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National Sustainable Development Strategies in Europe: Status quo and recent developments

By

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Abstract

The Quarterly Report (QR) of September 2010 provides a comprehensive update on National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDSs) of 29 European countries (27 EU Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland). The introductory chapter gives a general overview of NSDS processes, objectives and differences between countries. In the second chapter, the status quo and recent developments in NSDSs will be described and analysed along several aspects, including (a) basic information and institutional anchoring of NSDSs, (b) vertical policy coordination mechanisms, (c) horizontal policy coordination mechanisms, (d) evaluation and review, (e) monitoring and indicators, and (f) participation and consultation processes. Moreover, institution-building and mainstreaming of sustainable development through NSDSs will be reflected upon in a separate chapter. Finally, the QR presents some potential effects of NSDSs. Information for this comprehensive update is based on telephone interviews with NSDS coordinators, the ESDN country profiles and NSDS documents.

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1 National Sustainable Development Strategies – general overview

This introductory chapter provides an overview of general national sustainable development strategy processes, objectives and differences.

1.1 Introduction

National sustainable development strategies (NSDSs) are considered to be among the prime tools for realising governance for sustainable development (SD). They date back to 1992 and Agenda 211 which suggests that “[g]overnments [...] should adopt a national strategy for sustainable development” which should “ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations” (Agenda 21, Chapter 8 Integrating environment and development in decision-making). This particular interpretation of sustainable development stems from the attempt to reconcile conflicting interests of developing and industrialised countries at the 1972 Stockholm United Nations Conference on Human Environment and the most famous work of the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development led by Gro Harlem Brundtland, the 1987 report *Our Common Future*.

Many countries started preparing their own NSDSs towards the end of 1990s, culminating in a relatively speedy preparation in most of the European countries shortly before the 2002 UN World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. In addition to Agenda 21 and the linkage to the Rio commitments, NSDS development was spurred by further UN work (a 1997 Special Session of the UN General Assembly urging for governments to prepare their own NSDSs until 2002; effort of UNDESA and UNECE; UNDP’s Capacity 21 initiative, relevant especially for European countries which were not EU Member States at that time), work of the OECD (the Sustainable Development publication series, work of the Development Assistance Committee as well as linkage to one of the seven OECD’s international development goals) and by the EU through the European Council’s Presidency Conclusion from Gothenburg 2001 which marked the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS). NSDSs received highest attention internationally during 2000–2004 with a watershed of guidelines and assessments of early NSDS attempts by scholars, practitioners and international agencies (most notably Heidbrink & Paulus 2000, OECD 2000, UK DFID et al. 2000, Kirkpatrick et al. 2001, OECD 2001a, Dalal-Clayton & Bass 2002c, Dalal-Clayton et al. 2002, IIED et al. 2002, UNDESA 2002, EC 2004, Swanson et al. 2004). On the basis of the renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EC 2006), all EU Member States were asked to finalise their NSDSs (if they had not prepared one before) by 2007 and to address linkages between their NSDSs and the EU SDS in future NSDS reviews.

¹ *Agenda 21* is, together with the *Rio Declaration*, perhaps the most important document related to SD ever adopted at the global level, one of the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. It drafts very concrete measures for the implementation of sustainable development in various policy areas and at various political-administrative levels, stressing four pillars of sustainable development – social, economic, environmental and institutional.

The purpose of NSDSs can be described as aiming “to mobilize and focus a society’s efforts to achieve sustainable development” (Carew-Reid et al. 1994). They should provide a forum for societal articulation of a vision of the future, as well as a framework for processes of negotiation, mediation and consensus and capacity building (ibid.). According to Agenda 21, NSDSs “should be developed through the widest possible participation” and “build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country” as well as be “based on a thorough assessment of the current situation and initiatives”. After the first experiences with NSDSs, it has been understood that in order for NSDSs to remain continuously relevant as well as improve over time, they need a cyclical, iterative process with results of monitoring and evaluation feeding further debate and objective setting (see e.g. UNDESA 2001b, Dalal-Clayton and Bass 2002a, OECD 2001b). This normative process-oriented view, derived from the sequential rationalist policy cycle model (although heavily criticised for being unrealistic, see e.g. Sabatier 1991), became predominant.

NSDSs are thought of as serving to achieve better policy coordination and integration in several dimensions: horizontally (across policy sectors), vertically (across political-administrative levels as well as territorially), temporally (across time) and across societal sectors (public, private, academia, civil society). In Agenda 21 they are presented as separate from measures to improve processes of decision-making, planning, management as well as data and information. However in contrast to the earlier national environmental plans under the process-oriented view, NSDSs also became increasingly understood as vehicles for an ambitious governance reform, marrying the better regulation/good governance agenda with the principles of sustainable development (see EC 2005, Steurer 2009). The goal is to incrementally transform national policy-making in the direction of a more network-oriented and effective multi-level governance; fostering a change towards openness, transparency and public/stakeholder participation under the normative ideals of Habermasian deliberation; and improving the knowledge processes related to decision making so decisions are made on the basis of sound evidence and integrated understanding of the effects of the decision and the involved trade-offs (see e.g. OECD 2001b, EC 2005).

Boundary issues also represent a challenge in thinking about NSDSs. Firstly, in line with Mintzberg’s concept of ‘emergent strategy’ (Mintzberg 2000, see also Steurer 2007) “all existing national SD efforts”, i.e. processes of national capacity building, strategic planning, implementation and evaluation for sustainable development, can be seen as components of ‘a national sustainable development strategy’ (Cherp and Vrbensky 2002). Similarly, also OECD suggests that NSDSs “do not have discrete beginnings or ends” (2001b). NSDSs in this sense can be understood as instruments to further pre-existing SD interests present in the society. However, such a concept of a NSDS, able to encompass practically any policy process, can thus become too blurry. Meadowcroft (2007) argues that it is helpful to keep in mind the distinction between the discrete NSDS strategy process and “the broader practice

of strategic decision-making and policy implementation for sustainable development”. However, there are many processes and initiatives, having their own networks of actors, which in a number of countries take place outside of the scope of NSDSs (such as pursuit of better regulation/good governance agenda, sustainability, regulatory and other types of impact assessment, attempts at improving management of concrete environmental sectors (e.g. climate change and energy, water management, land-use planning), sustainable development indicators and their monitoring reports, green public procurement, corporate social responsibility, socially responsible investment etc.). They can have significant influence on the social and environmental performance of the country. Secondly, as a logical extension of the first point, there has been a realisation that “[t]he label does not matter” as long as “basic strategic planning principles” are maintained and “a co-ordinated set of mechanisms and processes which ensure their implementation” is in place (OECD 2001b). Now the NSDSs are considered not exclusively as the ‘starting points’ of strategic planning for sustainable development; national strategies for conservation, poverty reduction, regional development or tourism can (and do, although mostly outside Europe, see Swanson et al. 2004) serve just as well (Dalal-Clayton and Bass 2002b, 2002c; OECD 2001). In the tension between the need for concrete measures and tailored approaches and overarching character guided by a broad societal vision, the NSDSs will find their limits: “governance for sustainable development is not reducible to one really big, ideal, SD strategy process” (Meadowcroft 2007).

1.2 Differences in NSDSs

An analysis and comparison of NSDSs is complicated by the fact that they are very different from country to country. There is no blueprint for NSDSs. Several years ago, the European Commission in its analysis of NSDSs of EU Member States identified several types:² Framework strategies “set out general policy directions and guidance for sustainable development, combined with broad lines of action for specific problem areas”, aiming to change processes of policy development and implementation, and relying on separate (sectoral) action plans and annual work programmes as means of implementation (EC 2004, p. 11). This approach carries the risk that the principles and policy guidance formulated in the NSDSs will be too broad and general for practical use in particular issues³ as well as the risk of discontinuities between the NSDSs and their action plans. A less common type are NSDSs which have the form of action programmes with “concrete, short and medium-term objectives, with strict timetables and detailed measures” (ibid.). This approach faces the risks associated with the lack of an overarching long-term vision for societal transition towards sustainability as well as the tensions between achievable and concrete, although

² In the EU the NSDSs are typically what Swanson et al. (2004) describe as “comprehensive, multi-dimensional SD strategies”, i.e. single documents and processes incorporating all three dimensions of SD. They identified three additional types across the world: cross-sectoral SD strategies relating to specific dimensions of SD such as national environmental management plans or poverty reduction strategy papers; sectoral SD strategies incorporating all three dimensions of SD focusing on a specific sector such as a national sustainable transport strategy; and SD integration into existing national development strategies (ibid.).

³ Noteworthy is also the suggestion that since society is such a complex amalgam of contradicting interests the formulation of a broad societal vision by necessity results in a collection of lowest-common-denominator statements such as ‘democratic society’ or ‘prosperity’ which, similarly to ‘sustainable development’, are quite open to interpretation.

limited, measures and ambitious measures which attempt to ‘do everything’ and serve as ‘shopping lists’. Mixed approaches with the NSDSs serving as framework documents but still containing very detailed policy actions are quite common.

In addition, NSDSs to a significant extent differ in scope, objectives, topic areas and measures (as well as the mechanisms of their implementation). The number of objectives varies from 4 to 16 and they are formulated with various structuring principles in mind: along visionary concepts, along dimensions of human well-being, along environmental sectors or along problem areas. Topic areas also vary considerably with the less common being protection of culture, economic sustainability of the government or material welfare and economic growth. Of course, there are many reasons for this: countries vary in their natural and economic assets, in their histories of political discourses etc.

Given the differing contexts NSDSs were developed in, they vary also in terms of their mandate (to what extent they are binding for sectoral ministries or sub-national authorities) and institutional setup (organisations responsible for their implementation, institutional mechanisms for policy coordination or stakeholder involvement). Typically, the Ministries of Environment are responsible for their implementation and monitoring. This leads to several difficulties. Ministries of Environment in many countries tend to be among the ‘weaker’ players when defining national development priorities and means of their realisation. Thus they need to mobilise support of other, more influential actors to move issues related to NSDSs onto political agenda. This disadvantaged negotiation position often leads to ‘watering down’ of NSDSs. Secondly, Ministries of Environment are primarily expected to represent the interests of the environment, while NSDSs should balance economic, social and environmental priorities for achieving lasting human well-being. Ministries of Environment are thus often forced into an ambivalent position of defending at the same time environmental interests and interests of sustainable development (which at times can even be at odds with the interests of environment) and other actors can have difficulties understanding their interests. A logical solution would seem to be to anchor NSDSs to an institutional position central to the government, typically State/Federal Chancelleries or Prime Ministers’ Offices. Such a position communicates higher political will, makes it easier to embody the overarching character of NSDSs and enables representation of the much-needed role of the (neutral) balancing factor between sectoral interests. However, should we understand national development as a resultant force of the vectors of influence of individual sectoral actors, there is a risk that environmental issues will continue to be underrepresented.

2 Comparative stock-taking of NSDSs in 29 European countries

This chapter provides a comparative overview of NSDS processes in 29 European countries: it reports on recent developments in the 27 EU Member States, plus Norway and Switzerland. In particular, it describes the status quo and recent developments in the following aspects of the NSDS processes:

- a) general profile of the NSDS;
- b) vertical policy coordination mechanisms;
- c) horizontal policy coordination mechanisms;
- d) evaluation and review processes;
- e) monitoring and SD indicators;
- f) participation mechanisms.

The information collected for individual countries is based on telephone interviews with NSDS coordinators⁴ and on information available in the [country profiles section](#) on the ESDN homepage. In total, 21 interviews were undertaken, based on an interview guide in order to make comparisons between countries possible⁵. For those countries for which a telephone interview could not be arranged, information was taken exclusively from the respective ESDN country profile⁶.

The findings are then summarised shortly in tables for each of the categories mentioned above. It is important to note that due to the vast amount of new information we gathered during the telephone interviews, we will update the country profiles section on the ESDN homepage in the coming months. Due to limitations of space, this QR presents condensed information for each country only.

2.1 **Basic information on NSDSs and their institutional anchoring**

This subsection deals with the status quo and recent developments in revision and political profile of the NSDS and its institutional anchoring. In total, 28 countries have developed an NSDS and one country has a strategic approach on SD but no strategy document (The Netherlands). The first NSDSs were developed in the mid- to late-1990s: Swedish and UK adopted their first NSDSs already in 1994 (published in 1994), followed by Ireland (1997) and Belgium (1999). Most countries, however, developed their first NSDSs in preparation to the UN World Summit in Johannesburg in 2001, other countries followed later in the 2000s.

⁴ Interviews were conducted between 23 August 2010 and 22 September 2010.

⁵ We undertook interviews with NSDS coordinators from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands (only partially for information in chapter three), Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

⁶ Information for the following countries is based on information in their ESDN country profiles: Bulgaria, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Netherlands, Romania and Sweden. Information on Poland is not included in the tables (except Table 1) as Poland is undergoing substantial reforms in its state policy planning and development system: in 2007 and 2008, intensive work has been undertaken to create a legislative and institutional framework for preparing the work on a Long-term Development Strategy of Poland.

Most European countries have started to revise their NSDSs between 2006-2008 (e.g. Denmark, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, Lithuania, Bulgaria), some others recently in the period 2009-2010 (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, France, Latvia, Luxembourg). NSDS revisions from 2006 onwards are strongly linked to the topics and objectives included in the renewed EU SDS of 2006. New NSDSs are planned in Finland and Slovenia for the period 2011-2012. In some countries, such as United Kingdom and Poland, the future of their NSDSs and related processes is unclear due to recent changes in government.

The NSDS processes vary across countries. Only a few have managed to put it at the core of their national policy planning (i.e. Latvia, Poland see Table 1), other countries have linked the strategy with the general government program (i.e. Switzerland) or reached a better coordination of objectives and goals with other government documents. The majority of the interviewed NSDS coordinators confirmed that the NSDSs remain one strategy among other policy strategies. Moreover, the interview results suggest that although SD is an overarching concept, the NSDSs have not developed into overarching policy strategies for all governmental departments. The findings of the Finnish impact assessment⁷, which suggest that the added-value of the NSDS lies rather in its participatory and consultative processes, rather than in the document itself, seems to hold true also for other European countries.

Regarding institutional anchoring of NSDSs, there is a clear tendency, that the main coordinating bodies for NSDS processes are the Ministries of Environment (in 19 out of 29 countries). Based on the interview results, Ministries of Environment seems to have the best developed capacity and knowledge for SD. However, they often lack resources and high level political profile compared to other government ministries (i.e. Prime Minister's Office or State Chancellery, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Finance, etc). In some countries, NSDS processes are now coordinated by the Prime Ministers Offices or State Chancelleries (e.g. Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia, Slovakia and, since 2009, Poland). In Austria, the cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and the Federal Chancellery in the NSDS process has been strengthened.

Table 1: Basic information on NSDSs and institutional anchoring

⁷ Ministry of the Environment, 2010: National Assessment of Sustainable Development 2009. Helsinki.

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>Latest Version: Starting with 2006, a federal SD strategy was developed by the 'Expert Conference on National and Regional SD Coordinators'. The Federal SD Strategy was adopted in July 2010 by the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>Recent developments: This strategy will be the first common SD strategy of the national and regional level in Europe.</p> <p>New in the institutional anchoring: cooperation of the Federal State Chancellery and the Ministry of Environment.</p>	<p>Latest version: The third Federal Plan (FP) (2010-2014) has not yet been adopted; preparation has been delayed due to the revision of the Federal Act on Sustainable Development (SD).</p> <p>Recent developments: The revised Federal Act on SD, approved in 2010, but not yet published, calls for the development of a long-term vision for SD, based on which a new FP will be drafted in which the concrete measures are identified that are deemed necessary to achieve the long-term objectives determined by the vision.</p> <p>The revised Federal Act, furthermore, alters: (1) the duration and content of the planning and reporting cycle; (2) the composition of the Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development; (3) the possibility for a new government to change the FP.</p>	<p>The first draft of the Bulgarian NSDS is currently developed.</p> <p>After a period of broad consultation (September 2007 – September 2008) – including public authorities, stakeholders, academia, NGOs, etc – a decision for further analysis and improvements in the draft text was taken before the NSDS was submitted for adoption by the Council of Ministers.</p>	<p>The first NSDS of Cyprus was approved by the Council of Ministers in November 2007</p>
Leading institution in the NSDS process	<p>Federal level: Federal Chancellery; Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.</p> <p>Regional level: Regional governors.</p>	<p>Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD).</p> <p>Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development (PPS SD).</p> <p>Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) of the Federal Planning Bureau (FPB).</p> <p>Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD).</p>	<p>Ministry of Economy and Energy</p>	<p>Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Environment</p>
	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>Latest Version: The new strategy revision, which was planned to end in September 2009, was finalized in January 2010. The result has been a strategic framework for SD (more a policy brief than a strategy).</p> <p>Recent developments: The implementation part is still being discussed and will be delivered to the Government by 31st October of 2010. Also the monitoring and review process will be tackled in that part.</p>	<p>Latest Version: The revised National Plan for SD was adopted in March 2009. A first draft was published in 2007. This draft was subject to a broad stakeholder consultation.</p>	<p>Latest Version: The NSDS was approved by the Estonian Parliament in 2005. Since then no new strategy was adopted.</p> <p>Recent developments: The Commission for SD has been reformed since 2009, in terms of composition of participants and frequency of meetings and its functions in the NSDS process (see horizontal integration).</p>	<p>Latest Version: The new NSDS was approved by the Finnish National Commission on SD(FNCSD) and by the Cabinet in 2006. A new strategy process will be started, based on the external evaluation (2009)</p> <p>Recent Developments: The Finish Network for SD Indicators was established in 2010 and the work on a new strategy process will be started in 2011-2012.</p>
Leading institution in the NSDS process	<p>Government Council for SD operates under two standing committees: committee of communication and committee of strategy.</p>	<p>Ministry of Environment is the leading institution in the coordination of the NSDS.</p>	<p>State Chancellery</p>	<p>Secretariat of the FNCSD located at the Ministry of Environment.</p>

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>Latest Version: A new NSDS, subtitled “towards a fair a green economy” for the time-period 2009-2013 has been adopted in July 2010.</p> <p>Recent developments: The elaboration process involved abroad range of stakeholders. The new NSDS is much strategic and has a more clear focus, than the former NSDS, in order to reach more stakeholders.</p>	<p>Latest Version: The NSDS was adopted in 2002.Two Progress reports were published in 2004 and 2009.</p> <p>Recent developments: Stronger integration of the federal countries in the NSDS process; Stronger collaboration between the Parliamentary Advisory Council of SD and the State Secretaries for SD.</p>	<p>Latest version: the NSDS has been adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2002.</p> <p>Recent developments: The government had promoted the revision of the NSDS, which started in August 2007. The process outcome is a new and updated agenda for the NSDS which has not been adopted yet. Beside the NSDS, the political priorities for the whole government structure have been set under a new strategic objective of "green growth".</p> <p>Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has been reformed and restructured in 2009.</p>	<p>Latest version: The NSDS was revised in 2007.</p> <p>Recent developments: Due to the new Parliament and governmental structure the coordination mechanism can be changed.</p>
Leading institution in the NSDS process	Ministry for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Sea was the leading institution in the elaboration, coordination of this process. It will also be responsible for the monitoring process.	Committee of State Secretary ('Green Cabinet') on SD, chaired by the head of the Federal Chancellery.		National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)
	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>Latest version: The NSDS was approved by the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE) on 2nd August 2002. The revision process to bring in line the NSDS with the EU SDS started in September 2007. It has been stopped before the general elections of the government in April 2008.</p>	<p>Latest version: A revision process started in 2008 and in the same year a first draft of the revised NSDS has been submitted to government departments. The revised NSDS should replace the NSDS of 1997 and the second document 'Making Ireland's Development Sustainable-Review, Assessment and Further Action' published in 2002. No further information is available if the revised NSDS has been already adopted or not.</p>	<p>Latest version: The latest version of the NSDS (2002) was adopted in June 2010; it has been approved from the government and the Parliament.</p> <p>Recent developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the strategy has become the core long-term strategic planning document(until 2030) (all sectoral policies are obliged to integrates it in sectoral policies); • has moved his institutional framework towards a more high-level profile. The NCSD has been integrated in the NCD⁸, broadening its members to the highest level of the administration (ministers), but also regional authorities and main public institutions (academy of science, various chambers etc). <p>State Chancellery is nominated to be responsible for the NSDS process by the state system development law. This task will be then operated through the Ministry for Regional and Local government.</p>	<p>Latest version: NSDS was approved by the Government in 2003. Currently, the NSDS is under review and a revised NSDS is discussed in the National Commission for Sustainable Development. The revised NSDS will be approved by the Government later in 2008. No information is available if the revised NSDS is already adopted.</p>
Leading institution in the NSDS process	Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government		Ministry of Environment

⁸ The former NCSD has been integrated in the National development Council (set up in 2007) and the inter-ministerial coordination function and consultation functions have been handed over to the NDC. The NDC is a monitoring and steering mechanism which monitors the function of state development system, shows coordination of development processes and has the power to reject and postpone policy development documents.

