

The German Sustainable Development Strategy: Public governance indicators and the UN 2030 Agenda

Title of the practice German Sustainable Development Strategy

Summary of the governance practice

The core of Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy constitutes a set of – currently 66 – national targets and measurable indicators that cover all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It allows to regularly track Germany's progress in transitioning to a sustainable development and in ambitiously contributing to the global SDGs. Every two years, the Federal Statistical Office publishes an independent and publicly accessible Indicator Report that analyses the status of the targets and illustrates the result with an easily understandable weather symbol.

Short description of the governance practice

Since 2002, the German government's transition to sustainable development has been guided by a national Sustainable Development Strategy. The latest iteration of the German Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) emerged in 2016 and allows the government to track Germany's progress towards implementing the UN 2030 Agenda. The strategy is composed of a set of 66 national targets and indicators which cover all 17 SDGs and fulfill the Public Administration Principles defined by the SIGMA initiative. The State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development is in charge of steering the strategy, complemented by sophisticated sustainability governance across the government.

The Federal Statistical Office has established a data-collection system and conducts independent Indicator Reports every two years. The reports are publicly available. Depending on the status of the respective target, each one is illustrated with an easily understandable weather symbol. These Indicator Reports form a basis for discussion on the implementation of the national sustainability targets – both among the broader public as well as among top political and administrative levels.

Impact of the governance practice

Monitoring the government's progress in transitioning to a sustainable development by means of the GSDS's target and indicator set has become a crucial element of the government's overall sustainability efforts. The biennial Indicator Report generates substantial awareness: its essence is covered by major German newspapers and it is one of the essential publications and point of reference for the specialist audience. It also feeds directly into the work of the GSDS's central steering body, the State Secretaries' Committee. There is also a great interest by non-state stakeholders to be involved in the creation and improvement of the targets and indicators. The results of the biennial Indicator Reports also initiate concrete policy action: it was one of the crucial reference documents for the international Peer Review on the GSDS led by Helen Clark in 2018, who recommended inter

alia that the government should address off-track indicators (those 28 targets/indicators with a cloud or thunderstorm symbol) through individual departmental action plans.

Source: Example of country practice provided by the Government of Germany as part of the Policy Framework's consultation process