



Inter-ministerial coordination at the highest level backed by a concrete action plan provides a strong basis for policy coherence. In May 2016 the government established the ‘SDGs Promotion Headquarters’. This new Cabinet body, composed of all Cabinet Ministers, is led by the Prime Minister. It acts as a control tower to ensure a whole-of-government approach to SDG implementation and fosters cooperation among ministries (Government of Japan, 2017^[1]). In December 2017, the SDG Promotion Headquarters adopted the *SDGs Action Plan 2018*, which focuses on three overarching goals: (i) promoting Society 5.0 that corresponds to the SDGs, (ii) vitalizing local areas through SDGs, and (iii) empowering women and future generations. By setting these three cross-cutting themes, Japan recognises their indivisibility and need for integrated approaches for implementation (OECD, 2017^[2]). The action plan also includes a wide range of specific government projects that are categorized by eight priority areas along with the SDG Implementation Guiding Principles.

Guiding principles for implementation support policy integration in pursuit of the SDGs. In December 2016, the SDGs Promotion Headquarters adopted *The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles*. The guidance set out a vision;¹ five implementation principles (universality; inclusiveness; participatory; integration; and transparency and accountability); eight priority areas (which include 140 specific measures to be implemented both domestically and through international cooperation); and an approach to the follow-up and review process. They provide a framework for integrating the SDGs into the plans, strategies and policies of ministries and government agencies. They also aim to mobilize all ministries and government agencies by partnering with stakeholders to implement the SDGs, based on an analysis of the present situation in Japan and abroad (Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017^[3]).

Setting national long-term priorities enables the political leadership to pursue 2030 Agenda and SDGs more coherently. By translating the SDGs into concrete action at national level, the government has identified eight priority areas on which all ministries are required to contribute: (i) Empowerment of All People; (ii) Achievement of Good Health and Longevity; (iii) Creating Growth Markets, Revitalization of Rural Areas, and Promoting Science Technology and Innovation; (iv) Sustainable and Resilient Land Use, Promoting Quality Infrastructure; (v) Energy Conservation, Renewable Energy, Climate Change Countermeasures, and Sound Material-Cycle Society; (vi) Conservation of Environment, including Biodiversity, Forests and the Oceans; (vii) Achieving Peaceful, Safe and Secure Societies; and (viii) Strengthening the Means and Frameworks for Implementation. A first follow up and review of progress will be conducted in 2019. According to this outline, Japan plans to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (target 17.14) at the international level by supporting developing countries in establishing implementation systems for the SDGs (Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017^[3]).

¹ Japan has established the following vision to guide SDG implementation: “Become a leader toward a future where economic, social and environmental improvements are attained in an integrated, sustainable and resilient manner while leaving no one behind.”

Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Japan

Japan	
Political commitment	In 2016, the government established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, headed by the Prime Minister and composed of all ministers in order to ensure commitment at the highest level. A new national strategy, <i>The Implementation Guiding Principles</i> , includes national priorities and indicators. The SDGs Promotion Headquarters agreed on the “SDGs Action Plan 2018” in December, 2017.
Policy integration	The Government of Japan / the SDGs Promotion Headquarters is taking an integrated approach to solve issues related to the three dimensions of economy, society and the environment, and fosters interactions and synergies among eight identified priority areas. The SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles provide a framework for integrating SDGs into the plans, strategies and policies of ministries and government agencies.
Intergenerational timeframe	The SDGs Promotion Headquarters is a new cabinet body ensuring long-term support.
Policy effects	The SDG Promotion Headquarters consists of all ministries in charge of domestic and international issues and can take into account policy effects from domestic and international cooperation for the SDGs.
Coordination	The SDGs Promotion Headquarters holds meetings twice a year to review and decide basic directions, policies and detailed projects for promoting the SDGs. Its central position within the Cabinet can foster close cooperation among relevant governmental agencies and support information sharing.
Local involvement	The national government encourages local governments to incorporate the SDGs into their strategies and policies. The Headquarters sets “vitalizing local areas through promoting the SDGs” as one of the three basic directions of Japan’s SDG Model in the <i>SDGs Action Plan 2018</i> . The Headquarters plans to create a project “SDGs Models of Local Governments” through which the entire central government will provide extensive support to selected local governments in their SDGs implementation, and then expand to other local governments based on lessons learnt.
Stakeholder participation	The Headquarters promotes consultations with stakeholders via SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meetings that include representatives from the related governmental agencies, NGOs/NPOs, academia, the private sector and international organizations. The SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting also conducts implementation reviews on the achievement of the SDGs. The Headquarters awards the “Japan SDGs Award” to highlight best practices of companies, local governments and CSOs. The first ceremony was held in December 2017. The dialogue at the SDGs Promotion Roundtable Meeting also fed into the preparation of the <i>Implementation Guiding Principles</i> .
Monitoring and reporting	The SDG Promotion Headquarters monitors progress of measures taken in line with the <i>SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles</i> . This includes particularly the 140 measures included in the annex of the guiding principles. The first review and follow-up will be conducted in 2019. Japan will make proactive use of statistical data and employ key performance indicators (KPIs), including the SDGs global as much as possible. Subsequent to the 2019 HLPF, follow-up and review will be conducted, taking into account the four-year cycle of the HLPF organized by the President of the General Assembly.

Source: OECD (2017^[2]) and Government of Japan (2017^[1]).

Box 1. Promoting the SDGs within society

The SDGs Promotion Headquarters is responsible for raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the Implementation Guiding Principles. It proactively plans and leads communication activities to promote SDGs-related measures as a national movement in order to increase public understanding and support for engagement with the SDGs.

As part of this effort, the Government is fostering the sharing of good practices among implementing partners, including the private sector, by giving awards and promoting the use of SDGs logos and branding. The Government will further promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as encourage learning about SDGs in all settings, including schools, households, workplaces and local communities. The aim is to nurture children, who will lead society in 2030 and beyond, the competencies to be a creator of sustainable societies and the world.

The SDGs Action Plan 2018 recognises international events such as the HLPF, the G20, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 2019, and the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 and bidding for 2025 Expo, as suitable occasions to further raise awareness towards the SDGs and promote their implementation.

Source OECD (2017^[2]).

References

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- OECD (2017), *2017 Survey on applying the eight building blocks of PCSD in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Japan*. [2]