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	Latest Version: The revised National Plan will be submitted from the Inter-departmental Commission-interdepartmental body to the government- in October 2010 for approval.	Latest Version: The NSDS was approved by the cabinet of Ministers in December 2007. The NSDS has not been revised since then. Recent developments: recently there are some reforms on establishing a new SD unit in the Prime Minister Office, which would coordinate and monitor all governmental policies. The NCSD is not set-up currently.	The Action Program “Sustainable Action” was adopted by the Dutch Government in 2003. Recently, the Dutch Government developed a ‘strategic approach of SD’ for the whole policy process, i.e. making SD part of all policies. The approach comprises the following issues: (a) Monitoring report on SD (issued in November 2008) will be discussed with the Parliament; (b) Annual SD Report; (c) Communication Strategy of the Government will include SD issues; and (d) National Dialogue on SD will be initiated. Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment	The Government presented a new, updated NSDS – <i>The Norwegian Strategy for Sustainable Development</i> – in the National Budget in October 2007. In the National Budget for 2009, the Government’s work on SD in the first year following the new strategy is reported.
Leading institution in the NSDS process	Ministry of Environment	Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for coordination and implementation	Netherlands Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment	Ministry of Finance
	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	The NSDS in Poland was valid from 2000-2008. In 2007 and 2008, intensive work has been undertaken to create a legislative and institutional framework for preparing the work on a Long-term Development Strategy of Poland ⁹ . The relation of the NSDS and the long-term strategic development and the nine strategies is that SD is at the core of these strategies. ¹⁰	Latest Version: NSDS was adopted in 2007. Recent developments: with the new government in 2010 a new decision has been taken, concerning the main institutional responsibility in the coordination of the NSDS. This task has been shifted away from high-level institution, such as the Prime Minister Office, to the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning. A new department within the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning has now the leading role of the coordinator in the NSDS process ¹¹ .	Latest Version: The renewed NSDS was approved by the Government and officially launched on 16 December 2008, including a presentation at the European Commission. The review process of the current NSDS was a common project of the Government and the UNDP.	The NSDS was adopted by the Government in 2001; an updated and revised version in Action Plan for Sustainable Development was published in 2005. Recent Development: A new action plan and a new set of indicators is planned in 2010.
Leading institution in the NSDS process			Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Government Office of the Slovak Republic

⁹ The result was also the reduction of the strategic documents (42) into nine strategies. The preparation of the new 9 strategies and the Long-term Development Strategy of Poland has started in early 2010 and is planned to be finalized in the first half of 2011

¹⁰ However, a clarified relationship between these strategies and the former NSDS content and the governance mechanisms can still not be said

¹¹ The Department of the Perspectives and Planning leader has still not been nominated so far.

	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>Latest Version: Slovenia's Development Strategy 2005-2013 (also NSDS) was adopted by the Government in 2005. The current NSDS will be revised and a new Development Strategy 2013-2020 will be developed until 2012.</p> <p>Recent Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new government established a new body: Government Office for Climate Change (GOCCH) in 2009; • NCSD will be handed over to the GOCCH; handover for the NCSD has not been accomplished yet; • a long-term Strategy for Mitigation of Climate Change 2011-2050 will be developed; • the relation between the two strategies is yet unclear. 	<p>Latest Version:</p> <p>The NSDS was adopted by the Council of Ministers in November 2007.</p>	<p>Latest Version:</p> <p>The latest version of the NSDS was adopted in 2006.</p>	<p>Latest Version: The revised NSDS was approved by the Federal Council in 2008. This is the third NSDS after 1997 and 2002.</p> <p>Recent developments: Since 2009, the NSDS a sub-strategy of the Government Programme. The two processes of the governmental programme and the strategy are linked strongly together. This results in various improvements as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in more efficient coordination, - more solid institutional anchoring of the NSDS, - a broader acceptance of the NSDS - a more effective integration in the government policy.
Leading institution in the NSDS process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Office for Growth and Development will maintain the function of focal point until the GOCCH is fully operational. • The GOCCH will be chaired from an independent SD expert. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Agriculture, Environment, Rural and Marine Affairs and • Inter-ministerial Group on the Spanish NSDS under the coordination of the Economic Department. 	Ministry of Environment	Federal Office for Spatial Development
	United Kingdom			
Latest version and recent developments in the NSDS profile	<p>In 2005 a shared framework for SD in the UK was published including common goals and challenges for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Recent Developments: With the new election and the new conservative-liberal government in UK, it is very uncertain what will be in the future with the strategy: all three scenarios are possible;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the government signs in the current NSDS; (2) or it develops a new one; (3) or rejects a NSDS completely. The SDC will be for UK dissolved and the regional chairs also. 			
Leading institution in the NSDS process	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)			

Source: NSDS strategies, interviews with NSDS coordinators in 20 countries and ESDN country profiles.

2.2 Status quo in vertical policy coordination mechanisms

As can be seen in Table 2, the NSDSs are in most countries a policy strategy only binding for the national government. A notable exception is Austria, the only country in Europe that has adopted a federal SD strategy, binding both for the national and the regional level, and for which appropriate mechanisms are provided.

Generally, vertical policy coordination mechanisms vary substantially across countries. One can broadly distinguish three groups of countries:

- (1) Countries that have developed *well-coordinated vertical mechanisms with intensive collaboration among the various political levels in the NSDS process* (i.e. Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Finland, France, UK) and those that are in the *progress of intensifying vertical coordination* (i.e. Belgium, Latvia) by further promoting stronger cooperation;
- (2) Countries that have developed *a certain level of vertical policy coordination through consultation mechanisms* among the various political levels in the NSDS process (i.e. Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Sweden);
- (3) Countries that have *no separate vertical coordination mechanisms* and the cooperation in the NSDS process is almost exclusively based on information exchanging platforms (i.e. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain).

Below, we provide a short overview of each of the three groups of countries:

Countries with intensive coordination among the various political levels

The interviews revealed that this group has similar, well organized linkages between the national and sub-national levels in the NSDS process. Yet, these countries are very different in their political-administrative systems (federal countries such as Germany and Austria and more centralized countries such as France) as well as in their experiences with SD policies and mechanisms.

The federal countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland) have usually strong regional governments and, therefore, vertical coordination in policy-making in general and in SD in particular is characterized by intensive cooperation over a wide range of activities. Examples of vertical cooperation in the context of SD are forums (e.g. SD forum in Switzerland), conferences (e.g. expert conference of National and Regional SD coordinators in Austria), or working groups (e.g. national regional working groups in Germany). The vertical coordination mechanisms in these countries have provided several outcomes for their NSDS processes:

- various tools for the vertical coordination in the review process: for instance, in Switzerland, exchanging expertise among the various political levels led to the development of a special method for assessment at the national level 'sustainability assessment'; in Germany and Austria, common progress reports for the federal and the regional level have been developed;
- various tools for the implementation of the NSDS: e.g. SD strategies or programs at the sub-national level and, in the case of Austria, for the regional and national level;
- awareness raising and consultative events for different societal stakeholders at the sub-national level.

Centralized states (e.g. France, Finland) have developed specific steering and guidance tools at the national level for the implementation of their NSDSs at the sub-national level, or they have created special institutions at the sub-national level for a better steering process from the national level. For instance, in France the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, and Sustainable Development plays an important role in the implementation for centrally developed NSDS action plans for each region; these plans have to be taken into account in the regional SD strategies developed by the prefects.

Countries with a certain level of vertical policy coordination through consultation mechanisms

Interviews revealed that this group of countries (including, e.g. Czech Republic, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Sweden) is characterized by some collaboration in certain crucial policy topics of SD or in specific project. The mechanisms provide some platforms for coordination of policies between the political levels. However, coordination is done more on a case-by-case or ad-hoc basis (either in a specific project or in a specific policy topic), and in general less structured than in the first group. Examples are:

- (1) Conferences and Forums for SD, ('State-regions permanent conference' in Italy established since 1983, including representatives of national and sub-national bodies)
- (2) Collaboration and coordination indirectly through the National Councils for SD (NCDS), where the regional representatives are indirectly linked to the NSDS process (i.e. Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Estonia),
- (3) Strategic networks (in Norway, special agreements have been adopted between the national Association of Local and Regional Authorities).

These mechanisms have contributed to raising awareness of the NSDSs at the sub-national levels, sub-national action plans or SD strategies, and encouraging initiatives related to the goals of the NSDS at the regional and local level.

Countries with no separate vertical coordination mechanisms

This group of countries (including, e.g. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain) displays no separate strategic mechanisms for the involvement of the sub-national levels in the implementation or review of the NSDSs. Sub-national levels are either weakly involved in the NCSD in the form of some ad-hoc group meetings (i.e. Slovakia) or they are not represented at all (i.e. in the Irish NCSD). The collaboration is limited to specific projects in specific sectors of SD (e.g. in Greece, Ireland) or some partnerships in topics related to the objectives of NSDS (e.g. Denmark).

Table 2: Vertical policy coordination mechanisms

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical integration is expected to be well coordinated • The Federal strategy adopted in 2010 is binding also for the <i>Länder</i>-level • no institutionalized relation • various mechanisms are still in place to coordinate the various level • Actors Network Sustainable Austria • Future Platform Sustainable Austria'(SD projects) • Expert Conference of National and Regional SD Coordinators • Regional SD coordinators participate in the 'Committee for a Sustainable Austria' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competences pertaining to sustainable development are divided among the different regional and federal authorities. • Instead of a truly national sustainable development (SD) strategy, Belgium has a Federal Strategy for SD and Regional strategies which all have the same status. As a consequence, the Federal Plan (FP) objectives only concern the federal and not the regional level. A framework of agreement between the various levels exists, defining respective priorities. <p>Recent developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised SD Act aims to strengthen the cooperation between the different regional and federal authorities and the new FP will identify opportunities for cooperation. • The revised SD Act extends the duration of the new FP from four to five years to better match with the respective European Union and regional legislative cycles. • The long-term vision, which has to be prepared under the revised SD Act, can be adopted within a cooperation agreement between the Federal State and the Regions and Communities. 	The draft NSDS was discussed in several meetings, consultation and discussion forums with several stakeholder groups, including representatives of regional and local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation of the NSDS, e municipalities (the only sub-national level in Cyprus) were involved in the general consultation process
Leading institution (platform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management • <i>Länder</i> in the NSDS process. 	Inter-departmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) ¹²		Union of Municipalities and Union of Communities
Roles and function	<p>Role of the Expert Conference of National and Regional SD Coordinators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>sectoral knowledge building and awareness raising</i>¹³ • <i>coordination in policy preparation process for SD</i>¹⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consultation platform</i>: representatives of the sub-national governments participate in ICSD' activities and can therefore provide comments in the preparation of the FP or in the different thematic working groups. • <i>Coordination in the implementation of the FP</i>: the Constitution provides for the cooperation agreements as the mechanism for vertical coordination between the different regional and federal authorities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributing to the reinforcement of the Local Authorities; • updating the relevant legislations; • influencing the formation of policies, through continuous communication with the relevant Ministries, the House of Representatives and other organizations.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of various tools for the coordination; • common programs and concrete projects in SD • development and consensus building of political decisions(policy preparation); • organization of awareness raising events annually 			The only coordination between the national and sub-national level is undertaken for the National Action Plan on Green Public Procurement: based on the national plan, the municipalities have to develop their own local action plans.

¹² Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) is the leading institution for vertical policy coordination, as representatives of the sub-national governments participate in its activities and can therefore provide comments in the preparation of the FP or in the different thematic working groups (= *consultation platform*). The ICSD is supported by the Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development (PPS SD).

¹³ Information is transferred among the various levels in the different sectors of the NSDS

¹⁴ In future the representation of the state chancellery in these meetings, might have an impact in the political role of the regional SD coordinators

	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vertical coordination is not institutionalized • Three vertical coordination mechanisms work on the following platforms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Forum for SD: various stakeholders (2) Standing Working group for LA 21 (3) Collaboration and coordination of the NSDS through the Ministry for Regional Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSDS is not binding for the sub-national level. • No strategic mechanisms for the involvement of sub-national levels in the implementation of the NSDS. • The municipalities have their own 'Agenda 21 strategies'. • There are some partnerships¹⁵ which are related to the objectives formulated in the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical coordination mechanisms are relatively weak. • No official arrangements or structured relations between the two levels. • Two bodies serve indirectly as a forum for the various levels <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the NSDC, (2) the Joint Commission of Ministerial Bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vertical coordination is well-coordinated through the sub-committee of the FNCSD. • Local authorities in Finland have developed their own strategies and initiatives on SD and have set up the institutional framework. • The local authorities strongly support their autonomy in the SD processes from the central level.
Leading institution (platform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee of Communication (NCSO) which has an informative role • Ministry for Regional Development¹⁶ 	There are no institutions responsible for the vertical coordination of the NSDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSDC • The Joint Commission of Ministerial Bodies (JCMB) (only ministries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-committee on regional and local SD set up in 2007. • Its members are local, regional and national authorities, civil society and SD experts.
Roles and function	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The <i>SD forum</i> has an <i>information exchanging function</i> accordingly to the NSDS process cycle (2) <i>NCSO: Promoter of the implementation</i> of the NSDS strategies in the sub-national ones, through various SD activities (3) Ministry for regional Development: <i>coordinating body</i>; mapping if the relevant sub-national levels have considerably taken into consideration SD issues 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No institutions are officially responsible for the vertical policy coordination; • the few linkages are provided indirectly through the two bodies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) NSDC brings indirectly the national authorities and sub-national ones through its meetings (2) (JCMB) provides a forum for multi-level cooperation, which meets annually and discusses important policy topics. 	<p>The sub-committees role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>information exchanging platform</i> for SD activities at the various levels • <i>stimulating body for initiatives</i> at the various level • <i>Promoter of SD in regional and local administrations</i>, by showing best practices, and contributing to the implementation of the NSDS.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New action <i>plan for communication</i>: helps the municipalities in specific topics, (transport health, SCP, energy), to be in line with the NSDS. • Various <i>forums at the regional level</i>: exchange information on various SD crucial topics and good practices. • The <i>local level is very active on SD issue</i>: LA 21 initiatives and local SD strategies are currently at the core of NSDS implementation. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a structured relationship in terms of coordinating target-implementation and review processes between the two levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings (4-5 times a year) in specific SD issues in the sub-committee. • <i>Organized conferences and events</i> serve the purpose of the committee` function as an information exchange platform and stimulating body for initiatives at the local level. Currently, it is organizing the conference on 'Local Solutions 2011'.

¹⁵ Nature Conservation Partnership, Public Procurement Partnership.

¹⁶ Ministry for Regional Development is also collaborating with the ad-hoc working group on preparation of the implementation part of the current strategic framework. It is unclear of the implementation document will be adopted by the government in the future.

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are certain activities linking the national and sub-national level in the preparation and implementation of the NSDS. • <u>Preparation</u>: 'Grenelle de l'environnement'.¹⁷ • <u>Implementation</u>: three activities are of main importance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1)'state strategic action plans' for the regions¹⁸ 2)'state-territory intervention programme'¹⁹ 3)'framework reference' for LA 21 initiatives²⁰ establishes a clear link between the NSDS and the local LA 21 activities, but are not binding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSDS is a strategy of the government only, and not binding for the federal countries. • A stronger cooperation and coordination has developed especially in three main topics of the NSDS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public procurement, • land use, • sustainability indicators. • The mechanisms are until to a certain degree institutionalized through national-regional working groups. • There are also various conferences linked to these three topics with various stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vertical coordination mechanisms have not a regulated structure. • The link in the NSDS process is rather weak. • The national and sub-national coordination in SD activities works more effectively on specific sectors of SD (i.e. water management) rather than on the whole NSDS process. • Various recent reforms (local authorities have been reduced for strengthening the local operational capacities) shape the effectiveness of these mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-national levels were involved in the general consultation process of preparing the NSDS. Several round-table discussions were held in order to involve stakeholder groups. An on-line forum provided opportunities to give opinions, suggestion • Due to the new Parliament and governmental structure the coordination mechanism can be changed.
Leading institution (platform)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Council for SD</i> play s an important role in the consultation of stakeholders at the sub national level for the elaboration of the NSDS. • <i>Ministry for Ecology, Energy and Sustainable Development</i> plays also an important role in the coordination of the action plans with NSDS objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • German Council on SD • Committee of State Secretaries on SD • National-Regional Working groups(the participants are administrators of the central government and the regions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change. • The Ministry of Interior offers some coordination mechanism through the five-year development program for local administrations. 	
Roles and function of the mechanisms	<p>The first two are state-led activities for the regional level (<i>Top-down</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actions plans have a <i>steering functions</i> for the target setting of sub-national SD strategies; • '<i>state-territory intervention programme</i>' has a <i>fine-tuning function for the policies/projects</i> at the sub-national level through contracting and funding from the national level <p>The '<i>framework reference</i>' is has a <i>guidance function</i> for the LA 21 initiatives.</p>	<p>The national working groups (thematic groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination function in the target setting between the various political levels • <i>provide a certain structure</i> for a more coherent approach in the implementation and review process of the NSDS in the three fields <p>The German Council on SD has the function of an <i>information exchange platform</i> by organizing various workshops in the various crucial topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The few mechanisms that exist have an <i>information exchange function</i>, by translating SD policies at the local level. • <i>Guidance functions</i> in the coordination of SD activities. 	
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many LA 21 initiatives have been set up in line with the NSDS objectives. • The Ministry of SD holds then annually conferences for awarding best practices of local initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2008, the Federal countries took part for the first time in the formulation of a progress report itself, where they advocated a stronger cooperation in the 3 topics mentioned above. • After broad meetings and consultations in 2009 the joint Federal-Länder Report was prepared. It will be a subject of further discussion and meetings in autumn 2010; So far half of the German regions have regional SD strategies in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both in the preparation of the NSDS (2002) and in the review process of NSDS (2007) the response of local authorities has been rather limited. • The outcomes of these mechanisms are difficult to evaluate currently, due to the administrative reforms²¹ at the local level. These reforms are shaping substantially the mechanisms. 	

