

**7<sup>th</sup> Expert Meeting on Statistics for SDGs**

12 - 13 April 2023, Palais des Nations, Geneva

**Session 3: Shrinking resources and partnerships with policy makers**

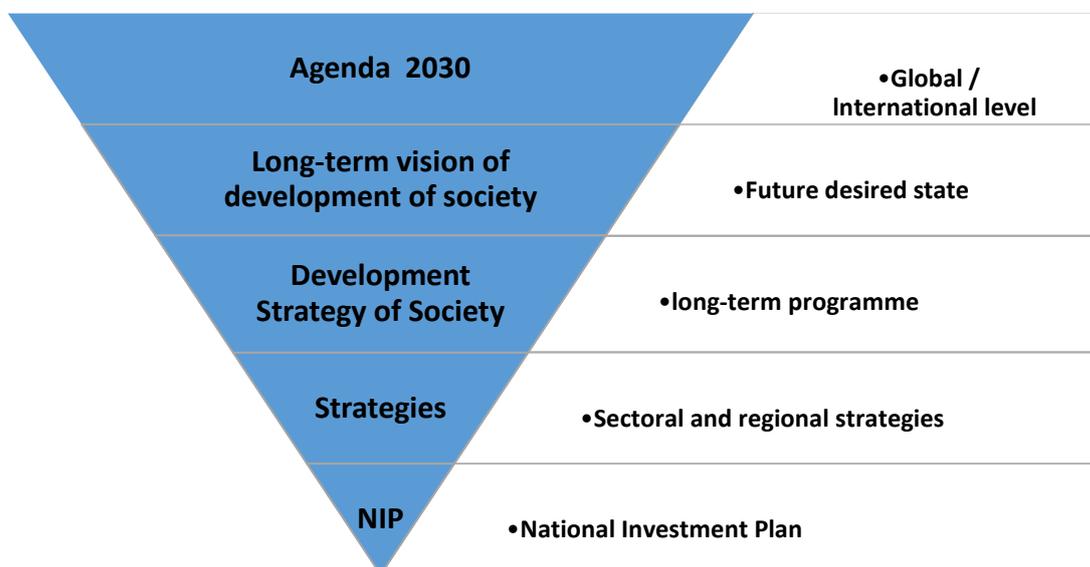
**Vision and development strategy of Slovakia 2030 -**

**Background for a long-term strategic planning**

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1. A long-term strategic planning was not a favourable political topic after revolutionary changes in 1989. However, impact of economic crisis in 2007 – 2009, gas crises in 2009 and number of uncompleted important projects (motorways, hospital, and scientific facilities) brought strategic planning back on-board. In legal terms, this happened in 2016 by amendment of the Act on Competences (575/2001 Coll.) and establishment of the Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Informatisation as the body responsible for strategic planning and strategic project management, including a preparation of the National Strategic Investment Framework. As inspiration for such Framework, the UK’s National Infrastructure Delivery Plan was selected and Slovakia intended to make such a plan for the period 2018 – 2030. However, it turned out that sectoral ministries were not prepared for this ambition and without building general strategic planning framework this kind of plan is not possible to draft, especially in the country much dependent on EU programming period. All sectoral plannings are very much bound to EU programming period, at that time 2014 – 2020, now 2021 – 2027.

**Agenda 2030 taken on-board for a long-term strategic planning**



2. The inverted pyramid of strategic planning shows how wide sustainable development principles of Agenda 2030 are embedded in the long-term vision of society and then narrowed down to national development strategy, sectoral and regional strategies, and finally to a project level represented by National Investment Plan.

3. Using a highly democratic participatory process, Slovakia built the first stage of the pyramid by **integration of the 17 SDGs into six national priorities of Agenda 2030**, approved by the Government (resolution 273/2018):

- Education for a life in dignity
- Transformation towards a knowledge-based and environmentally sustainable economy in the face of changing demographics and global environment
- Poverty reduction and social inclusion
- Sustainable settlements, regions and landscape in the context of climate change
- Rule of law, democracy and security
- Good health.

