



3rd ESDN PEER LEARNING PLATFORM AND VISIT

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA IN COUNTRIES AND REGIONS: SHARING FOR LEARNING

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Peer Learning
Platform and
Visit Report

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Introduction

The **3rd ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit**, which took place on 12-13 June 2018 in Rome, brought together policymakers from all across Europe, from both the national level and regional level, to share, in greater depth, their experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit was organized by the ESDN in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea, and the CREIAMO PA Project.

The CREIAMO PA Project (Competences and Networks for the Environmental Integration and for the Improvement of the Public Administration Organizations, hereinafter referred to as Project or CREIAMO PA), is the project initiative managed by the Italian Ministry for the Environment (beneficiary), in cooperation with Sogesid SpA (in-house provider of the Ministry), financed under Axis 1 "Development of administrative and institutional capacity for the modernization of the Public Administration" of the National Operational Program Governance and Institutional Capacity 2014-2020.

The Platform, which took place on June 12th, was held over three sessions, called "Spaces for Learning": "**Space for Learning 1: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national & regional level – 'Learning by listening'**" featured 3 presentations from the national level (Italy, Germany, and Belgium) and 3 presentations from the regional level (Piedmont, Saarland, and Wallonia). The following two "Spaces for Learning" were characterized by their interactive nature: "**Space for Learning 2: 'Speed Dating'**" - Exchanging experiences, learning from examples – 'Learning by exchanging' allowed participants to exchange their experiences in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and identify common themes, strengths, and challenges by discussing together one-on-one, for ten minutes, before they were required to pair up with another speed dating partner. "**Space for Learning 3: Designing your 2030 Agenda/SDG Implementation Success Story - 'Learning by doing'**" required participants to form groups of 6-8 people and exchange on a particular SDG that will be in the focus of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018 (SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15) and how these particular SDGs and their targets could be met on the short-term, mid-term, and long-term by focusing on the governance mechanisms required to address the SDG's specific targets.

The **3rd ESDN Peer Learning Visit**, which took place on June 13th, focused on a series of presentations about how Italy is implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national and regional level, which allowed for a very deep and varied perspective regarding the progress Italy has been making at the national and regional level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The main objective of Peer Learning Platform and Visit was to have a very informal exchange and interaction between policymakers who are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, or are responsible for the development of strategies/policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs. In total, more than 50 participants from 9 countries took part in both events.

Keeping within the tradition of the 1st and 2nd ESDN Peer Learning Platforms and Visits, the 3rd ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit operated under the **Chatham House Rules**. Therefore, there will be no names, personal observations from participants, or the opinions of specific participants included in this Report.

Peer Learning Platform

Welcome and Orientation Session

The Peer Learning Platform was opened by a representative from the Directorate General for Sustainable Development in the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land and Sea, where the representative welcomed participants and provided the framework for the Peer Learning Platform and Visit. The goals of the Platform and Visit were briefly outlined and focused on the importance of being able to cooperate, use, and share all the tools at each country's disposal to forward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This sharing of good practices, tools, and experiences is exactly what the ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit seek to do. The presenting countries and regions will focus on the different, yet common, experience of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

A second presentation was given during this session, which focused on the CReIAMO PA Project. This presentation was delivered by another representative from the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea. The presentation provided a brief overview of the CReIAMO PA Project and its relevance in the implementation and integration of environmental sustainability into public policies in Italy.

The Project is funded by Structural Funds. It seeks to address the building up of regional capacities within Italy to be able to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. The aim is to achieve unitary planning, which deals with strategic infrastructure and integrated environmental actions.

The Project also seeks to bring together the different departments within the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea in order to bring in many different aspects of the 2030 Agenda implementation. The Project tries to not only highlight the needs and weaknesses of the different departments within the Ministry, but also to highlight the good practices and strengths. CReIAMO PA also deals with the changes introduced by the reforms that are currently under way, combining the principles of protection, while at the same time safeguarding those of development and competitiveness.

It has been identified that there is a lack of skill in the different offices within the Ministry with respect to sustainable development. Building up those capacities will be very important if the 2030 Agenda is to be effectively and efficiently implemented.