¹⁷ The roundtable 'Grenelle de l'Environnement' was a broad consultation process in environmental fields, held between 2007 and 2008, where also sub-national representatives were included.

¹⁸ These action plans operates objectives outlined in the NSDS and must be understood as regional implementation plans. These action plans have to be taken into account in the regional SD strategies developed by the prefects.

¹⁹ '*State-territory intervention programme*' is a contract between the national level and the local authorities-referring to various policy issues, including sustainable development.

²⁰ As part of the revised NSDS process in 2006, the 'framework reference' for LA21 was developed by the national level in cooperation with NGOs and representatives of the sub-national levels.

²¹ Recently local authorities have been reduced for strengthening the local operational capacities.

	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSDS is not binding at the regional level. • The main platform for the vertical coordination is the State-Regions Permanent Conference²². 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of intensive coordination between the national and sub-national levels in NSDS processes. • No institutional process of linking activities on the different political level. • The sub-national level is also not involved in “Comhar” (NSDC). • There is some coordination between the national level and the local level in specific sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDC serves as a coordinator between the national and sub-national level in the NSDS process. • NDC has replaced the NSDC; NDC has been set up for coordination of the long-term development with sustainability put at its core. • The sub-national level (government authorities and regional planning institutions) are members of the NDC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not much coordination between the NSDS and the local SD strategies and SD activities. • Special seminars are held for municipalities on NSDS issues and implementation, including awareness raising and knowledge building seminars on special issues like SD education.
Leading institution (platform)	A “Technical Board” ²³ on SD is located in the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Planning (CIPE).	County and City Managers’ Association (CCMA) is mainly responsible for coordination between the various levels in the specific sectors (i.e. water issues).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDC (chaired by the Prime Minister)²⁴. • A regional Sub-council of the NDC will be set up soon (for monitoring and implementation of the NSDS at the regional level). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environmental Centre for Administration and Technology (ECAT-Lithuania). • The municipalities.
Roles and function	<p>The “Technical Board” on SD plays a role in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>preparation in guidelines for SD</i> strategies at the regional level • <i>preparation of decisions</i> to be adopted by the main platform for vertical coordination: State-Regions Permanent Conference • <i>it represents the main link with the main body responsible for horizontal integration</i> 		<p>The functions of the NDC are at the national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitoring and steering function at the national level</i> • <i>coordination of development</i> processes • <i>evaluator</i> of the planning and government decisions • <i>power to reject and postpone</i> policy development documents which are not in line with SD principles²⁵ <p>Regional Sub-council for SD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stimulation of the implementation at the regional level • monitoring of the implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECAT has developed projects for developing local SD strategies which cover broader issues, not only the environment. • municipalities play an important role for the development of various sectoral strategies.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some regions have adopted their SD strategies, affected from that process. • Implementation of LA 21 processes contributed to a higher consistency with regional SD strategies. • At the national level financial contribution was made available for local administrations. 		Outcomes are to be seen in the future, as the NDC has replaced the NCSD (since 2007) and overtaken the function of the NSDC.	

²² This mechanism was established in 1983, including representatives of national and sub-national political bodies.

²³ It includes representatives of the national and sub-national levels.

²⁴ The NDC comprises High level public administrators (11 ministers), the Latvian association of local and regional governments, as their regional planning institutions and political persons from each sector, as well as main public institutions representatives (Academy of Sciences, Business, Chambers of Commerce, confederation of employees and employers) and NGOs.

²⁵ The document are postponed or rejected from the NDC and they can not be approved by government or parliament.

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>terms of development</u> of NDP, the sub-national level is indirectly involved through two bodies and a series of round table discussions (in the Parliament and the High Council for SD). • In <u>terms of implementation</u>, the new NDP has still to deliver its mechanisms. • In the new NDP, the local level is invited to act in various sectors with certain measures. 	The national level is trying to encourage the regional level for taking on SD initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •no separate coordination mechanism for SD between the national and sub-national levels sectoral policies, •In sectoral policies, there is a stronger coordination between the political levels, e.g. in environmental policy, transport policy or the Climate Change Strategy •In the current process of developing a 'strategic approach' of SD, the sub-national levels have not been involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic network named 'Vital Municipalities' contribute to the implementation of national SD priorities at the regional and local levels. • Vital Municipalities is an agreement on cooperation between the National Association of Local and Regional Authorities (NALRA) and the Ministry of the Environment. • It has to a large degree replaced the former LA21 processes.
Leading institution (platform)	High Council for SD	Responsible for coordination as monitoring of SD initiatives is the Department of local governments, located in the Office of Prime Minister (OPM).		National Association of Local and Regional Authorities (NALRA) and the Ministry of the Environment.
Roles and function	Role of the High Council for SD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>agenda setting function</i> during the development of the NDP • <i>guidance in the implementation</i> of the NDP objectives at the local level • Some measures in the last NDP have already been implemented. 	OPM tries to <i>encourage local government</i> to collaborate closer with local council for undertaking certain initiatives in SD.		
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the NDP: there is a specific chapter dealing with SD at the local level. • new ways of integrative policy design are discussed as the LA"1 initiatives are seen as out of date. 			

	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neither local nor regional authorities were directly involved in the development of the NSDS. The NSDS is not binding for the regional or local level. There are no proper vertical coordination mechanisms. Representatives of local communities participate in the National Council for the Environment and Sustainable Development (NCESD) and can indirectly have an impact on the NSDS process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An LA 21 project was launched by UNDP. Its aim was to translate the strategic goals and objectives of the NSDS down to the local level by encouraging communities to create their own Local Sustainable Development Strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct link between the NSDS and the activities at the sub-national levels. There are several sub-national activities and projects, but there is no strategic link or coordination with the NSDS. The Government Council for SD includes local authorities, but they do not coordinate the NSDS or work directly with the national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a link between the objectives of the NSDS and the regional programs. This link was fostered by the coordination mechanism NCSD²⁶.
Leading institution (platform)	NCSDI ²⁷	N.A	Government Council I for SD ²⁸ .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Until now the NCSD. <p>In the future the Government office of Climate Change.</p>
Roles and functions				<p>Roles of the NCSD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinating body of the various level in the NSDS objective setting review body plenary for a dialogue of various stakeholder in SD <p>Roles of the Office for Regional Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinates multi-level governance issues with the NCSD and the Regional Development Councils. <p>In the Future: The chair of the NCSD will be handed over from the Government office for Growth to the Government office for Climate Change.</p>
Outcome	There are various SD activities developed at the regional level, but they are not an outcome of the NSDS.			The main outcome of the NCSD: achievement of general consensus: among the various levels in the structure for monitoring of SD.

²⁶ Through the establishment of the Government office of Climate Change in 2009, the role and functions of horizontal integration, might be taken over from the Government office of Climate Change. Generally, every dialogue in the NSDS will be transferred to this Office.

²⁷ There are various Ministries, which cooperate with the regional level in various sectors. Also various councils at the regional level have undertaken SD activities; but these are not linked with the NSDS process at the national level.

²⁸ NCSD has been very passive in operational terms in the last 2-3 years.

	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Vertical Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The coordination among the various levels is still at a very simple state. • There are no permanent mechanisms to regulate and coordinate this relationship. • There is no body to coordinate the main problems and conflicts. • During the preparation of the NSDS some participation arrangements: were organized: 'Conference on SD'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vertical mechanisms regarding the preparation of the NSDS (2002) were coordinated through 'reference groups'. • Both 2004, and 2006 NSDS did not apply a broad stakeholder consultation, but were mainly developed as cooperation between Government ministries. • In terms of NSDS implementation, there is currently no formalized coordination mechanism for the NSDS process (Commission for SD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vertical mechanisms are relatively strong. • Linkages on the various levels (federal, regional, local) are managed within the SD forum. <p>Recent developments: The intensity of vertical cooperation among the various participants has increased in various issues (i.e. sustainable tourism), but also on methodological basis (i.e. development of new indicators) resulting in introduction of new instruments (i.e. Sustainability Assessment).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK had set up a multi-level governance system. • Each political level had to contribute to achieve NSDS objectives in their sub-national strategies (national-regional and local level). <p>Recent developments • The vertical coordination mechanisms will change in the future, as the regional structures ,mechanisms and institutions will be abolished²⁹.</p> <p>• In the future, if the government will sign in the NSDS, the current Ministry of Environment has then to find ways how to set up the direct linkage to the local authorities and which platforms to use in absence of the regional structure.</p>
Leading institution (Platform)	No formal body for coordination (No NCSD has been established so far).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission for SD replaced the Council for SD (2002-2007), however did not take up its work in linking the political levels. The sub-national levels are not represented in the Commission. • The Ministry of Environment offers some mechanisms for coordination and exchange. 	The SD Forum was set up in 2001 as an initiative of the Federal Office for Spatial Development	<p>There are various leading bodies: National level: DEFRA. Local Level: local authorities.</p> <p>The regional bodies responsible for the vertical coordination will be abolished³⁰.</p>
Roles and functions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the SD Commission does not provide a link of the various political levels, • The ministry of Environment fulfils the <i>role of:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 a coordinator in specific issues as SD indicators 4 An information exchange platform 	<p>The role of the vertical mechanisms provided through the SD Forum are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to <i>serve as an exchanging platform</i> for information and expertise through the various governmental levels on various SD issues; • to <i>promote the participation possibilities:</i> • to <i>develop through involvement of the sub-national levels the national targets</i> for the LA 21 projects. 	<p>The multi-level governance system had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a <i>guidance and influential role</i> of the central government through various tools at the sub-national levels³¹ • <i>coordinating function</i> • <i>consultative function</i>³² • <i>consensus finding</i> on SD issues at the regional level through 'SD partnerships' or 'mini' SD Commissions'.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 4 regions out of 17 have developed a regional SDS. • The regional level has not done many efforts to introduce SD initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Environment organizes various conferences bi-annually. • Some coordination between the political levels in the development of SD indicators set in 2006, for an increased usage of these indicators at the local level. • Some coordination on the environmental policy objectives. 	<p>Development of various tools and instrument through the exchange of information in certain topics (i.e. exchanging expertise in 'Sustainability assessment' led to the development of a special method for assessment at the national level)</p>	<p>Following mechanisms will be abolished in the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication and consultation mechanisms</i> between the national with the regional level³³; • <i>Tools</i> as the regional planning documents; • <i>Regional bodies.</i>

²⁹ The government is in the process of removing the regional chair of government, which was key to the delivery of objectives at the sub-national level. The drivers of these reforms are: (1) cost-saving measures; (2) less state control and more local freedom and independence.

³⁰ At the regional level, three regional bodies were responsible for the NSDS coordination: (1) Regional development agencies, (2) Regional assemblies, and (3) the Government Offices in the Regions

³¹ The tools at the regional level were the 'Regional Frameworks' and at the local level, the 'SD Community Strategies'.

³² Consultation on the feedback of the NSDS at the local level were organized through 'consultation packs' and at the regional level through 'SD Dialogue'.

³³ 'SD Dialogues' provides feedback on the NSDS preparation. 'SD Partnerships' are roundtables at the regional level on SD issues.

2.3 **Status quo in horizontal policy coordination mechanisms**

The concept of SD does not only emphasise the need for vertical but also for horizontal policy coordination, i.e. the integration of different policy sectors. Generally, all EU Member States have developed various forms of inter-ministerial and cross-departmental mechanisms for coordinating the implementation of NSDSs objectives³⁴. The format of these mechanisms varies from inter-ministerial working groups (Estonia), to committees (Committee for a Sustainable Austria, or Committee of State Secretaries, the ‘Green Cabinet’, in Germany) or networks (inter-ministerial network secretariat in Finland).

The developments observed in horizontal integration vary mostly regarding the following factors:

- (1) *Institutional structures*: three sub-institutional structures play a key role: inter-ministerial bodies at the political level (politicians and administrators), inter-ministerial bodies at the administrative level (only administrators) and hybrid-regimes (politicians, administrators and societal stakeholders);
- (2) *Roles and functions of the mechanisms*: they vary within these three groups as will be displayed below;
- (3) *Outcomes of these mechanisms*.

Institutional structure

Horizontal mechanisms are categorized on the basis of their institutional structure:

- *Inter-ministerial bodies at the political level*: in this case, the inter-ministerial body is chaired by politicians or high-level administrators (e.g. in Austria, Germany, Latvia, Norway, Malta, Spain, Ireland).
- *Inter-ministerial bodies at the administrative level*: participants are mainly representatives of the national administration (ministries) under the lead of the Ministry of Environment (e.g. Belgium³⁵, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, Romania, Switzerland and United Kingdom).
- *Hybrid regimes*: in this third group, the processes of horizontal policy coordination (politicians and administrators) are enriched by participation and consultation processes of societal stakeholders (NGOs, business, academia, civil society), e.g. Finland's National Sustainable Development Council and Ministry of Environment,

³⁴ Based on the ESDN country profile, the only country where the development of horizontal mechanisms is not clear is Lithuania. Lithuania has dissolved the institution (National Council on SD) responsible for the horizontal coordination.

³⁵ Under the revised act for SD(2010), representatives of federal government members are no longer part of the Inter-departmental

the Government Council for SD in Czech Republic, the NCSD in Hungary³⁶, Slovakia and Slovenia).

Roles of horizontal mechanisms

The horizontal mechanisms (at work in the various inter-ministerial bodies at both the political, administrative and hybrid regimes levels) fulfil the following roles:

- a coordination function in the preparation of the NSDS;
- a coordination function in the implementation of the NSDS:
 - either through governmental action plans presenting specific measures for the departments (like work programs in Austria) or,
 - by encouraging the development of departmental action plans (e.g. Belgium and UK) and audit systems or, by promoting the integration of NSDS targets in the target-setting of the implementation of the sectoral strategies;
- a review and ‘watch-dog’ function: it promotes the collection of information from the ministries in the implementation of the NSDS and monitors the progress of the NSDS.

The inter-ministerial institutions share all the aforementioned roles in horizontal policy coordination, but also display some differences. Horizontal mechanisms which are steered from inter-ministerial bodies at the administrative level have more a *preparatory policy-making function*. They do not replace any usual decision-making mechanisms. In contrast, the countries locating the horizontal policy coordination institutionally at the higher-level share additionally a *political guidance and steering function*. This function is reflected in influencing the pace of implementation of the NSDSs in sectoral policies. In countries such as Germany and Austria, where the horizontal mechanisms have not only a preparatory policy function but also decision-making competences through the Chancellery, an increased linkage of political leadership with horizontal coordination is considered to be the case. In cases where horizontal mechanisms are coordinated by hybrid regimes (e.g. NCSDs), they provide an agenda setting³⁷ and advisory function to the government on SD issues, by providing recommendations based on its wide consultation processes with various societal actors.

Outcomes

The interviews revealed that: (a) the institutional profile of the horizontal mechanisms affects the performance on policy coordination and integration: the higher the political profile of horizontal policy mechanisms, the more visible is the NSDS process for the politicians; (b) horizontal policy integration fosters and strengthens inter-ministerial cooperation and dialogues.

³⁶ Due to new election and governmental changes the institutional structure for the horizontal mechanisms might change

³⁷ Agenda setting function: when drafting proposals for the set-up for the consultation processes of other stakeholders in the NCSD

Various implementation tools for horizontal policy integration have been developed in the countries such as

- departmental action plans in line with the NSDS (e.g. UK, Belgium, Finland),
- departmental reports on the implementation of the NSDS in specific policy fields (i. e. Germany),
- national SD action plans for the various departments (i.e. work programmes in Austria, National Development Plan in Latvia)
- preparation of policy framing reports on crucial SD issues based on inter-ministerial consultations (i.e. for the preparation of ‘Focus Reports’ inter-ministerial efforts are required in Estonia),
- various strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Agenda 21.

Table 3: Horizontal policy coordination mechanisms

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal Coordination is fostered by the Committee for A sustainable Austria; The government has contributed to the development of work programmes <p>Recent developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different from the situation until 2010: is that the Committee is co-chaired by the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The mechanisms link the expertise of SD through the ministry and high political guidance through the chancellery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal coordination is undertaken through the Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and through the sustainable development units (SDU) created in the respective federal administrations. Additional institutions involved are the Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) of the Federal Planning Bureau (FPB), the Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development (PPS SD) and the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD). <p>Recent developments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised SD Act has made changes to the composition of the ICSD. Representatives of federal ministers are no longer part of the ICSD, which is to improve its focus and support vis-à-vis the different federal administrations. 	<p>Improvements since the last National Strategy (1992) have been made in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaboration and horizontal integration through the establishment of inter-ministerial commissions and councils, the adoption of programmes and plans on behalf of the Council of Ministers as well as ad-hoc inter-institutional working groups to solve specific problems. It is pointed out in the strategy that the EU integration process has been a strong driver for improving horizontal collaboration. 	Horizontal coordination is undertaken by the Inter-Governmental Committee.
Leading Institution/Platform	Committee for a sustainable Austria includes representatives from several federal ministries, social partners, and the regions.	ICSD: Membership of the ICSD now extends to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> representatives of the various federal administrations; one representative of each sub-national government; a representative, as an observer, from the FPB. 	Inter-ministerial commissions and councils.	Inter-Governmental Committee(IGC) chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.
Roles of the Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination through common projects and programs. Through the new co-chair as the Chancellery the coordination function becomes more difficult, but it gains more political profile. Political guidance function. Steering mechanism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> preparation of the preliminary draft and the draft of the Federal Plan (FP); coordination of the report by its members which provides information about the implementation of the measures through which each administration has contributed to the objectives of the FP; coordination of policy regarding sustainable development (e.g. through working groups on public procurements, CSR, EU SDS...). 		<p>IGC tasks are to coordinate the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation, review of the NSDS.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is expected that the outcomes become more visible. It is expected that the mechanisms gain higher profile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Plans for Sustainable Development. Action plans in line with the FP from the SD units of the various federal administrations. Opinions by the FCSD. Reports by the members of the ICSD. Evaluation reports of the FPB. 		