4. Participatory process represents the idea of the Quadruple helix, i.e. decision making process shared by government and citizens under the principle **“Leave no one behind!”**



5. The six national priorities were subsequently presented in July 2018 in UN, during the High Level Political Forum, in the frame of the so-called Voluntary National Review.

Slovakian **integrated approach to SDGs** in fact supports the phenomenon of interlinkages, underlined in the 2019 Report of the UN Secretary General: <sup>1</sup>

*“The present Report strives to address this head-on by adopting a systemic approach to the Sustainable Development Goals, informed by the knowledge of the interactions among them. In this way, it identifies the biggest transformative potentials of the 2030 Agenda, not through the pursuit of individual Goals and targets but rather by explicitly considering their interlinkages and resultant co-benefits and trade-offs. In an increasingly globalized and hyper-connected world, any intervention on behalf of just one Goal can lead to unintended consequences for the achievement of other Goals nearby or faraway, today or tomorrow. Conversely, the chances of progress on one Goal in a specific part of the world will depend on interventions made in other sectors, in sometimes distant places. Those interactions often imply trade-offs, but also give rise to co-benefits and the significant potential for transformations towards sustainable development. The key to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda thus lies in leveraging interactions among the Sustainable Development Goals away from trade-offs and towards co-benefits, from vicious to virtuous circles.”*

6. The participatory process was unique and deserves a special mentioning. The process was carried out in co-operation with the Plenipotentiary of Government for Civil Society in order to respect all principles of open government, i.e. representatives of regional and local authorities, academia, business associations and non-governmental organisations were invited to present their

<sup>1</sup> [Global Sustainable Development Report September 2019.pdf](#)

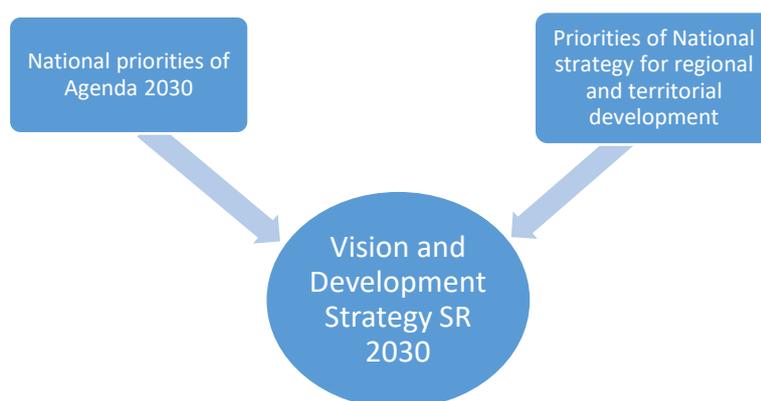
ideas how to transpose SDGs to Slovakian internal environment. **Slovakian approach** to the implementation of SDGs was appreciated in the study of the Policy Department of European Parliament “**Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: good practices and the way forward**”.<sup>2</sup>

## Vision and Development Strategy 2030

7. The second and the third stage of pyramid were merged into one and six national priorities formed the basis for the “**Vision and Development Strategy 2030**”, which could be understood as an executive document of SDGs in Slovakia. Again, a highly democratic participatory process was used to formulate this document. Therefore, we can say that the “**Vision and Development Strategy 2030**” is the document of a whole society, although it was formally adopted by the Government (resolution 41/2021).

8. The most interesting feature of this document is again the point of integration, this time of national policies with regional. That was possible thanks to close proximity of National strategy for regional and territorial development prepared independently from the above national Agenda 2030 priorities:

- *Sustainable competitive environmentally oriented economy of regions*
- *Improvement of the quality of life and the development of nature and human capital*
- *Integrated (regional and territorial) development and infrastructure.*



9. The Vision 2030 as such is based on the key principle: **quality of life is more important than economic growth**. As for the Development Strategy 2030, it is first of all important to say that integrated approach is a tool to break silos or isolation. Inside this document this led to drafting of three **integrated development programmes**:

- *Protection and development of resources*
- *Sustainable use of resources*
- *Development of communities.*

10. Internal structure of each integrated development programme consists of:

- *Goal*
- *Key changes*
- *Current situation*
- *Measures to improve current situation.*

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<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/160360/DEVE%20study%20on%20EU%20SDG%20implementati on%20formatted.pdf>

Details of the document can be found at: <https://www.mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Slovensko-2030.pdf>.