The operational approach and the actions that are already taking place are training and coaching on the job in the context of:

- Project initiatives related to environmental issues considered binding for planning (climate change, sustainable mobility, blue and green economy, etc.);
- Actions aimed at integrating specific evaluation procedures (SEA, EIA, VInCA); and
- Measures to promote and disseminate the Green Public Procurement (GPP) tool.

Designing and implementing learning paths that, overcoming the logic related to individual sectors:

- Promote pro-active behavior based on mutual "give-take"; and
- Enhance the propensity to re-interpret the "central" and "peripheral" role according to a "network" logic and from a peer to peer point of view.

This session was then concluded with a speech by one of the ESDN Co-Chairs, who welcomed all the participants in Rome and thanked the Italian hosts for helping with the event's organization.

The Co-chair then gave some background information and context of the ESDN. The ESDN reinvented the concept of peer learning and established its own system and process that began in 2015 and witnessed its first Platform and Visit in 2016. The ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visits are important and necessary, because it affords participants the opportunity to listen to one another, share practical experiences in the policy-making process, and learn lessons from everyone's experiences, especially from the shortcomings and the challenges and how to overcome them.

For this particular Peer Learning Platform and Visit, the ESDN Co-Chair reinforced the Italian hosts' sentiments that the Platform and Visit should look at the institutional mechanisms that allow policymakers to integrate the 2030 Agenda into their daily work, which is taking place in increasingly difficult environments throughout Europe.

The Co-Chair also shared that apart from different political climates, there are also differences between the institutional set up of the different European countries, as some are more federalized, such as Italy, Germany and Belgium, which were elaborated on in the next session, and more centrally steered countries. These institutional differences raise interesting questions regarding vertical policy integration and how the national level and subnational level can harmonize with one another.

Space for Learning 1: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national & regional level - “Learning by listening”

“Space for Learning 1” focused on the experiences of the national level of three European countries that have a typically federalized form of government, meaning the regions have a greater degree of autonomy than regions in many other European countries. This “Space for Learning” featured 6 presentations in total: 3 from the national levels of Italy, Germany and Belgium, as well as 3 presentations from the regional levels from selected regions within these countries: the Italian region of Piedmont, the German Federal State of Saarland, and the Belgian region of Wallonia.

The speakers were asked to prepare 15-minute long presentations that would address the following questions and themes regarding their experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda at their respective governmental levels:

- NSDS update to bring the strategy in line with the 2030 Agenda/SDGs;
- SD strategy/guidelines for 2030 Agenda/SDG implementation;
- Institutional capacities and capacity-building for the 2030/SDG implementation;
- Inter-ministerial cooperation for the 2030/SDG implementation;
- Vertical integration efforts and mechanisms between national and regional level;
- Implementation efforts/successes on the 5 SDGs in focus of HLPF 2018;
- “What’s our implementation success story?” (i.e. highlighting the main success factors in the respective country); and
- “What we are still struggling with...” (i.e. barriers encountered, capacities and instruments still lacking, etc.).

National Level Experiences

Italy

A representative of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea opened up the first session of the Peer Learning Platform, where they shared Italy’s experiences in adopting their National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS).

The NSDS involved a multilevel consultation process. The document that would go on to become the NSDS was shared with respect to the implementation process with researchers, the expert community and other stakeholder groups. Not only did this multilevel consultation process serve as a consultation mechanism, but also as a good monitoring system. Civil society was also consulted in order to help draft the vision for 2030.

The Italian NSDS was then ratified in December 2017 and is streamlined along the 5P’s: 1) Planet; 2) People; 3) Prosperity; 4) Partnership; and 5) Peace. Sustainability vectors were helpful in being able to streamline goals. As an example for the Planet category, 3 strategic choices were presented that were also related to the SDGs.

Since the ratification of the NSDS, the Italian regions have exactly 12 months to align their Regional Sustainability Strategies (RSDS) with the NSDS. The regions will commit themselves by defining their regional strategies.