	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal mechanisms are coordinated through the Government Council for SD on an inter-departmental basis. <p>Recent developments: Since the recent election, the composition of members in the Government Council for SD might change. It is unclear yet how the composition will change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a wider involvement of the various line ministries through inter-ministerial consultation, especially in the preparation of the strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-ministerial policy coordination is conducted through the Inter-ministerial working group. The NCSD advises on these mechanisms through reporting mechanisms. <p>Recent Developments: The NCSD has been reformed in its functions and composition since 2009 and has been announced as an independent body from the government. Its functions have, therefore, been changed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well coordinated through the inter-ministerial Secretariat which prepares and outlines the work of the FNCSD.
Leading institution/platform	<p>It has two standing committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> committee for strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is responsible for the strategy monitoring and implementation; it sets the agenda for the NCSD sessions, committee for communication: it is for awareness raising and communication on SD crucial issues to the public and municipalities. 	<p>The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the coordination of the NSDS process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estonian Commission on SD (NCSD) acts as an advisory independent body to the government, comprising various stakeholders outside the administration system (business, NGOs, academia). The Inter-ministerial working group comprises representatives of several ministries and the Estonian Statistical Office. It is chaired by the Strategy Director of the State Chancellery. <p>Power: NCSD is an independent body with advisory competences. Inter-ministerial group deals with coordinating tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat of the FNCSD (Ministry of Environment). Inter-ministerial network Secretariat of the FNCSD, which includes all ministries with a stake in SD. FNCSD includes broad members and stakeholders, and has a high-level profile.
Roles of the mechanisms	<p>The horizontal mechanisms (through the NCSD) have following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>advisory function</i>, which advises the government on SD issues <i>monitoring function</i> in the implementation of the NSDS in the various ministries <i>coordinates SD policy making</i> through the various departments 	<p>The inter-ministerial coordination has the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>agenda setting</i> for the NSDS <i>coordinating the implementation</i> the strategy in the various sectoral policies <i>reviewing</i> how the strategy objectives are met developing the indicators. 	<p>the NCSD has an</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>agenda setting function, providing analysis on SD issues for the government and</i> <i>framing the policy content. It stimulates the government debate on crucial SD issues.</i> <p>The <u>Inter-ministerial</u> working group has a coordination role among the line ministries in the NSDS process. It discusses and agrees on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>guiding working plans,</i> <i>it reviews the main SD sectoral strategies from SD perspective,</i> <i>compiles reporting for the government.</i> 	<p>The Inter-ministerial network functions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>collecting information from the various ministries, each within their area of expertise</i> <i>trying to integrate SD issue into all relevant sectoral policies and</i> <i>encourage ministries to develop own action plans and audit system</i> <p>The functions of the FNCSD secretariat are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>keeping the SD issue "alive" through the ministries</i> <i>political guidance: agenda setting function for the whole mandate period of the FNCSD</i> <i>coordination functions for the various stakeholders</i>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Council, as the advisory body to the Government in SD issues, has reached the outcome establishing the strategic framework for SD in 2010 through, by reconciling various interests among the ministries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the new revised strategy; strengthening the dialogue and coordination between the ministries; 	<p>The NCSD prepares twice per year 'Focus reports' on crucial SD issues, where special inter-ministerial efforts are required (i. Sustainable Consumption)³⁸.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sectoral action plans for ministries;</i> <i>Environmental management system within the ministries (it is still to be implemented).</i>

³⁸ These reports are policy driven and are presented to the government for implementation and also made available to the public.

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2005, SD is included in the French Constitution with the adoption of the Environmental Charter; this has strengthened the inclusion of SD in the work of all public institutions. Each ministry has one High-Ranking Civil Servant (nominated from the minister) who is responsible for preparing the contribution of their administration to further developing the NSDS, co-ordinating the preparation of corresponding action plans and monitoring their implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal mechanisms are considered as a <i>key success story</i> for Germany. There are well developed linkages between the political and administrative level in the implementation of the NSDS through the Committee of State Secretary (monthly meetings). <p>Recent development: Stronger linkages of collaboration between the Parliamentary Advisory Council on SD (set up in 2004) of the German Bundestag and the state secretary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inter-ministerial implementation of the NSDS is coordinated through the National Coordination Committee of the Government Policy in the field of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development. The government has set the goal of reaching a '<i>resource efficient economy and green growth</i>'. The various departments are coordinating their work by developing strategies on crucial topics of SD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCSD is mainly responsible for the coordination of the NSDS. There is no more information available how the NSDS has fostered or even created any mechanisms for policy integration. <p>Recent development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to the new Parliament and governmental structure the coordination mechanism can be changed.
Leading institution/platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Standing Committee of the High-Ranking Civil Servants for Sustainable Development (Secretariat is in the Ministry for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development³⁹) has been set up recently. The Economic, Social and Environmental Committee. 	Committee of State Secretary ('Green Cabinet') chaired by the head of the Federal Chancellery. It consists of state secretaries from nine ministries.	National Coordination Committee of the Government Policy in the field of Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development. The Committee comprises nine ministries	
Roles of the mechanisms	<p>The Standing Committee has the functions of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Horizontal coordination</i> of the implementation of action plans; <i>review and monitoring</i> of the implementation and follow-up of national SD objectives. <p>The Economic, Social and Environmental Committee will also follow-up on the implementation of the NSDS (independent body).</p>	<p>The Committee of State Secretary has following roles and competences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Coordination role:</i> prevents conflicts between ministries; ensures that objectives are met, <i>steering mechanism:</i> offers inputs to ministries and influence the pace of the implementation, <i>'guidance competence'</i> of the chancellery; in linking political leadership and administrative implementation, <i>monitors the</i> implementation of the NSDS. 	Coordinating the implementation of the strategies in sectoral policies.	
Outcomes	Have to be seen in future;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 2009, there are departmental reports on the implementation of SD in specific policy fields. The reports are presented to the Committee and made to the public available. Impact assessment of laws and regulations has been introduced: the Parliamentary Advisory Council on SD various assess the SD Impact assessment of laws and regulation⁴⁰. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the governmental objective on green growth various departments have developed specific and more concrete strategies than the overarching NSDS (i.e. as biodiversity strategy adopted recently). The relation of these individual strategies with the NSDS is unclear. 	

³⁹ Ministry for Ecology, Energy and Sustainable Development was established in 2007. It has the highest rank inside the government hierarchy.

⁴⁰ The SD impact assessment of laws has been introduced from the Cabinet in order that various ministries assess the implications of their sectoral laws for SD. The assessment has no specific procedure requirements which ministries must take in consideration. The Parliamentary Advisory Council evaluates this assessment whether the various laws demonstrate enough consideration of sustainability issues or not. If not, the Council prepares certain proposal to the Cabinet and recommends informing the respective ministries to take further more in consideration its proposals. The functions of the Council are: (1) to raise awareness of SD issues in the Parliament and provide recommendations to the Cabinet also to help inter-ministerial coordination through the evaluation of SD Impact assessment of laws.

	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal integration is one of the most explicit aims of the Italian NSDS. <p>Several measures are envisaged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> application of the legislation on environmental protection, integration of environmental issues within sectoral policies, environmental assessment of plans and programmes, integration of environmental factors into services and product market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSDS identifies institutions, procedures, and policy instruments which should enhance policy coherence. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a sub-committee of the parliament – the Joint Committee on SD – established to monitor and examine SD issues, the National Sustainable Development Partnership , the Government’s Strategic Management Initiative, High-Level Inter-Departmental Steering Group oversees and guides the process of revising the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal coordination mechanisms are guaranteed through the Ministry for Regional and Local development. Based on the National Development Plan (adopted in 2013), ministries will prepare their medium-term National Development Plan and must take in consideration the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Commission for Sustainable Development played an important role for the horizontal coordination. However the NCSD does not operate any longer.
Leading institution/platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Technical Board of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Planning’s (CIPE). Commission on SD comprises representatives of the Ministry of Economy, the Regions and other Ministry representatives with competencies for SD policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sub-committee of the parliament – the Joint Committee on SD. High-Level Inter-Departmental Steering Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Chancellery. Ministry for Regional and Local Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (NCSD) does not operate any longer.
Roles of the mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal coordination in the implementation through the ministries engaged in SD policies. Linkages with the regional level in the vertical coordination, as it has representatives. Review the NSDS implementation. 	<p>The role of the mechanisms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation of the NSDS through various departments, monitoring of the NSDS, review of the NSDS process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Chancellery is <i>responsible for steering horizontal coordination process</i>. At the national level, the Ministry has to ensure coherence between sectoral medium-term planning documents and the NDP and NSDS. Ministry has a "<i>watch dog</i>" function, in the way that ministries adopt SD objectives in their sectoral policies and monitor this process. 	
Outcomes			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main implementation instrument for the NSDS: National Development Plan. Based on the Plan, the ministries will prepare their policy development plans, in line with NDP (NSDS). 	

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	The Inter-departmental Commission of Sustainable Development (ICSD) fosters horizontal integration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The system of horizontal coordination mechanisms is being restructured • A new Unit (located in the Office of Prime Minister, linked to Cabinet) will be set up and coordinate and review all governmental policies, under the perspectives of sustainability criteria. (Movement to put SD at the core of sectoral policies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination at the national level is addressed by the 'Contact Persons Group' (CPO)(8 ministries) • additional coordination mechanism is the monthly meeting of five ministries • A number of initiatives: (1) financial statement on the policy dimensions of SD; (2) examination of two policy field should be performed to see if a closer integration creates added value; (3) sustainable impact assessment for investments 	<p>(3) 'Green Cabinet' is responsible for ensuring policy coherence.</p> <p>(4) Following increased need for coordination of the climate change issue, the mandate of 'the Cabinet on SD' was expanded in 2008 to cover more specifically policies related to climate change.</p>
Leading institution/platform	Inter-departmental Commission, it is composed of representatives of each ministry.	The Unit in the Prime Minister's Office will be set up in the future.	Contact Persons Group	Green Cabinet', chaired by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and composed of state secretaries from other ministries and the Office of the Prime Minister.
Roles of the mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the process. • Implement the NDP in the sectoral policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating body. • Critical reviewer. 		
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual progress reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes are to be seen in the future. 		

	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizontal implementation: the NSDS contains a 'road map' that indicates the institutions responsible for each measure. The NSDS also makes cross-references to other plans and action programmes which have to be reviewed following the new guidelines and objectives outlined in the NSDS. Since the coordinator for the NSDS⁴¹ is still not nominated by the government; the mechanisms have not been working well in their functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the recent restructuring of the Government (April 2007) the task of coordinating this process has been transferred from the Ministry of European Integration to the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Management (MMDD). The General Directorate for SD (GDSD) has been recently created with the responsibility to coordinate the activity of other ministries in relation to the revision of the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mechanisms are coordinated through the Government Council for Sustainable Development since the new statutory rights in 2004. The Council is supported from the Government office who asks for input of the ministries and prepares the results of the Council and its members in reports which are then delivered to the government. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current NSDS is valid until 2013⁴² and the inter-ministerial coordination is delegated to the new Government office for Climate Change. Currently there is a mixed concept of stakeholder concepts in these mechanisms (inter-ministerial coordination together stakeholder processes through the NCSD). There are some thoughts of restructuring the stakeholder processes; by separating the civil servants coordination from other stakeholders' consultation.
Leading institution/platform	Inter-ministerial network, which is also responsible for the EU 2020 process at the national level (Secretariat is located in the Ministry of Economy)	In 2006, the 'Inter-ministerial Commission for the elaboration of the SD Strategy' was established and involves representatives of all ministries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Council for Sustainable Development⁴³. Government Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GOCCH will take over the inter-ministerial coordination, which was a responsibility of the NCSD. The NCSD is undergoing a deep reform process, which is still not accomplished⁴⁴.
Roles of the mechanisms	<p>The horizontal mechanisms have the function of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>coordinating the implementation</i> of the NSDS in the public administration sectors, <i>reviewing the progress in the implementation</i> of the NSDS. 		<p>The Council has the function of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a <i>coordinating, advisory and initiating body</i> of the Slovak Government, <i>preparation/creation body</i> (i.e. action plans and various policy issues can be pre discussed before they are delivered to the government, <i>discussion platform</i>.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The roles the GCCHO in the horizontal mechanism are still unclear. There might be two processes of coordination; once for inter-ministerial civil servants and one process for other stakeholders through the NCSD.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, this network has provided a useful platform for horizontal coordination among the line ministries. There has been not a guiding role of the coordinator-new department within the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning- as there is still not an official nominated from the government for this task. This gap exists since one year. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice a year the council held's meetings with its members. Ministries or other bodies prepare on ad-hoc basis some up to date documents which are discussed in the meetings of the council. The council prepares recommendations on various SD policy issues to the government and to other stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inter-ministerial secretariat of the NCSD in the one and half years was weak and passive. Session and topics were not synchronically organized with the government agenda (not up-to date). Contribution of stakeholders (line ministries) was not of huge extent (lack of reimbursement and lack of time for preparation due to ad-hoc meetings).

⁴¹ The Department of the Perspectives and Planning in the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning has now the leading role of the coordinator in the NSDS process.

⁴² There will be two strategies in the future: the NSDS 2013-2020 and the Strategy for Mitigation of Climate Change 2011-2050, which will be horizontally coordinated. The relation of these two strategies is still unclear.

⁴³ The Council is supported by a Working Group for SD (members are from the academic community, NGOs and regional and local governments).

⁴⁴ These reforms comprise that the NCSD will be taken over from the Government Office of Climate Change (currently Government Office for Development) once the recruitment of new experts in the NCSD has been accomplished. Then there will be a concrete decision how the stakeholder processes will be separated from the civil servant inter-ministerial coordination process.

	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	Unite Kingdom
Horizontal Policy Coordination Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These mechanisms are coordinated through the ministry by the Inter-ministerial Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal mechanisms are currently coordinated through the Ministry of Environment. The revised NSDS was prepared by a special Coordination Unit for SD in cooperation with a cross-departmental working group. The horizontal mechanisms on NSDS, have also promoted the building of thematic working groups which apply inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The horizontal mechanisms are coordinated by the Inter-departmental SD Committee (ISDC). Other more 20 federal agencies are also involved in the ISDC. Its tasks are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to coordinate the confederation policy as it relates to SD and inter-departmentally SD activities; to foster the relationships within federal administration as with private sector and civil society to contribute to agenda setting for the implementation of Agenda 21; 	<p>Three mechanisms facilitate horizontal integration:</p> <p>(1) Cabinet Committee structure has been reformed ; the Subcommittee of SD has not been established yet; depending on the new governmental decision,</p> <p>(2) SD taskforces (comprising officials, ministers), established in 2002 have not been active through years; An inter-ministerial Program board was established instead,</p> <p>(3) Governments' ministries produced action plans until now, that identify some huge level contributions to delivering the NSDS.</p> <p><u>Recent development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There might be a reform of SD Taskforces in the future. A new Sub-committee will be then established and will have to manage how to make SD agenda more interesting across ministries. Sub-committee of SD at the ministerial level: program board at the official level. <p>(Secretariat is the SD Program Unit within DEFRA)</p>
Leading institution/platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inter-ministerial Group: The delegates in these group are representatives at the higher level of the ministries, under the coordination of the Economic Department of the Prime Minister Office <p>This Group has high level profile.</p>	Ministry of Environment.	The ISDC has no special competence. It does not replace the usual decision making/ interdepartmental coordination mechanisms, anchored in various legislations.	
Roles of the mechanisms	<p>The functions of the Inter-ministerial Group are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'watch dog' function, that the ministries implement the NSDS objectives in their sectoral policies; coordinate implementation. 	<p>Roles of the Ministry of Environment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinating the implementation of the NSDS within the government since 2007 promote further the development for the NSDS. 	<p>Roles of the horizontal mechanisms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They have a more preparatory policy making function, by exchanging, coordinating policy information or reconciling various interests in formulation of goals. They do not replace any usual decision-making mechanisms, but offer through the ICSD an opportunity to discuss beforehand various topics as issues. 	<p>The roles of these mechanisms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review delivery of the SD strategy; integrate NSDS in sectoral action plans.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were two meetings per year. The outcome is the implementation of the NSDS in sectoral policies. 	<p>A working group on green economy with participants from different ministries was established in 2010.</p> <p>This is led by the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications.</p>	<p>Outcomes:</p> <p>(1) Various strategies resulting from the coordination of federal administration and businesses (i.e. a new communication, or infrastructure strategy);</p> <p>(2) reports to international bodies such as the UN;</p> <p>(3) Strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Agenda 21.</p>	

2.3 Status quo in evaluation and review

NSDSs are not only strategic documents but also foster strategic processes. As NSDS processes need to adapt to new situations and challenges constantly, the evaluation of these policy processes and the achievement of the NSDS targets is important and has been introduced in almost all European countries.

The review processes of NSDSs can take three forms: internal reviews, external reviews and peer reviews. The findings of the review processes are employed for different purposes (in some cases as a response to reporting mechanisms on the NSDS' contribution to the implementation of the EU SDS⁴⁵ and in some other countries as a response to the national review procedures). Countries also experience different problems in this regard.

- *Internal review:* Internal reviews are conducted within the government ministries by the institution responsible for the review process. Usually, this depends on the country's institutional setting and on the particular institution charged with SD tasks. However, in the majority of the countries, review processes are undertaken by horizontal mechanisms and inter-ministerial bodies also responsible for the implementation of NSDSs. Four patterns are generally evident: (i) In some countries, the responsibility for the internal review sits at the government level (e.g. Malta, Spain, Austria, Estonia, Germany, Cyprus, and Slovakia). (ii) In most countries, inter-ministerial bodies along with individual ministries are responsible for the progress reporting to the government (e.g. Finland, France, Greece, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Ireland, Lithuania, Italy). (iii) While in most countries the NCSD is involved in this process, in some others the NCSDs are solely responsible (e.g. Czech Republic, United Kingdom⁴⁶). (iv) Some countries are also assisted from independent national statistical institutes (e.g. Austria, Germany, Latvia, Belgium and France). The internal review process can be classified according to timing or according to the underlying subject of review. In terms of timing, some countries have a bi-annual review process that culminates with the publication of a so called progress reports (i.e. Austria, Cyprus, Portugal, Luxembourg, Latvia, Lithuania). Some others have an annual reviews or annual progress reports (e.g. Belgium⁴⁷, Estonia, France, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom). The majority of them have a less tight schedule (e.g. Bulgaria, Czech Republic Denmark, Finland⁴⁸, Greece, Malta, Norway,

⁴⁵ All countries have developed reports on their NSDS contribution to the EU SDS implementation.