## **A. Institutional Framework for Agenda 2030**

11. The main coordinating body for the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Slovakia is the **Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development**. In particular, the Government Council coordinates the creation of policies and strategies related to sustainable development, both at the national and regional level, and assesses the progress made in implementing Agenda 2030. The Government Council is chaired by the Minister for Investments, Regional Development and Informatization, who is in charge of the internal dimension of the Agenda 2030. The Deputy Chairman is the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, who is responsible for the external dimension of the Agenda 2030. Members of the Government Council include key line ministers, representatives of other relevant state institutions, including National Statistical Office, regional administration, cities and municipalities, employers, trade unions, academia, non-governmental organisations and relevant government advisory bodies.

12. The working body of the Government Council is the **Working Group** for the Implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development whose member reflect Government Council.

## **B. Voluntary National Review 2023**

13. The following documents serve as a main source of information for VNR 2023:

- Vision and Development Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2030;
- 2nd Monitoring Report on the implementation of Agenda 2030 (approved by the Government resolution 410/2022), prepared under a co-operation between the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization and Statistical Office on the one hand and the stakeholders involved in the Working Group for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 on the other hand;
- UN statistical database on Slovakia <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/svk> as well as a global database <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/unsdg> were used. The methodology used to evaluate trends of the SDG indicators was based on the technical annex to the Progress chart published on <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2021/progress-chart>;
- OECD inputs on PCSD (Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development) and interlinkages of SDGs.

14. UN Handbook on the VNR preparation, edition 2023, provides a good guidance for drafting the VNRs. Workshops organised by UN in Tourin (6-7- December 2022) and Sofia (4-5 April 2023) are very useful as well. The handbook structure contains the item “Systemic issues and transformative actions.” Since the year 2023 marks a mid-term review of the Agenda 2030 implementation, this item is even more serious. It is quite clear that the effort shall be intensified at both national and international levels. In Slovakia, at national level much more should be done for the 3 pillars and 8 principles of the PCSD developed by OECD: <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pcsd/oecd-recommendation-on-policy-coherence-for-sustainable-development.htm>



15. Nevertheless, further effort should be made at international level as well along the following lines:

- **International co-ordination**

16. Between setting ambitious goals and reporting on them there is a long chain of important events, like drafting strategic programmes with their specific objectives and indicators, alignment of legal and institutional framework, building capacities etc. These events need an international co-ordination level as well. Co-ordination of the VNRs preparation is not enough.

17. There is clear discrepancy between a rosy picture of national VNRs presented by politicians in New York on the one hand and realistic picture of global reports on SDGs implementation: *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals* (Report of the UN Secretary-General, July 2020)<sup>4</sup>, *The Short and Winding Road to 2030, Measuring distance to the SDG targets* (OECD 2022)<sup>5</sup>, *Europe Sustainable Development Report 2022, Achieving the SDGs: Europe's Compass in a Multipolar World* (p. vi).<sup>6</sup> This was also pointed out by the participants of the UN workshop in Tourin.

***Pure national implementation of global Agenda does not seem to be a functional way forward*** (can for example SDG 13 on Climate change be implemented this way?).

- **Indicators**

18. Different international agencies use different methodologies to evaluate indicators, also countries use national indicators to complete missing data in the UN database, which may lead to the question how much different methodologies reflect the definition of SDGs, targets and indicators adopted at UN level in 2015. To this end, a project of co-operation with OECD on the "Monitoring Framework of Sustainable Development in Slovakia" to be implemented in 2023/2024 will be of much help.

***Different methodologies and missing data in 2023 on the one hand and expected review of indicator framework in 2025 on the other hand – is it not too late for Agenda 2030?***

<sup>4</sup> <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3865828>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/the-short-and-winding-road-to-2030\\_af4b630d-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/the-short-and-winding-road-to-2030_af4b630d-en)

<sup>6</sup> <https://eu-dashboards.sdgindex.org/>