDG implementation as well as a new strategy for international development cooperation and humanitarian action titled “The World 2030”. The Action Plan includes a specific chapter that highlights the importance the Danish government attaches to PCSD and the various mechanisms it uses to promote policy coherence on a national, European and international level.
Policy integration	The Action Plan identifies four priority clusters as a framework for the government’s implementation of the SDGs: ‘Growth and Prosperity’; ‘People’; ‘Environment and Climate’; and a ‘Peaceful and Safe Society’. The clusters aim to give national policies on SDG implementation a common direction relevant to the Danish context.
Intergenerational timeframe	The Ministry of Finance tracks the fiscal sustainability of domestic policy by tracking the fiscal sustainability through projections of long run spending and taxation. The government will establish a mechanism to assess the consequences of new legislation on the SDGs that is expected to continue independent of electoral cycles.
Policy effects	Denmark assesses new legislative proposals in terms of their effects on the economy, environment and gender equality. The government supports line ministries to integrate policy coherence for sustainable development in policymaking. As part of the national Action Plan, the government will assess the consequences of new legislation for the SDGs when considered relevant in the Danish context and if the impact is significant. The work to develop the specific concept and guidelines for the assessment is currently being finalised.
Coordination	The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the coordination of the national implementation of the SDGs. Line ministries are responsible for integrating the SDGs in policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for other international SDG activities, including in the context of the UN, as well as implementing the SDGs in Danish foreign, security, trade and development policy. In addition, an interministerial coordination group has been established, in which every line ministry is represented. Efforts are mainly coordinated through the interministerial SDG coordination group and bilaterally between the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the line ministries on an ad hoc basis.
Local involvement	Each year the government negotiates the following year’s budget for municipalities and regions. The government and municipalities and regions agree to co-operate to achieve the SDGs and integrate sustainable development in policy making.
Stakeholder participation	Denmark has a tradition for inclusion and involvement of stakeholders and strives for a broad stakeholder engagement at all levels of policy making. The Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs held a number of meetings with relevant stakeholders, including representatives from civil society, business and investors, municipalities, youth organisations, academia and the independent national human rights institutions to discuss the process leading up to the UN HLPF in 2017 and 2018. In addition, the government included contributions from those stakeholders in the Voluntary National Review drafted for the HLPF 2017. Similarly, the government invites members of parliament and other relevant stakeholders to participate in the Danish delegation at the HLPF.
Monitoring and reporting	The government defined indicators for each of the 37 targets in the four priority clusters. The government publishes annual progress reports on all targets which are sent to the Danish Parliament. Every fourth year, the progress report will be replaced by a more comprehensive status report that could also contain initiatives for achieving the SDGs and possible adjustments to the Action Plan. Progress is monitored by ‘Statistics Denmark’ which has the mandate to gather data from other national authorities. The first statistical report was published in 2017 in light of the meeting of the UN HLPF 2017 and the Denmark’s Voluntary National Review report.

Source: Government of Denmark (2017^[1]; 2017^[2]; 2017^[5]); Statistics Denmark (2017^[6]); OECD (2016^[7]; 2017^[3]).

References

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