⁴⁶ The SD commission, which had since 2006 the function of an independent 'watchdog', will be dissolved by the end of March 2011.

⁴⁷ Belgium has prepared, additionally, to the annual reports, also bi-annual reports from the Taskforce on SD in the Federal Planning Bureau.

⁴⁸ Finland is working on the renewal of its strategy concept based on it's the assessment of its NSDS in 2009. Therefore, it has still not set its new review procedures. Before the 2009 Assessment of the NSDS, Finland had a bi-annual review process. Moreover, it is working on the development of various planning tools as the 'ex-ante assessment framework',

Ireland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden). Germany has a four-year review process cycle.

- *External review:* Not all countries contemplate the reliance on an external review. However, the underlying trend seems towards a more pronounced employment of this means. Two options are usually employed. Either the leading institutions for the review process commissions a private consultant (e.g. Switzerland, Finland) or the task is given to independent researchers (e.g. Austria)⁴⁹.
- *Peer Review:* Peer reviews have been conducted in four countries, in France (2005), Norway (2006), the Netherlands (2006) and Germany (2009). The idea behind the peer reviews of the NSDS within the EU is to identify and share good practices in a process of mutual learning. The peer review of an NSDS is voluntary and will be undertaken upon the initiative of the Member State concerned. The process should be a bottom-up exercise with participatory elements – involving stakeholders from all political levels – with no intention to ‘name and shame’. The peer reviews are intended to address all three SD pillars and the peer reviewed country is free to choose to undertake a review of the whole NSDS or focus on one or more specific issues.

Utilization of findings

Countries usually employ the findings of their reviews to improve the development of a renewed NSDS or implementation of their current NSDS. In some countries, the results are first discussed in inter-ministerial groups, then in the NCSD. In some countries, progress report drafts are also discussed in the parliament before being sent to the government for approval (e.g. Germany, Latvia). In the majority of countries, the review also led to a revision of the NSDS document and to its institutional anchoring (see above). However, in some countries, there has not been any follow-up, apparently due to a lack of policy coordination (e.g. Portugal, Spain, Greece)

Problems detected

The contribution of the reviews is particularly important because it reveals that countries seem to experience similar problems. Some lack vertical integration or political commitment (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia, Latvia, UK). In general, goals seem often to be too broad while the means not adequate or the implementation insufficient (e.g. Belgium, Finland, Germany, Slovakia, Spain, UK), no clear mandates are established, or

which should help sectoral policies in setting targets in line with the NSDS objectives. It is also preparing its new indicator set, which then should be linked

⁴⁹ Austria conducts also evaluation of NSDS's mechanisms of horizontal and vertical integration by the Austrian Audit Court of Auditors.

relevant stakeholders are not included (e.g. Austria, France). In some countries, horizontal coordination seems still to be a problem (e.g. Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Spain) while in others, there is a lack of ownership from the ministries for NSDS (e.g. Estonia).

Lessons learned

In NSDS review processes, one can witness a trend towards stronger integration of the lessons learned (on the basis of the review results) in the NSDS revision. Recently, many NSDSs were revised and included new measures for new challenges. A trend towards an increased vertical integration, or collaboration with stakeholders (e.g. Austria, Belgium, France, Germany)⁵⁰ is also evident. Additionally, countries have worked on the refinement of SD goals (e.g. time-scheduling in target setting) and consistency of review cycles as well as drafting of SD plans or progress reports (e.g. Luxembourg, Germany, Belgium). Further work is also done for a better integration of SD in sectoral planning (e.g. Switzerland, Finland, Germany).

Table 4: Evaluation and review processes

⁵⁰ Austria's Federal Strategy on SD adopted in 2010 and co-chaired by the Federal Chancellery, Germany (through closer cooperation in specific SD fields), Belgium (revision if the main SD act).

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Review form and undertaken review	<p>Review form: There are three forms of review-auditing: (1) Internal review: bi-annual progress reports of the work programs⁵¹. The last report was issued in 2006. (2) External review: in autumn 2005, an external evaluation was conducted by a group of independent researchers for the NSDS (2002). The next external evaluation will be conducted in 2011-2012 for the new Federal SDS (2010) (3) Evaluation of NSDS's mechanisms of horizontal and vertical integration are audited by the Austrian Audit Court of Auditors⁵²</p>	<p>Review form: There are two distinct provisions for internal review⁵³: (1) The report by the members of the Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD). ○ Information on the implementation of the measures through which the administrative unit they represent aims to contribute to the objectives of the Federal Plan (FP). ○ To be completed at least 18 months prior to the agreed completion date of the FP. (2) The Federal Report on Sustainable Development, drafted by the Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) of the Federal Planning Bureau (FPB). ○ Divided into two parts: a status and evaluation report and a foresight report looking at future developments. ○ The status and evaluation report needs to be published at least 15 months prior to the completion date of the FP.</p>	<p>Review form: There are several impact assessments and audits foreseen for environmental policy-making: environmental impact assessment (EIA), strategic EIA for plans and programs, environmental audits of enterprises and permits.</p>	<p>Review form: Internal review: Bi-annual report prepared from Inter-Governmental Committee •The process of the last review started in July 2009. •The 2009 NSDS Review was submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval September 1st 2010.</p>
Responsibility and utilization	<p>Responsibility: (1) Internal review: • Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management; • Federal Chancellery; • at the <i>Länder level</i>: the 'Experts conference of National and Regional SD Coordinators'; (2) External review: • independent research or independent consultant; (3) Review of vertical/horizontal coordination : • Austrian Court of Auditors reviews the coordination of the federal and the <i>Länder level</i>. Utilization The review findings are integrated the further development/implementation of the NSDS⁵⁴ A revision of the Federal SDS is planned on 2012.</p>	<p>Responsibility: • Interdepartmental Committee of SD members • Task force on SD of the FPB is responsible for drafting its status and evaluation report⁵⁵ Utilization: The timing of submission of both reports (18 and 15 months prior to the completion date of the FP) is specifically decided to support and allow the integration of lessons learned into the design of the subsequent FP. The reports drafted by the FPB are communicated to the federal minister in charge of SD, as well as to the ICSD, the Council of Ministers, the legislative chambers, the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD), the governments of the regional authorities as well as to all official international organizations which were established as a result of or were associated with the Rio Conference.</p>	<p>Responsibility: • The Supreme Expert Environmental Court (SEEC), (comprising representatives of ministries and stakeholders) takes decisions based on the various impact assessment reports. Utilization: Until the submission of the 2009 Review to the Council of Ministers, written comments, as well as oral ones especially during the public hearing, were taken into consideration in the final draft.</p>	<p>Responsibility: • Inter-Governmental Committee. Within the long-term review process a number of bodies were involved⁵⁶. Utilization: Until the submission of the 2009 Review to the Council of Ministers, written comments, as well as oral ones especially during the public hearing, were taken into consideration in the final draft.</p>

⁵¹ Work programs define specific measures and objectives that are to be implemented. They also refer to relevant sectoral and institutional competencies. Work programmes were published in 2003 and 2004. For the period 2009-2010 a Joint work program (specifying measures, objectives that are to be implemented at the various political levels) was adopted by the provincial head of governments: Work programs for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 will follow.

⁵² A general review report comprising the review or the integration of SD in federal provinces and at the national level will be published in October 2010.

⁵³ Thereby changing the existing system based on a) annual reports of the ICSD members with information on the measures implemented through which their administration contributed to the objectives of the FP; and b) bi-annual reports by the TFSD of the FPB (5th evaluation report issued in October 2009; see <http://sustdev.plan.be/>).

⁵⁴ The external review findings are expected to give recommendations on a revision of the Federal SDS by 2012.

⁵⁵ The report needs to be published at least 15 months prior to the end date of the Federal Plan

⁵⁶ Governmental Departments, Municipalities, Communities, NGO's, Academic Institutions, Organized Societal Groups, People from Political Parties, as well as independent active citizens.

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Key problems and lessons learnt	<p><u>Key Problems:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lacking vertical integration, • lack of political commitment and leverage, • indicators are communicated mostly at the expert and not at the political level. <p><u>Lessons learnt:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the lack of vertical integration is tackled through the development of the common federal strategy for the various political levels(adopted in 2010), • the new institutional anchoring could have a positive impact in increasing the political visibility of the NSDS mechanisms, • the indicators will be communicated and better integrated in political processes, for an increased usage in the policy recommendations, 	<p><u>Lessons learnt:</u></p> <p>The revised Federal Act on Sustainable Development takes into account lessons learned during previous reviews undertaken, as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes into account the changed international context related to SD, • promotes vertical integration by a stronger focus on cooperation among the various levels, • integrates the monitoring and reporting procedures as components of a coherent learning cycle, • reaffirms the Sustainability Impact Assessment procedure, • allows for increased flexibility in the development and implementation of future Federal Plans for SD, providing a new government with the possibility to change a plan during its life span. 		<p><u>Key Problems:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination (not all representatives were able to be present at all the meetings, causing delays in the whole process), • Dissemination of results (Although the Review Process was publicized as much as possible, and all comments were gladly accepted, more things could be done regarding publicity), • There was a bottom-up approach used during the formation of our NSDS as well as the 2009 Review. • However, it seems that the best approach should be the top-down(meaning that the decisions in the long-term framework of SD, should be taken on a high level (e.g. on a SD Council Level), and then be distributed to the respective Ministries/Departments for implementation purposes, • Through the 2009 Review process, the need for the formation of a SD Council was pointed out.

	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Review form and undertaken review	<p><u>Review form:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review, conducted with involvement of the various stakeholders. Progress reports were published in 2006, 2007 and 2009. Based on the 2009 review, a new strategic framework on SD was approved in 2010. 	<p><u>Review form:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review for the revised strategy has still to be conducted in the future. There is no clear governmental decision yet which clarifies the future review procedure. The former NSDS (2002) was monitored based on indicators and less on a comprehensive policy processes. 	<p><u>Review form:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal review: The Inter-ministerial working group, headed from the State Chancellery prepares annually internal Progress reports of NSDS. The fourth report has been published in 2009. 	<p><u>Review form:</u></p> <p>(1) Internal review: The government program on SD (1998) was evaluated in 2002-2003 internally through a sub-committee of the FNCSD. The report also served as a basis for a five year work plan of the FNCSD (2003-2007).</p> <p>(2) External review: In 2009, instead of an internal review, an external review was conducted from an independent consultant in collaboration with an ad-hoc steering group (Secretariat members of the FNCSD and Academia). Based on this assessment; a new strategy process will be launched in 2011-2012.</p>
Responsibilities and utilization	<p><u>Responsibility:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was undertaken from the Strategy Committee in the NCSD. This Committee has various working groups comprising stakeholders, within and outside the government. <p><u>Utilization:</u></p> <p>The result were then also discussed in the NCSD and presented to the government for implementation.</p>		<p><u>Responsibility:</u></p> <p>State Chancellery and Inter-ministerial working group.</p> <p><u>Utilization:</u></p> <p>The report findings are presented to the government.</p>	<p><u>Responsibility:</u></p> <p>FNCSD and its Secretariat (Ministry of Environment).</p> <p><u>Utilization:</u></p> <p>The latest evaluation findings (2009) are discussed in the FNCSD and then presented to the government for approval. The Network on SD Indicators is also based on the recommendation improving the list of SD indicators.</p>
Key problems and lessons learnt			<p><u>Key problems:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of ownership in the ministries for the NSDS: sectoral focus on the SD Broad concept of SD, makes it more difficult to have clear focus on government priorities <p><u>Lesson Learnt:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation and involvement of the line ministries in the NSDS process more actively Introduction of 'Focus Reports 'from the NCSD, in order to provide direction and frame the SD priorities. 	<p><u>Key problems</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of concreteness of targets NSDS does not provide any policy guidance in SD policy terms for the sectoral, Unawareness of the NSDS in the sectoral target setting(no action plan developed) Lack of commitment of senior managers Problem of the NSDS is linked with the problem of the broad SD concept. <p><u>Lesson learnt:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal of the NSDS concept Development of an ex-ante assessment framework Enhancement of the operational indicators

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Review form and undertaken review	<p>Form of review:</p> <p>(1) Internal review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual progress reports on the NSDS (2003-2008) . In 2006 the NSDS (2003) was brought in line with the EU SDS the last progress report was published in 2009, concluding the cycle of the NSDS 2003-2008. The next progress report on the NSDS 2010-2013 will be delivered in 2011 <p>(2) Peer review:</p> <p>In 2005 France was the first country that organized a peer review process to evaluate the implementation of the NSDS with the inclusion of four peer countries (Belgium, Ghana, Mauritius and the UK).</p>	<p>Form of review:</p> <p>(1) internal review: every four years; Progress reports have been compiled in 2004 and 2008⁵⁷</p> <p>(2) Peer Review: In 2009, the next one is considered to be initiated in three years</p>	<p>Form of review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revision process of the NSDS(2002) has been accomplished but the draft report is not adopted yet <u>Implementation report on EU SDS.</u> The first national report on implementing the EU SDS has been published in August 2007. 	<p>Form of review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU SDS implementation report together with the approval of the NSDS in 2007. The NCSD started its work by an overview of the adopted strategy. The Report "Search for the future" gives a critical overview of the situation of the country from SD point of view. It should be ready by 2011.
Responsibilities and utilization	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standing Committee of the High-Ranking Civil Servants for Sustainable Development coordinates the review process, Ministry for Ecology , Energy, Sustainable Development prepares the report, The Economic, Social and environmental Committee will also follow up the implementation of the NSDS. 	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee of State Secretary('Green Cabinet'), Federal government initiated the Peer Review, which was organised by the NCSD <p>Utilization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Peer Review report was published in 2009, It has been discussed in the Parliament Advisory Council on SD , which delivered also its recommendations to the government and in the Committee of State Secretary('Green Cabinet'), The NCSD refers in its debates to the results of this report. 	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change together with the other ministries have reported in this process. Also local authorities responded to this review process, though not very actively.</p>	<p>Responsibilities:</p> <p>NCSD</p> <p>Utilization:</p> <p>A short version of the Report was communicated to the Parliament. Based upon the findings, the draft of renewed NSDS should be ready by June 2011.</p>
Key problems and lessons learnt	<p>Problem:</p> <p>the NSDS2003-2008 process was an administration oriented process, not involving actively other stakeholders the strategy was not cross-cutting enough through its main topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> therefore, the new NSDS elaboration process involved a broader basis of stakeholders using various tools⁵⁸, also, it is being worked on an action plan for the NSDS, in order to reach not only the state agencies but also other stakeholders, the Strategy has been redefined from a more cross-cutting perspective including better the three dimensions of SD. 	<p>Peer review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong concentration of the current work on climate change issue; other topics should be also better integrated:(energy efficiency in building etc) There is a lack of implementation of SD: Germany has a great potential on SD know-how, which is not being implemented effectively; the "SD made in Germany" can offer competition advantages in new green markets(new technologies, products and services), which risk to be lost, Lack of a Vision in the goals and indicators <p>Lessons learnt⁵⁹</p>	<p>Main problem mentioned is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the used data for measuring progress was more qualitative rather than quantitative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> changing thinking and attitude (paradigm shift the whole institutional system -including educational system - needs radical change Greater freedom of decisions, opportunities and responsibility shall be provided to local decision make Rural economy shall protect our most important basis for existence r

⁵⁷ For the first time, the report explains the governmental organization in sustainability politics in detail and strengthens the management of sustainable development in German policy making.

⁵⁸ Roundtable of the "Grenelle de l'environnement" of environment issues, roundtable with NGOs, companies, trade unions, Sub-national authorities for SD issues; internet consultation open to every citizen (2500 people answered the internet consultation)

⁵⁹ The Parliament Advisory Council on SD is already holding meetings in the revision and amendment of the indicators set as well as on the integration of long-term vision of goals.

	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Review form and undertaken review	Review form: Internal review: annual assessment reports on the implementation of the NSDS based on ten priority indicators. Also the implementation report on EU SDS has been prepared in 2007	Review form: Internal review: •The review of the strategy, was published in 2002, which served as a work plan ⁶⁰ , •The revision of the 2002 report was finished in spring 2007, •There are no information more available if a new NSDS will be or was developed, based on the last review.	Review form: Internal review: •A new review procedure, based on the revised NSDS(2010): bi-annual Progress report starting form 2011, • the last review was conducted in 2007 for the EU SDS implementation report . All ministries were involved in the process.	Review form: Internal review: Implementation reports are to be submitted bi-annually to the NCSD by a task force established by the Ministry of Environment with the support from other ministries.
Responsibilities and utilization	Technical Board on SD of the CIPE	Responsibilities: •Parliamentary Sub-committee and the National Sustainable Development Council ("Comhar"), evaluated the implementation of the strategy in 2002 •The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the last review. Utilization: The progress report of 2007 is an internal report prepared by the Department of Environment investigations should be undertaken across departments and 'Comhar'(NCSD) will also have some input.	Responsibilities: •Ministry of Environment (EU SDS implementation report) In the future: •SD Institute will be responsible for preparation of the reports ⁶¹ , •Ministry of Regional Development: coordinator of the review process, •National Development Council (NDC) ⁶² : will evaluate and discuss the findings and pass them further to the parliament, •SD Commission (Parliament) will evaluate the process of SD ⁶³ and provide recommendations to the government.	Responsibilities: • Ministry of Environment; • National Commission for SD.
Key problems and lessons learnt		The outcome of the new review (2007) will inform the decision whether to develop a new NSDS or to update the current one.	Problems: •not clear procedural setting to the EU; •until 2007: SD concept was not taken seriously from sectoral ministries; therefore serious problems for reporting since the understanding of SD for each sector: weak. Solutions: •offer more incentives: introduction of SD assessment procedures(for clear and coherent targets with SD principle), •more awareness raising and education events for a better understanding of SD.	

⁶⁰ The 2002 report examines progress made in the ten years since the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

⁶¹ The SD Institute will be a non-governmental institution with high level scientists working on forecasting/ evaluation of SD and evaluation of governmental action decision

⁶² The NDC has various monitoring and steering functions. It monitors the function of state development system, shows coordination of development processes and has the power to reject and postpone policy development documents and development decision, if they seem not to be in line with the strategy principles. The NDC participants are high level public administrators (11 ministers), and high level public institutions and NGOs, as well heads of the regional planning and Latvian association of local and regional governments.

⁶³ The SD Commission will be set up by the end of 2010 in the Parliament. It will have two tasks. First, it will look through the SD monitoring report, I evaluate the process of SD and make recommendations on the amendment in the strategy. Secondly, it will provide recommendations to the government in case certain sectors would show not enough concern of sustainability

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Review form and undertaken review	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal review, The last review was undertaken in 2006, •Every two years, a national report on the implementation of the NSDS is published by the ICSD. 	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal Review: a review of the NDSS was prepared form the previous NCSD in 2009; •it was put in the agenda of government but due to time limits was still not adopted, •It will be put in the agenda again in 2010. 	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Progress reports on the NSDS are published annually and presented to parliament. •Peer review in 2006:Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated a peer review of the Dutch NSDS⁶⁴ 	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A Peer Review of the Norwegian NSDS was conducted by a group of Swedish experts in spring 2006. •The report was delivered in 2007. <p>In addition to examining earlier strategy documents, the review looked at Norwegian policies for SD in general, including institutional aspects.</p>
Responsibilities and utilization	Responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •ICSD (Secretariat is the Ministry of Environment), •NCSD also contributes to the finalization of the report. Utilization: The findings are communicated to the Parliament and to the public.	Responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Office of Prime Minister, •Ministry of SD. Utilization: The draft was communicated to the Cabinet to be approved, The work has not been accomplished yet.	Responsibility: Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Finance.	Responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ministry of Finance initiated the Peer Review, •The Peer review was conducted form Swedish experts. Utilization: The report has been supplemented with a foreword by the Minister of Finance and a short summary (pp 11-13) that describes how the recommendations from the review team is followed up in the new strategy. The foreword and summary thus give a brief overview of the main aspects of the new strategy.
Key problems and lessons learnt	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governance issues, the cooperation of the ministry of environment with other ministries during the NDP process was not done intensively, therefore the ministries lost interest in the NDP • the NDP was a in definition of key objectives and action measures. Lessons learnt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ICSD-set up in 2004-should improve the horizontal coordination and the acceptance of the NDP in the sectoral policies, • introduction of various time-horizons in the strategy, a better and clear division between long/term objectives and short-term action measures. 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current NSDS is not prioritising actions, • lack of integration of actions . Lessons learnt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more integrated design of actions, • through the New Unit in the Prime Minister Office: all policies will have SD principles integrated. 		

⁶⁴ Germany, Finland and South Africa were selected as peer countries

	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia
Review form and undertaken review	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal Review: since 2007 a bi-annual review process has been introduced, •Before 2007, annual progress reports were prepared. The last review was undertaken in 2009 and the new one is planned in 2011. 	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal review: In September 2006, the process for revising the current NSDS was launched⁶⁵, •The revised NSDS will cover the 2009-2013 period of other strategic documents. The subsequent revised strategies and action plans will have the same time tables as the EU programming periods. •No additional information is available if this review has already been accomplished or not. 	Review form: <p>There are two types of internal review:</p> <p>(1) Review of the implementation of the action plan for SD (2005) under the responsibility of the Government Office and the ministries. From 2005 on, there have been annually progress reports.</p> <p>(2) review of the implementations of various chapters of Agenda 21 at the national and local level under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment.</p>	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal review: NSDS is monitored in the form of a Development Report, prepared annually by the Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD); •The NCSD can influence by requesting IMAD to take in consideration certain topic; •The review is undertaken annually in the spring of every year.
Responsibilities and utilization	Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Follow-up and monitoring of NSDS implementation will be undertaken on a technical level by the inter-ministerial network, coordinated by the Ministry of Economy⁶⁶, •The Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning uses this platform for the coordination of the review process. Utilization: <p>Recommendations from the progress reports are not been taken into account, as there is a lack of policy coordination among the ministries in the NSDS process from the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning.</p>		Responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Government office and NCSD •Ministry of Environment Utilization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Government Office initiates the process and gathers information from the ministries, •the results are discussed in the NCSD Review findings are then presented to the ministries, which should work on further on the implementation of the action plan `objectives. 	Responsibility: <p>Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development (IMAD) (governmental institute).</p> <p>Government Office for Growth (in the future the reporting task on the progress might be transferred to the Government Office for Climate Change which will take a lot of coordinating functions in the NSDS process).</p> Utilization: <p>The findings of IMAD were adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia as a guideline for formulation of national economic and development policy.</p>
Key problems and lessons learnt	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bad management of the roles and responsibilities of the main actors⁶⁷, • lack of political importance, reflected in the downgrading the institutional profile (from the Prime Minister Office to the Ministry of Environment). Lessons learnt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lesson learnt are few, as the institutional downgrading in the main coordination role of the NSDS and the missing governmental decision for the appointment of a new coordinator in the NSDS demonstrate still a lack of political commitment. 		Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited budget; • lack of visibility and understanding of SD in the sectoral ministries • SD as a concept: too theoretical; not understood from the public • SD concept is too broad; the meaning of SD is reduced to the individual topic of interest (i.e. only economic or only social issues). Lessons learnt: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising, • continue the process of incorporation of SD action plans in the ministries, • continuous cooperation with various stakeholders(NGOs). 	no answer

⁶⁵ It is planned to complete the revision process by the end of 2008

⁶⁶ The same network is also responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the future EU 2020.

⁶⁷ NCSD and Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning; If these coordinating and awareness raising role were fulfilled better, an increased acceptance of the NSDS in the line ministries and in the public might be the result

	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Review form and undertaken review	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal Review: The Strategy has been reviewed and the draft of the Progress Report has been finalized in 2009. •the report is still not presented to the Council of Ministers for adoption. 	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •in March 2006 the government presented an elaboration of the 2004 NSDS. •In June 2007 Sweden published its first implementation report on EU SDS priorities, •the first revision of the 2002 NSDS took place in 2003-2004. The revised NSDS is not a review in the traditional sense, but more an update that prioritizes objectives 	Review form: <p>in the past:</p> <p>(1) Internal review: annual progress reports are prepared from the Federal Office for Spatial Development together with the ICSD. The latest one has been developed in June 2009;</p> <p>(2) External review carried out in 2005⁶⁸.</p> <p>In the future:</p> <p>Periodical external evaluation: the strategy will be evaluated externally, accordingly to the four-year-cycle of the government program in 2010 (The NDSs is a sub-strategy in the government programme since 2009).</p>	Review form: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Internal review: the last review was undertaken in 2009. •SD Programme Unit within DEFRA collects comment from the Programme Board Officials and assesses where the NSDS targets have been implemented according to the indicators or not.
Responsibilities and utilization	Responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Economic Department of the Prime Minister Office who works closely with the Inter-ministerial Group. 		Responsibility <p>(1)ICSD- Inter-departmental SD Committee, (2)the external review is carried out from an independent consultant.</p> <p>Utilization:</p> <p>(1) The ICSD makes the internal reports available to the Federal Council, Parliament and the Federal Administration.</p> <p>(2)The results of the external evaluation (2005-2006) were adopted by the ICSD in the recommendations for the renewal of the SD strategy (2007).</p>	Responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Defra⁶⁹, •Inter-ministerial Program Board, •SD Commission was also since 2006 responsible for the progress in implementation of the NSDS objectives. The SDC will not have this function anymore from End of March 2011. <p>Utilization: The result findings were communicated to ministers and discussed with regional and local They served as a basis of whether to develop a new strategy or not.</p>
Key problems and lessons learnt	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the NSDS must be up-dated, taking into account current economic and financial situation; • lack of integration of ministries; • short-medium term perspectives of the goal; • some indicators were inappropriate to measure certain targets. 	not specifically identified	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of political commitment; • NSDS as developed 15 years ago, has been overshadowed from other strategies, recently developed (i.e. green growth strategy). <p>Lessons learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The process of SD should integrate new challenges and topics. 	Problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targets were out of date, as for example on climate change where more ambitious goals are set then 5 years ago; • in some areas the commitment has been exceeded; • In general the NSDS has been sufficiently delivered. <p>Lessons learnt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some goals could be adopted to new ambitions (climate change).

⁶⁸ Switzerland developed a method to assess political projects from a sustainable development perspective: [Sustainability Assessment: Conceptual framework](#). In the course of this framework, sustainability assessment guidelines for federal agencies and other interested parties have been developed. These guidelines have been drawn up to help sustainability assessments to be carried out as efficiently as possible and in accordance with standard principles. They set out a procedure in nine steps and provide additional support in the form of a Sustainability Assessment Excel Tool that enables the relevance of an initiative to be reviewed from the sustainable development perspective and allows its impacts to be recorded in outline terms.

⁶⁹ DEFRA has the lead responsibility for monitoring, reporting and reviewing the process made towards the objectives set out in the NSDS

2.4 Status quo in monitoring and indicators

Monitoring is an observation activity, mostly based on a set of quantitative indicators. The higher and stronger the link between indicators and policy objectives in the NSDSs, the more measurable are the deliveries of the strategy. This section outlines shortly the status quo in development and revision of the set of indicators, and their utilization in the NSDS review process.

Set-up and revision of SD indicators

Most countries have developed a set of SD indicators⁷⁰ together with the development of their NSDSs. Four trends are evident in the development and revision of the SDI. A first group of countries will adopt soon a new set of indicators accordingly to the revision of their NSDS (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Luxembourg and Finland). A second group of countries has recently completed their revision (in 2010: Germany, Greece and Slovenia; in 2009: Belgium, Estonia; France, Latvia and Switzerland; in 2008: Denmark, UK; in 2007: Norway) and a third group comprises countries that have not revised their indicators yet (e.g. Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Spain, Sweden). Most countries, while revising their NSDS, also have begun up-dating their indicators to new key SD challenges and topics, by better integration of sub-national levels.⁷¹

Institutions

Few European countries possess completely independent bodies (i.e. non-governmental) that are responsible for the development and monitoring of SD indicators (one such case is Germany with its Federal Statistical Office). Most countries collaborate with their national statistical offices for obtaining data. Statistical units within ministries usually perform the development and monitoring task and publish monitoring reports (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland). Only a few countries such as Slovakia, Ireland, Bulgaria, Romania, Portugal and Cyprus have not yet established such mechanisms.

Monitoring process

The monitoring reports show the status and progress of SD within the country. The monitoring processes vary among countries, based on timing and on institutional capacities. Only a few countries have developed regular SDI monitoring cycles (bi-annually: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, UK, Czech Republic). There are also countries that update

⁷⁰ Some countries, such as Ireland and Slovakia, Netherlands still have no set of SD Indicators which is explicitly linked or used for the monitoring of trends in the NSDS objectives. The work on development of the set of indicator in Bulgaria, Romania and Portugal is still in progress.

⁷¹ Many countries have benefited from various works at the national or international level on revision of indicators (i.e. the beyond GDP indicator work done by Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission

the set of indicators continuously but have not regular reporting mechanisms (i.e. Luxembourg).

Utilization

SD indicators and their assessment are generally integrated in the progress reports. The SD indicator reports are also used for external evaluation or peer reviews. The trends on SD indicators are discussed in various platforms such as inter-ministerial bodies, at the various political levels, but also at the societal stakeholder level (in the NCSD).

Table 5: Monitoring and indicators

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was developed in 2006 The next indicator report will be adopted in 2011. The new indicator set will also comprise indicators at the regional level. The new indicator set will be developed at the national and sub-national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest set of 88 SD indicators, dated October 2009, includes 18 key indicators reflecting policy priorities. The revised SD Act stipulates that within the development of the long-term vision indicators will be established to assess whether the objectives are achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For monitoring the NSDS, a set of indicators is currently developed. It will be closely related to the set developed by Eurostat, with additional indicators reflecting specific national issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cyprus reviewed the existing set of indicators. Efforts are currently being made in order to minimize their total number, as well as to include some compound SD Indicators.
Responsible Institutions for development of indicators and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Ministry of Environment⁷². Various statistical centres⁷³. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the indicator: Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) of the Federal Planning Bureau (FPB) as part of the Federal Reports on Sustainable Development. Monitoring: the Taskforce on SD and the ICSD 	Not specified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring: Governmental Department, in the Inter-Governmental Committee. There's no other formal monitoring/review mechanism formed.
Utilization of indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicator reports are published bi-annually. The last one have been published in 2007, 2009. The indicator reports are also made to the public available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators are included in the Federal Reports on Sustainable Development. They are taken into account in the drafting of the Federal Plans. The indicators are also available to the public through websites. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings are made to the public available, but not through a separate set of indicator. These trends are taken into consideration in the future planning of Action Plans for departments.
	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was developed in 2004. The new strategic framework(2010) identifies three sets of indicators at the national, regional and local level. An update of the indicators should follow, once the implementation document is finalized and adopted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denmark has developed an indicator set in 2002 which has been updated continuously, in more or less annual basis. The last monitoring report was published in 2008. Based on the new revised National Plan for SD, a new set of indicators will be introduced . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators has been revised in 2009 as the indicator topics have been adjusted to relevant SD topics in Estonia. The trends on indicators are included in the progress reports. The indicator reports are prepared from the National Statistical Office bi -annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recent established Finnish Network on SD indicators is working on improvement of how to develop SD indicators. The work on the new SD indicators has started. The decision on a new strategy concept is still to be taken⁷⁴.
Institutions for monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working Group on indicators in the NCSD (academia, NGO, Business, administration)⁷⁵. 	Danish Environmental Protection Agency and the various ministries reported also on the indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring: State Chancellery together Independent National Statistical Office. Development: National Statistical Office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finnish Network on SD Indicators (ministries as academia, and statistical office).
Utilization of indicators	The indicators of the WG are reported bi-annually in indicators reports and utilized in the progress reports for monitoring of the achieved goals in the NSDS.	The indicators were then built in the annual monitoring reports, used also as the evaluation reports.	Indicators findings together with the Progress reports are presented to the government. New instrument as the 'Dashboard of Sustainability' ⁷⁶ has increased their usage by the public, academia, policy makers.	So far the indicators were included in the progress reports and discussed in the FNCSD. It served for monitoring the policy objectives of the NSDS (2006). The set of indicators has been up-dated continuously.

⁷² The Ministry for Environment is responsible for the policy coordination of the indicator reports

⁷³ The Statistical centers within and outside the government are responsible for the development and preparation of the indicator reports

⁷⁴ The indicators development process and the target setting process in the future will be linked in an ex-ante assessment framework

⁷⁵ The meetings of the WG on indicators overlap with the meetings of the Committee on SD

⁷⁶ This instrument provides a good overview of SD indicator performance through EU countries

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NSDS 2003-2008 indicators were defined in the framework of the (EUSDS)⁷⁷. For the new NSDS 2010-2013, the list of indicators has been completed and improved. Indicators are linked to the Strategy's key challenges⁷⁸ and to a quantifiable target written in the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring reports are prepared every two years independently by the Federal Statistical Office to assess the development on the basis of SD indicators. The newest indicator report has been published in July 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last set of indicators was developed and established in 2010. There is no clear mechanism, which links currently the progress report with the update of indicator set. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of sustainability indicators has been elaborated by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2008.
Responsible Institutions for development of indicators and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The calculation and the update of those indicators are coordinated by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> INSEE⁷⁹, Statistics and Observatory Division (Ministry for SD), other ministerial statistics divisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal Statistical Office. These results are discussed in an inter-ministerial working group, where further amendments can be proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Centre for the Environment and SD National Statistics Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Council for SD National Statistical Office
Utilization and communication of the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SD indicators are utilized in the progress report. The Indicators leaf let is also prepared and published in the website of the Ministry for SD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Monitoring report is part and subject to the progress reports (every four years). The indicator report is also presented every two years in the inter-ministerial WG,⁸⁰ which discusses and includes amendments to the set indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new indicator set was developed after the EU SDS Implementation Report (2007) has been adopted: it is not integrated in the old report (2007). The indicators will be utilized from the government and administrative departments to keep on track. 	
	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last set of indicators was developed in 2002. The National Statistic Institute (ISTAT) will implement a national data base of indicators, in the form of time series, for the analysis of phenomena considered to be relevant for SD goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NSDS does not specify an indicator set for monitoring the NSDS goals. Since 2003, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) annually publishes the indicator report 'Measuring Ireland's Progress' (most recent one published in 2009). Another report, 'Counting What Counts', published in 2007, reviews and makes recommendations on Ireland's SDI including selection criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was revised together with the strategy in 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was developed with the strategy in 2003. The set seems not to be revised since its establishment. No information is available how the indicators are used and which are the follow-up.
Responsible Institutions for monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistic Institute. The Technical Board of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Economic Planning's (CIPE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not a specific institute specifically responsible for the development and monitoring of indicators which are explicitly linked to the NSDS⁸¹. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Centre of Statistical Office for the preparation and development of indicators. Ministry of Regional Development will be responsible for the monitoring process. 	
Utilization and communication of the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicators are integrated in the annual assessment reports. They are made available to the public. 		<p>The SD indicators will be used for the overall assessment of SD in Latvia. The SD indicators will be included in the general Progress Reports.</p>	

⁷⁷ The "Grenelle of Environnement" Roundtable and the NSDS revision needed them to be updated

⁷⁸ The consultation concerning the sustainable development indicators benefited from several thought works carried out in 2009 by various organisations, in particular from those from the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission. It also goes hand in hand with the works undertaken in France to meet the needs for territorial indicators and provide those that can already be available and relevant from now on.

⁷⁹ National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies

⁸⁰ The indicator report is though still prepared from a non governmental institution, and applies objective methods for calculation of trends in the achievement of targets. The 2008 indicators report included for the first time, additionally to the detailed description of indicators and their trend, a brief statistical evaluation with regard to distance to target. This evaluation is graphically characterised by weather symbols, e.g. "sunny" or "cloudy" in line with the Eurostat-Indicator-symbols

⁸¹ However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) protects the environment through its licensing, enforcement and monitoring activities.

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of indicators was developed in 2002 and presented in an indicator report. They have been up-dated in 2006 and published in an indicator report. For the new National SD Plan, a new set of indicators is being developed (cooperation with Eurostat). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was adopted together with the NSDS in 2007 and was not renewed since then. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Netherlands do not yet have a fixed set of SD indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of national indicators has been update for the new NSDS 2007. Some changes have been made to some of the other indicators to make them more politically relevant.
Responsible Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment sub-units. National Statistical Centre of Luxembourg A sub-group in the Inter-departmental Commission works on the development and monitoring of indicators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistics Office prepares the indicators. Ministry of SD interprets the indicators into Progress reports. 		No information available
Utilization and communication of the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicators are integrated in the progress reports. They are made available to the public and presented to the Parliament. 	No information available		No information available
	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since two years it is being worked on the development of SD indicators which should be linked with the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Romanian NSDS(1998) was mainly aimed to introduce SD rather than specifying detailed objectives, actions and indicators. Today, the set of SDIs is still valid, but work to expand the current set of indicators is ongoing. The aim is to bring the SD indicators in line with the indicators developed by Eurostat. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is not one set which properly used in measuring progress in action plan. The data used currently derive mostly from Eurostat. A renewal of the action plan as the development of the set of indicators is planned for 2010⁸². 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of SD indicators for Slovenia was developed in May 2010. The method for the calculation of the set of indicators was to better link the indicators with specific measures. The SD indicators will be linked to the future "Development Reports" on the NSDS.
Responsible Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistical Centre provides the data for the indicators. Monitoring: Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistical Office (a central state administration body) will prepare the data set for the indicators in the future (still in the process). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Statistical Office. Government Office for Climate Change(there will be a new dialogue framework in the future).
Utilization and communication of the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the SD indicators are also being integrated in the progress reports. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicators used were form various datasets (UN, Eurostat etc). They were integrated in the annual progress reports. In the future the target setting and indicator development will be better linked, in order to increase their usage from the ministries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SD indicators were incorporated in the drafts of the new strategy for 'Mitigation for Climate Change'. For the first time, during the budget reform, the specific budget measures were linked to SD indicators (inter-ministerial). The 'SD Indicators Brochure' is made to the pubic also available.

⁸² The challenge is to develop a set of indicators which is more effectively linked to the action plan targets.

	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Set of indicators and linkages to the monitoring process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicator was developed in 2007 and was not revised since then. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators has been revised with the NSDS in 2006. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The latest set of indicators ahs been developed in June 2009, based on the lesson learnt form the old MONET indicator system (2003)⁸³. The Monet measurement system facilitates regular reporting on the status and progress of SD and has a monitoring function. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicators set, developed in 2005, together with the NSDS, were revised in 2008. The progress against these indicators is monitored annually since 2005. The recent indicator report was published in 2010. In the future these indicators might be revised and adapted to new international work on improvement of wellbeing indicators/ beyond GDP indicators of the Stiglitz Commission.
Responsible Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Spanish Observatory for SD; Inter-ministerial Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The set of indicators was developed by the Statistics Sweden A working group was charged with facilitating cooperation at the political levels: national, regional, local. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO). Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE). Federal Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Office of Statistics (NOS). Statistical Unit of Defra produces annually the reports with data from the NOS.
Utilization and communication of the findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SD indicators were used during the review process of the Progress Report 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the indicators were developed with a broad involvement of the local levels, higher usage of these should be the result. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators are integrated in the internal evaluation reports and serve as a basis for the external evaluation. The findings are made available to the public through publication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The indicators were always used for the review of policy processes, when reporting to the EU in 2007 and in the internal review in 2009 and they are made to the pubic available.

⁸³ The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO), the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) and the Federal Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) joined forces to create the MONET measurement system. With over 100 indicators, this monitoring tool facilitates regular reporting on the status and progress of SD throughout Switzerland.

2.5 Status quo in participation and consultation processes in NSDSs

All countries, when developing their current NSDSs, have brought in contributions from across government ministries and involved stakeholders from various sectors as well as a broad range of interest groups.

Governments are making substantial efforts in broadening the involvement of stakeholders group in order to strengthen the ownership of the NSDSs.⁸⁴ Additionally, new mechanisms and tools are developed to better engage societal stakeholders in policy-making processes (e.g. Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Austria). In many countries, NCSDs are under revision: the purpose is to make them more independent and less influenced by governments (e.g. Estonia). Some countries are also contemplating the opportunity to separate societal stakeholders' processes from civil servants' coordination (e.g. Slovakia and Slovenia).

As for the institutionalization of the participation processes, one can observe three different trends: (1) countries that have developed a NCSD, (2) countries that use other platforms, and (3) countries that are still developing some mechanisms.

- *NCSD as the main platform for participation processes*⁸⁵: As can be seen in Table 6, 15 countries out of 29 have institutionalized the participation process through an NCSD. This, in turn, permits the involvement of stakeholders in the policy making processes. In some cases, NCSDs are chaired by the Ministry of Environment (e.g. Finland) or the Government Office (e.g. Slovenia, Czech Republic)
- *Other platforms of participation processes*: Countries that do not have an NCSD are using other platforms, such as ‘SD Dialogues’ (e.g. Switzerland) or inter-ministerial strategy working group (e.g. Austria⁸⁶).
- *Platform for participation process are still in development*⁸⁷: Several countries (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Lithuania, Spain, Denmark⁸⁸) have not yet established permanent platforms for participation of stakeholders. All of them, however, are working on the improvement and establishment of consultation mechanisms with societal stakeholders.

The consultation and participatory mechanisms (through councils or other bodies), of the first and second group display common functions:

- 1) *Discussion forum*: the mechanisms facilitate broad debate among the participants

⁸⁴ The participants in these consultation across countries cover main stakeholders as representatives from Academia, NGOs, Business and civil society, and civil servant or politicians

⁸⁵ The government in United Kingdom will withdraw the funding from the SD Commission from end of March 2011

⁸⁶ This strategy group, established in 2002, has been working on the elaboration of ‘standard of public participation’ in 2008. These standards should be applied by the administration when developing programs and policies.

⁸⁷ Denmark and Lithuania have dissolved their NCSD.

- 2) *Outreach and reporting mechanisms*: the thematic seminars/workshops serve awareness raising and education activities
- 3) *Policy preparation, coordination and integration mechanism*: regular meetings are held where various topics are discussed (information distributed in the ministries) or recommendations presented to the government.
- 4) *Critical reviewer*: the mechanisms are also used for the discussion of monitoring reports and drafts of progress reports with other stakeholders
- 5) *Consensus finding and political guidance*: various policy issues are discussed in regularly meetings are held and develops various reports on crucial SD topics and presents them to the government.

Outcomes

The outcomes of these participation mechanisms vary substantially across the countries. However, the majority of interviewees agreed that consultation with stakeholders were useful during the review or revision processes of the NSDSs and that the results have provided direction in the further implementation of the NSDSs. Finally, civil society was more responsive in countries where NCSDs were very active⁸⁹. Therefore, these mechanisms play an important role in making the society aware of crucial SD issues.

Table 6: Participation and consultation processes in NSDSs

⁸⁹ One of the best practices in Europe is the Finish National Council on SD, that has a high- political profile and in its 17 years of work has managed to establish participatory mechanisms , by creating ownership in various societal groups in the field of SD, that cannot be abolished (see Table 6).

	Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Participation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are various participations tools and mechanisms which have been successfully implemented Strategy group(2002)⁹⁰ is still in place and interlinks the actors working in this field in Austria "Standards of public participation"(2008)⁹¹. These standards should be applied by the administration when developing programmes and policies. 	<p>The revised Federal Act on Sustainable Development describes the following consultation provisions linked to the preparation of the new FP⁹².</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) is responsible for preparing a preliminary draft of the SD plan, which is then subjected to a legally mandatory consultation of the population. During the 60 days consultation, the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD) has to formulate its opinion on the preliminary draft. The scope and method for consulting the population is decided by the Minister on the basis of a proposal by the ICSD. The ICSD then has 60 days to examine the FCSD opinion and the feedback from the consultation and to prepare a draft of the new plan. The draft plan is submitted then to the government, which has to state the reasons for deviating from the FCSD's unanimous opinions. 	<p>A broad consultation (September 2007 – September 2008) – including public authorities, stakeholders, academia, NGOs, etc – a decision for further analysis and improvements in the draft text was taken before the NSDS was submitted for adoption.</p>	<p>More stakeholders have been added in the mechanism.</p>
Responsible Institution and participants	<p>Institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inter-ministerial working group worked on the "standards of public participation", included several stakeholders (social partners and NGOs) and expert The strategy group comprises 20 persons from administration, academia, consulting, NGOs, etc. 	<p>Institution: The FCSD plays a central role, as it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> expresses opinions on measures related to the federal and European sustainable development policy implemented by the federal government; provides a forum for exchange of views; proposes scientific research and stimulates the active participation of public and private sector organizations as well as the wider public; performs these missions at the request of the federal ministers and the legislative chambers or on its own initiative. <p>Members: civil society representatives, including actors from the economic sector, environmental protection organizations and development cooperation organizations. Representatives of each government member and representatives of each of the regional authorities have a consultative status⁹³.</p>	<p>Institution: Inter-Departmental Advisory Council for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>Participants: This Council is chaired by the Minister of Economy and Energy. The members of the Council are vice-ministers and directors of specialized administrations whose activities are related to SD.</p>	<p>Participants: General public, local Communities, Municipalities, Private Profit Organizations, NGOs, Academia, Political Parties, as well as Representatives of the Parliament.</p>
Response and outcomes	<p>The outcomes of these standards and the work of the strategy groups aimed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to create a participative decision preparation; to increase the visibility of interests through these participation events; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a wide response from experts and the civil society in the preparation of the Federal Plans in 2000, 2004 and 2008. There is a large body of opinions issued by the FCSD on the federal policy for sustainable 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcomes of these participation processes were very useful for the finalization of the 2009 Review (as answered in previous question). NSDS document was improved with the public

⁹⁰ At the end of 2002, a strategy group was established to define participation in relation to SD and to interlink the actors working in this field in Austria.

⁹¹ In July 2008, the Council of Ministers approved the new standards of public participation

⁹² This alters the existing procedure to date, under which a legally mandatory general consultation of three months on the preliminary draft of the plan is organized. In these 90 days the consultation process is launched in parallel with a formal opinion of the FCSD. Comments are included by the ICSD in a draft plan, submitted then to the government. The government has to state the reasons for deviating from the FCSD opinion.

⁹³ Previous composition of the FCSD: representatives of the employers' federations, trade unions, energy suppliers, consumer protection organizations, environmental protection organizations, development cooperation organizations and scientific experts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to find consensus in various interests. The response of the public has been very wide and active 	development, whether at the request of federal ministers or on its own initiative (available on http://www.cfdd.be).		participation. Additionally, the stakeholders were satisfied that they were included in the process.
	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Finland
Participation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Government Council on SD is the main platform for public participation. In cooperation with the Committee on the SD Strategy, the Council facilitates public discussion by organizing public hearings, thematic workshops, national stakeholder forums, email-based discussions, information campaigns, etc. The platform used for the public participation is the SD forum⁹⁴. The Council has the main co-ordination role for developing the NSDS. It is also responsible for updating and monitoring processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad public consultation was undertaken when the NSDS draft was discussed in 2007. The participants were stakeholders from NGOs, academia, business and administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public participation mechanisms have changed substantially, due to the reform of the mandate and functions of the NCSD⁹⁵. The reformed NCSD will continue to hold regularly meetings on crucial SD topics and forwards the result of these participatory discussions to the government. it will also continue to organise various events as SD conferences (bi -annually) and ad-hoc events in crucial SD issues. In all these participation mechanisms the role of the NCSD is to increase ownership and serve as an information exchange platform for stakeholders. 	<p>The main forum is the FNCSD which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitates broad debate among the participants, organises thematic seminars, awareness raising and education activities, holds regular meetings where various topics are discussed (information distributed in the ministries) or recommendations presented to the government⁹⁶, installs evaluation sub-committees or outsources evaluation to external consultant which review government programme.
Responsible Institution and participants	<p>Institution:</p> <p>Governmental Council for SD consists of representatives from governmental institutions, local authorities as well as of all major groups of society and is chaired by the Prime Minister.</p>	<p>Institution:</p> <p>The NCSD was dissolved in 2002.</p>	<p>Institution:</p> <p>NCSD is since February 2009 an independent body, comprising major stakeholders as NGOs, businesses, academia, various unions (trade, labour) and excluding governmental members.</p>	<p>Institution:</p> <p>FNCSD Members are all possible stakeholders from academia, business, NGOs governmental officials.</p>
Response and outcomes	<p>The outcome s have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a strong connection of government council and its bodies and the regional authorities, development of various managerial tools: communication strategy and the new communication action plan (adopted in September 2010), regularly information to the sub-national levels. 	<p>The comments were included in the draft of the NSDS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response has been very wide and the public has been very active in participating in these events. The outcomes of various meetings have been the Focus reports (twice per year). These reports are policy driven and are presented to the government for implementation and also made available to the public⁹⁷. The added value remains though in the participation process rather than the output. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a wide response from the stakeholders. FNCSD is considered as a politically high-level body taking care of SD. It has been functioning for 17 years and has created participatory mechanisms that are very hard to eliminate. It continues influencing the activities in the ministries and the whole society (through its regular meetings, conferences and seminars⁹⁸).

⁹⁴ The SD Forum is a plenary for an annual dialogue with the public on various topics: 'Sustainable Transport' (in 2007), 'Sustainable Energy' in 2008-2009, Public Health in 2010; Sustainable Consumption and Production in 2011.

⁹⁵ The NCSD comprises no longer representatives of governmental authorities or civil servants. It is a fully independent organisation from the

⁹⁶ Meetings are held regularly four times a year (i.e. green economy, local and regional SD: best practices, on SCP). Ministry of environment sets the agenda for the FNCSD and prepares the questions for the public discussion. Based on the comments a report is prepared and also key messages as recommendations are provided to the government and to the relevant ministries

⁹⁷ The NCSD prepares twice per year 'Focus reports' on crucial SD issues, where special inter-ministerial efforts are required (i. Sustainable Consumption). These 'Focus reports' have a long preparation phase, where comments/recommendations of various stakeholders are integrated.

⁹⁸ Example: discussing on how to take part on Rio+20 processes and on what kind of mechanisms are needed to have more broad participation for the Rio+20. Seminars and workshop with lectures and conferences are held on these topics.

	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary
Participation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCSD, set up in 2003, has been restructured in 2009 as a result of the 'grenelle de l'environnement' (2007-2008) follow-up.⁹⁹ A second process broadened the consultation on SD issues in 2008-2009. These result were subject to an internet-based consultation with civil society (open to every citizens) and with the Economic, Social and Environmental Committee¹⁰⁰ The new NCSD aims to provide advice and submit proposals in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of SD policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are always wide participation and consultation processes linked to the NSDS process¹⁰¹ cycles organised from the German Government Various ministries as well as the Federal Chancellery invites selected stakeholders from alliances, association or civil society, to discuss draft progress reports in various events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the government offers a new tool for public consultation, which is internet based¹⁰² The Participation arrangements in the NSDS process are more ad-hoc based, through the National Council for Physical Planning and SD the thematic sessions do not always show a direct strong link to the NSDS process, but deal with sectoral topics under the SD umbrella 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is organized by NCSD, through its members representing major stakeholders, using Internet and e-mails.
Responsible Institution and participants	<p>Institution: National Committee for Sustainable Development and the 'Grenelle Environnement' (CNDDGE) was set up in 2010¹⁰³</p> <p>Participants: The CNDDGE bring together actors from civil society¹⁰⁴ and territorial authorities</p>	<p>Institution: German Council for SD</p> <p>Participants: various social groups as well as of science and research.</p>	<p>Institution: National Council for Physical Planning and SD with members coming from the Ministry of Environment</p> <p>Participants: members coming from the Ministry of Environment, local authorities, employers' and trade unions, research institutes and NGOs</p>	<p>Institution: National Council for SD</p>
Response and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was a broad response from stakeholders in the elaboration of the new NSDS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their comments have been integrated in the NSDS The new NSDS is much strategic and has a more clear focus, than the former NSDS, in order to reach more stakeholders than the former NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was always a wide response to the participation events and consultation mechanisms. the specific comments/opinions and recommended issues in the consultation processes will be then integrated in the Progress report in 2012 Specific participatory consultation processes used from the Ministry of Environment¹⁰⁵ will be also applied in future for the overarching consultation process of the NSDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different stakeholders were invited in two public consultation phases during the drafting of the NSDS the council has informed the review process, with stakeholders comments it has informed the government policies, and contributed to amendments 	<p>It is ongoing process at the moment.</p>

⁹⁹ The '[Grenelle de l'Environnement](#)', which started during the summer of 2007, was an unprecedented multi-stakeholder consultation process in preparation of the new NSDS. It brought together all the stakeholders dealing with SD issues on a daily basis (central government, local authorities, NGOs, businesses, unions, etc.) throughout a five-fold democratic process: (1) Action propositions: Six working parties prepared the negotiations; (2) Public debate: meetings in French provinces, internet, consultation with scientific and institutional bodies, consultation with the Parliament; (3) Decisions and guidelines: Four roundtable discussions led to the adoption of 268 commitments in all sectors; (4) Operational phase: 34 operational working parties prepared implementation propositions; and (5) Legislative phase: Two bills have been voted by the Parliament.

¹⁰⁰ Economic and Social Council (CES) becomes the Environmental, Social and Economic Council (CESE), now integrating a college of environmental actors.

¹⁰¹ Wide participation processes were held during the development of the NSDS in 2002, formulation of the progress reports in 2008.

¹⁰² All planned legislation on SD are made available before their adoption to public discussion, www.opngov.gr.

¹⁰³ The follow-up committee of the former NCSD

¹⁰⁴ NGOs, employers' associations, enterprises, labour unions, the media and scientist

¹⁰⁵ The Ministry of Environment organizes consultation processes in the framework of the preparation of its progress report in the environmental policy fields. The consultation process included two phases: In the first Phase various topics were discussed in an [online forum](#), where participants had to raise important political questions in the environmental field and discuss them in this forum. In the second phase, three dialogues of civil society were organised in various topics (i.e. agriculture, biodiversity and land usage), where participants of the civil society were invited to further contribute with their comments in these discussions.

	Italy	Ireland	Latvia	Lithuania
Participation mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant stakeholders were involved in the development of the revised NSDS. The public consultation involved 140 bodies/organizations in the course of 14 official meetings and through the use of a specific telematics forum accessible from the web site of the Ministry of the Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A National Sustainable Development Council (Comhar), was established as a forum for consultation and dialogue on issues related to SD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the preparation of the NSDS: there was a wide public involvement process organised many regional forums: discussion on scenarios and strategic choices national forum (1000 people, 6 discussions national and regional forums), where specific priorities of SD were discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCSD does not operate anymore and no other commission/council has been established so far No other information regarding the participation arrangements is currently available.
Responsible Institution and participants	<u>Institution:</u> Ministries, environmental NGOs, trade unions, enterprises, local and regional authorities,	<u>Institution:</u> Comhar' is made up of representatives coming from the state sector, economic sector, environmental NGOs, social, community NGOs, and the professional and academic sector	<u>Institution:</u> NCSD was dissolved in 2010. A new body such as the NDC has been created which has become more high level public participation forum ¹⁰⁶	
Response and outcomes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually, Comhar' publishes annual reports giving details of work carried out during the reporting period Comhar carried out stakeholder consultations during the review of the NSDS, which will be then integrated in NSDS review Three regional seminars on SD issues (Dublin, Cork and Sligo) were held in mid-2007 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the consultations process led to improvement of the final draft of the strategy General information on the strategy, its events and the activities, are presented in a Webpage NSDS has been awarded for its success in vitalizing enhanced democratic participation in governmental planning. 	

¹⁰⁶ There have been some changes in the composition of participants (not only civil servants, but also the Latvian association of local and regional governments, as their regional planning institutions participate now) and it has changed the profile to more high level (11 ministers) and included also more higher level participant from public institution (such as academy of science), NGOs, Social partners, confederation of employers and employees, NOGs etc.

	Luxembourg	Malta	Netherlands	Norway
Participation mechanisms and outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation arrangements consist of roundtable meetings; NCS D plays an important role in this process The NCS D carries out following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting as discussion forum on SD issues; Proposing research and studies on SD topics; Establishing relationships with similar committees in the EU Member States Promoting the largest possible participation of public and private organizations and the participation of citizens Expressing views on any measures relating to SD national policy taken or planned by the government. 	<p>The NCS D was not very effective as a plenary discussion forum; therefore it will be restructured.</p> <p>The new unit for SD in the office of prime minister who will be responsible for the whole coordination process of the NSDS will take over also the responsibility of contacting public participants and integrating them in the.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no official National Council on Sustainable Development. The reason for this is that the Netherlands were already applying policy planning procedures involving various governmental and non-governmental actors and agencies long before the NSDS process. At the national level, several existing councils advise the Government on issues related to SD 	<p>The Government is pursuing a policy to encourage industry, NGOs, the public administration, schools, educational institutions and individuals to participate pro-actively in the effort to ensure sustainable development.</p>
Responsible Institution and participants	<p>Institution:</p> <p>NCS D acts as a consultancy and discussion body, with representatives from NGOs, trade unions, chambers of commerce and business association.</p>	<p>Institution:</p> <p><u>In the past:</u> the NCS D was the main institution responsible for the consultation processes with various stakeholders.</p> <p><u>In the future:</u> the functions will be delegated to the Unit for SD in the Office of Prime Minister.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The “VROM-Raad” (Netherlands Council of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment) is a multi-stakeholder advisory council, charged with advising Government and Parliament in SD policies RMNO, the independent and multi-stakeholder Dutch Advisory Council for Research on Spatial Planning, Nature and the Environment, has taken an active role in SD¹⁰⁷ 	<p>There is no NCS D still in Norway. The establishment of such an institution has been recommended in the peer review.</p>
Response and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participants of civil society remain more or less the same. The response of civil society on the last consultation for the draft of the revised NDP was not very broad. Generally the civil society has problems in understanding the concept of SD. The outcomes of the various meetings have contributed to the collection of views of various stakeholders and amendments of policy directions in SD. 	<p>In the past:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the meeting and seminars the NSDC tried to integrate the public, basically the feedback was incorporated in the NSDS and decision making. <p>In the future:</p> <p>The SD Unit in the Prime Minister Office will conduct enhanced public participatory policy making.</p>		

¹⁰⁷ RMNO looks at the knowledge component of policy development, e.g. promoting the use of scientific insights in new policy and channelling the right questions from policy makers to researchers.

	Portugal	Romania	Slovakia	Slovenia
Participation mechanisms and outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main platform for consultation is provided through the NCSD. The NCSD is an advisory body to the Government and Parliament on all SD issues and should act towards consensus-building among the members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public participation arrangements are taking place with the development of LA 21 initiatives. The NSDS points out that in order to implement the objectives initiated by the Government in the "Agenda 21", the involvement of all social groups is necessary. Women, young people and NGOs are specifically mentioned in a sub-chapter and their contribution to SD is highlighted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The participation events are mostly on an ad-hoc basis. NCSD is the main platform for the consultation processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NCSD, as the main platform for public consultation in SD policies is undergoing various reforms¹⁰⁸. Currently there are mixed concept of stakeholder processes (state administration together with representatives of business, NGOs, civil society etc. These processes should be divided in the future. As the NCSD reform has not been accomplished yet, little can be said on the future of these arrangements now.
Responsible Institution and participants	Institution: The NCSD has members from administration, industry, trade unions, NGOs, local communities.		Institution: The NCSD is responsible for the participation arrangements. The Council is supported by a Working Group for SD, which members are academic community, NGO's , regional and local governments.	Institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the future: NCSD roles will change, but nothing clear can be said now. Once the NCSD set up is accomplished, the new established Government Office for Climate Change will take over the NCSD.
Response and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to lack of resources and lack of awareness raising and communication tools, the outreach function of the NCSD has been very low. The response to the events of the NCSD has been very weak. Lately, only some NGOs participated in the events. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main response comes from the NGOs, and less from the public and civil society. Civil society has not a proper understanding of SD and is active and concerned more for concrete environmental or social issues. The ministries are also reluctant for more cooperation with the NGOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public participation events have not been organised often from the NCSD in the one and half years, therefore the response has not been wide. The outcomes of the NCSD consultation process were in the last years generally depending on the commitment of the NCSD' chairman. A concrete outcome was the SD indicators skim¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ There should be an open call for the recruitment of NCSD experts, where stakeholders should promote candidate to the governmental office, since last year. But the set up of the NCSD has not been accomplished yet. Moreover, the Government Office for Climate Change should take over the NCSD. The aim is to strengthen the stakeholder dialogue and also give more power to the NCSD. In order to have an increased contribution of the line ministries, there should be two separate processes: one for civil servants (which work closely together and on a daily basis.) and one for the other stakeholder as businesses, NGOs etc.

¹⁰⁹ A couple of workshops were organised with NSCD former members and stakeholders coordinated by the statistical office

	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
Participation mechanisms and outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The only participation arrangement was during the preparation of the NSDS in 2007 through the 'Conference on Sustainable Development' that was convened within the CAMA (Environmental Advisory Council). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In March 2007, the Swedish Government has set up an advisory Commission on SD which replaced the Swedish Council for SD. The Commission on SD is a forum for discussion, analysis and dialogue and should, therefore, stimulate broader discussion in the society on SD. It aims to analyse SD issues and develop cross-sectoral action strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is still no NCSD in Switzerland. since 2008, 'SD Dialogue' is in place, where depending on which process phase the strategy is, SD crucial topics¹¹⁰ are discussed. The first SD Dialogue was held in the light of the economic crisis, dealing with the topic on economic and fiscal stimulation. the recent one, has proved to be instrumental in gathering information from stakeholders in the light of the evaluation of the NSDS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the framework of a new governmental decision, UK will withdraw funding from the SDC from the 1st of April 2011. SDC will therefore not have any future role on the national level in UK. In the last years the SDC undertook following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring cross-government and departmental progress towards SD. Carrying out biennial "State of the Nation" progress reports and three annual thematic in-depth reviews of public service. Undertaking critical reviews of policies such as Treasury spending reviews, budget and pre-budget reports. Monitoring the "accountability framework" for sustainable development.
Responsible Institution and participants	<u>Institution</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no plenary for dialogue provided through a permanent body (NCSD), CAMA (Environmental Advisory Council), made up of 18 organisations representing civil society, offered a platform through which the public consultation could take place. 	<u>Institution</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission is chaired by the Swedish Prime Minister and members are representatives from national ministries, business sector, NGOs and the research community. 	<u>Institution:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Secretariat of the Inter-departmental SD Committee (ISDC), and the Federal Office for Spatial Development give the opportunity to participate in the SD Dialogue. <u>Participants:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all kind of association from economy, trade unions, academia etc. 	<u>Institution:</u> <p>Until April 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SD Commission comprising stakeholders from business, NGOs, administration and academia offered a platform for consultations on the NSDS process. In April 2006, the SDC officially took on the role as a SD 'watchdog', reporting to the Prime Minister. <p>After 2011: new mechanisms will be introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently there has not been an engagement on this platform. The aim is to continue the involvement of stakeholders. DEFRA is doing this indirectly through other departments who are dealing more with for example business actors and other stakeholders.
Response and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcome reached were suggestions from various stakeholders to the draft of the NSDS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is the major focus of the Commission in 2008, but no final programme of the Commission on SD has been set yet the Commission has contributed to the NSDS, the EU SDS, international cooperation on SD and to the preparation of Sweden's Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The results of these kind of workshops are being reflected in the evaluation process and in the renewal of the NSDS integrated in the policy making processes. 	

¹¹⁰ The SD Dialogue is organized in a workshop form, a participation arrangement, which giving an opportunity to other stakeholders (i.e. business, civil society) to participate in the NSDS process and influence through their comments SD policies.

3 Institution-building and mainstreaming of SD

Based on the interviews with NSDS coordinators, this chapter analyses how NSDS processes have affected institutions, policy making processes, legislation and sectoral planning¹¹¹. The chapter also discusses how NSDSs are discussed in the political sphere and what the obstacles and challenges are for the countries' transition to sustainability.

With the exception of Denmark and Spain, the NSDS processes have strengthened the capacities of existing institutions rather than creating new ones. All interviewees agreed that this process did not weaken any institution¹¹², and only a few were replaced (for example, the NCSD in Latvia will be integrated in the National Development Council). Across countries, the NSDSs have strengthened inter-ministerial bodies (e.g. Switzerland, United Kingdom, Belgium and Luxembourg) and SD units at the Prime Minister offices (e.g. Malta and Slovakia). In these countries, NSDS processes have also brought to the creation of departmental SD sub-units (e.g. Switzerland, Malta) or sub-committees, subordinated to the decision-making bodies such as the Cabinet (e.g. UK).

Vertical policy coordination mechanisms of the NSDS have also contributed to the establishment of sub-units for SD at the regional and local levels (e.g. Germany, Switzerland and Austria). Societal consultation processes have further strengthened the role of stakeholders through the NCSD and *vice versa* (e.g. Switzerland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Finland and Hungary). NCSD capabilities have significantly improved due to several dynamics: substantial reforms in their profile and composition (e.g. Latvia, Estonia)¹¹³, strong participation in the review processes (e.g. Germany), or through their transformation in independent bodies with “watchdog” functions (e.g. UK).

The NSDS implementation at the governmental level has provided impulses to parliamentarians acting in the SD field to set up institutional settings in order to increase the control towards the NSDS process in the government (e.g. Germany). There is a new trend towards the establishment of parliamentary institutions in this respect (e.g. Latvia, Czech Republic in 2010 and Germany in 2004). Their purpose is to raise awareness of SD issues at the parliamentary level, to submit proposals for the NSDS process, and to provide recommendations on individual topics.

¹¹¹ Interviews were conducted with NSDs coordinators from Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

¹¹² An exceptional case is Latvia. The Ministry of Environmental lost its coordination role and the Ministry for Regional and local Development won more power in horizontal policy coordination and in policy creation.

¹¹³ NCSD is chaired in Estonia from an independent university rector, and does not include any representatives of the government. This has strengthened the role of the stakeholders and weakened the role of the government office.

NSDS and policy-making processes and legislation

According to interviews, the NSDSs have mixed effects on policy-making, sectoral-planning or legislation processes. Half of the interviewees claimed that NSDSs have a rather strong influence in policy making; the other half was sceptical (e.g. Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, Greece, Switzerland) or believed that the NSDSs were not affecting at all their policy-making and planning (e.g. Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary). Most NSDS coordinators, who were skeptical, believed that the NSDSs are overshadowed by other policy topics such as crisis management or climate change that proved to have more political attraction than SD¹¹⁴. In general, NSDS coordinators had difficulties in evaluating the *extent* to which the NSDSs or other policy strategies affected policy-making processes. Several interviews revealed that the NSDSs remain a very broad and general platform which offers established-mechanisms for an exchange and coordination of strategies at the administrative level. Accordingly, the NSDSs have created a “participative culture of policy preparation or policy planning processes”. In some countries, these processes have been extremely relevant, also beyond SD (e.g. Austria for transport policy, construction, etc.).

Reference in political debate

The interviews revealed that NSDSs were rarely referred to in political or public debates. And when this happened, it was mostly due to those who are either involved in the NSDS processes or interested in topics such as environmental policy. Several reasons account for this: Firstly, the economic crisis absorbed political debates. Secondly, the NSDSs are just one strategy among several other policy strategies. Thirdly, where and when mainstream economic thinking is dominant, there is little place for debates on SD issues. Finally, due to SD being a rather complicated and an abstract concept, the public has often difficulties in understanding its terms, despite all awareness raising efforts.

Obstacles and challenges in the transition to sustainability

Most interviewees believe that the NSDSs alone, as a policy tool, will not suffice to move countries in the transition towards sustainability. Several obstacles are to be overcome:

Economic factors: The countries' key concern is to recover from the economic crisis, budgets are constrained, and politicians want to employ the few resources in the most effective way. This may have mixed results on SD. Budget constraints might attribute priorities only to sectoral issues and not to cross-sectoral topics, and the reductions may result in loss of expertise (e.g. UK SD commission will be dissolved in 2011).

¹¹⁴ In Slovenia, a new Government Office for Climate Change is established, which also take over the NCSD and all coordination mechanisms of the NSDS will be transferred to that body. Moreover, a new long-term strategy on Mitigation of Climate Change, with a perspective until 2030 will be set up soon

Political factors: The main obstacle for the NSDS integration in policy making is the politicians' concerns for short-term policies. This is in conflict with the long term SD concept. Nonetheless, some chances are detectable in the political culture: for example, countries are more and more concerned with issues like green growth.

International and European incentives: At the moment, there is no incentive from the international level for strengthening SD policies at the national level. Firstly, the EU SDS has not provided enough guidance to national NSDS processes. Secondly, the failure of reaching common goals in the climate change debate might also paralyze SD policies at the national level.

Way of thinking: The complexity of SD requires a holistic approach in thinking. However, neither policy-makers nor the public is willing to follow and understand the pillars of SD.

Institutional factors: Current institutional structures (e.g. sectoral orientation of political actions) hinder or complicate the coordination mechanisms of NSDSs.

The interview partners suggested several solutions to address current challenges. In particular, they underlined the need of better coordination mechanisms, stronger participation, and a change in SD incentives models. For achieving wider political visibility, the role of stakeholders (business and public) should be further strengthened. Finally, in order to overcome vertical coordination problems, EU institutions should put more pressure and should show more guidance for implanting SD objectives.

4 Potential effects of NSDSs

The ultimate criterion for judging the success of NSDSs is to what extent they contributed to a balanced environmental, social and economic performance of the state (i.e. the ‘impact’ on human well-being across generations). However it is quite difficult to make such an assessment; in 2009, [Finland has undertaken a national assessment of sustainable development](#) as first comprehensive assessment. The causal chains between – (i) the institutional architecture and process of NSDS preparation, (ii) its result in terms of objectives, measures and means of their implementation as well as mobilisation of political will and societal support and building of institutions such as working groups or inter-ministerial committees, (iii) actual implementation through work programmes, action plans, sectoral strategies and partnerships, (iv) mechanisms of achieving change such as new regulation, changes in procedures or budgeting/investment, (v) change in actual practices ‘on the ground’ (changes in behaviour, production and consumption patterns), and (vi) change in environmental, economic or social indicators – are very long and complex (indeterminate, non-linear) and the changes are taking place in an environment with a complex influence of a multitude of external factors which makes it difficult to make clear attributions. (Nevertheless the methodological challenges should not prevent us from asking questions on impacts of NSDSs.)

Instead of assessing ‘impacts’, second-tier criteria, so-called ‘outcomes’, can be used to assess the success of NSDSs: e.g. to what extent they contributed to coordination in national objective setting, to what extent they influenced delineation of competences, what kinds of measures have been formulated through NSDS processes and whether they have been implemented, or to what extent NSDSs affected national policy planning processes (e.g. in terms of stakeholder participation). Surprisingly, very little evidence exists. Contribution to coordination in objective setting remains hard to estimate, partially also because of the differences among NSDSs. In some countries, NSDSs achieve ‘policy integration through a stapler’, when the objectives, targets and measures of an NSDS is a collection of objectives, targets and measures which were formulated through separate (sectoral) planning processes – thus the NSDS does not serve as a forum for balancing and reconciling sectoral interests through appealing to an overarching vision, but as a reporting platform for all development processes in place in the country. Even in countries where NSDSs aspire for more, it is difficult to identify causal linkages; e.g. policy actors can try to mobilise support for their interests by referring to the NSDS but the added value of the NSDS is difficult to assess. There is some evidence that horizontal policy integration mechanisms of NSDSs were in some countries used by actors involved in strategies related to policy issues beyond the scope of NSDSs (e.g. biodiversity or climate change) which would indicate a positive outcome. It would also seem that NSDSs in general do not achieve redistribution of competences in established policy areas and, although possibly important in identification

and raising awareness of new policy issues cutting across boundaries of existing policy areas, their influence on charting competence boundaries in these new policy areas seems also low. Here, however, evidence also remains sparse. In terms of effects on processes of policy making, it can be said that NSDSs typically achieve strong stakeholder participation in NSDS processes itself, however, their effects on participation in other (sectoral and cross-sectoral) policy planning processes or potential derived measures (impact assessment, public procurement, budgeting etc.) is questionable. Evidence for other process-related criteria such as consideration of long timeframes/intergenerational equity in policy making or integration of all three dimensions of SD into decision making is also sparse.

Typically, and for reasons of practicality, assessments of NSDSs (including the peer reviews, which have not become as widespread as expected) focus rather on third-tier criteria (‘outputs’ as per evaluation terminology, although further in the text we use the term outcomes for all of effects which, not surprisingly, mostly tend to be ‘outputs’) centred on SD institution building (e.g. compositions of national SD councils or inter-ministerial working groups), capacity building, formulated objectives (e.g. the SMART criteria), work programmes or action plans and NSDS-related processes (e.g. stakeholder participation in NSDS preparation). However, the significance and explanatory power of such assessment is strongly limited and only serves to widen the divide between NSDSs and actors associated in the networks centred on NSDSs and, on the one hand, national policy planning processes and development directions as well as mainstream policy actors (e.g. national Lisbon strategies/reform plans, regulatory impact assessment, budgeting etc.) and, on the other hand, SD-related processes and actors which are outside of the scope of particular NSDSs (e.g. corporate social responsibility initiatives, various forms of environmental/sustainability assessment, green public procurement etc.). Evidence for this level of effects is more available. On the one hand, the NSDSs often provide tools and forums for vertical and horizontal policy coordination and strengthen the dialogue among ministries as well as enable better access to distributed information. NSDSs succeed in raising awareness through forums and events with involvement of societal stakeholders and through large-scale participatory processes in bringing the term ‘sustainable development’ on the ‘radar’ of numerous societal actors. In many cases, they contributed to changes in interests and expectations of involved actors as well as to deepening of mutual understanding across sectors and political-administrative levels which can be understood as an important precondition for policy coordination. They often result in creation of further plans such as sectoral action plans or reports. On the other hand, the effect of SD institution building is hampered by limited competences of these institutions (competences often tend to be related only to the NSDS process itself) and frequently lack high-level political and administrative support and resources.

Almost all of the above relates to identification of positive effects of NSDSs. Surprisingly, little has been said in literature about the possible negative effects of NSDSs. Evidence is

lacking, but we suggest that the following deserve consideration: NSDSs contribute to competition between national strategies (in particular with national Lisbon strategies/national reform programmes, but also environmental strategies e.g. of nature conservation and possibly also with cross-sectoral initiatives to tackle climate change) and to ‘policy inflation’. They can cause placation of stakeholders, contribute to ‘participation fatigue’ or possibly through botched participation processes lead to frustration and resignation of stakeholders. If failing to influence policy objective setting (especially in comparison with alternative tools of stakeholder participation or policy integration), they potentially serve as waste of resources of actors representing environmental or social interests and misdirection of their efforts. Since sustainable development is a concept very much open to interpretation, and NSDSs often lack mechanisms to control the incorporation of SD objectives and principles in sectoral policies, they can also provide powerful actors with opportunities for ‘greenwashing’ and legitimising business as usual.

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