Italy is also developing a Sustainable Development Forum, which is scheduled to start in the second half of 2018, and which will be overseen by the Ministry of the environment.

Germany

A representative from the German Federal Chancellery, which has the main coordination role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda within Germany, presented on the current status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level in Germany.

For Germany, the 2030 Agenda will continue to be the guiding principle for German policy. The new government that was formed after the recent elections in Germany have signed the Coalition Treaty 2018, which lays out the government's continued support for the integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into German policies.

At the end of 2016, Germany finalized its update of their National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), which introduced the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into its core framework and has since become the guiding document for implementation at the national level. The NSDS measures sustainable development related effects at three different levels: 1) Within Germany; 2) effects in Germany with global impacts; and 3) measures with Germany, or bilateral cooperation.

The NSDS focuses on each of the 17 SDGs and outlines for each Goal: 1) content and political priorities; 2) measures for SDG implementation; 3) national indicator and goal; and 4) activities for national implementation of the Goal. Every SDG is linked to at least one national goal, which is mostly quantified, and when not, then is qualitative in nature. There are currently 63 indicators that cover 38 areas. There is a biannual analysis regarding Germany's progress that is carried out by the Federal Statistical Office.

Germany also has many sustainability management systems and institutions in place: 1) the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development; 2) the German Council for Sustainable Development; and 3) the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development. Figure 1 below shows the relationships and interplay between these 3 institutions, as well as a number of other institutions.

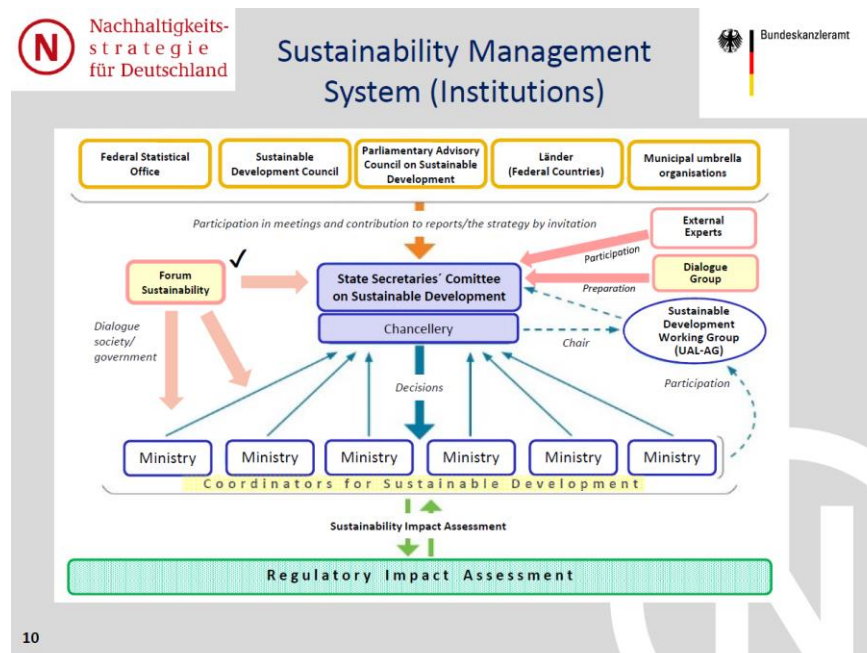


Figure 1: Sustainability Management Systems¹

¹ Taken from the German Federal Chancellery representative's presentation at the 3rd ESDN Peer Learning Platform.

The State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development serves as the central steering institution for the NSDS and is chaired by the German Federal Chancellery. The Committee works on key issues with the participation of external experts, as well as the participation of the Council for Sustainable Development and the Parliamentary Advisory Council. The decisions that are reached in the Committee are published, which serves to increase the transparency of the entire process.

The German Council for Sustainable Development is made up of 15 members, who are appointed by the Chancellor for three years. The Council advises the Federal Government on all matters relating to sustainable development and serve as an important stakeholder in public dialogue on sustainable development.

The last major institutional sustainability management system is the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development. The Advisory Committee gives the German Sustainable Development Strategy a parliamentary dimension. The Committee plays a role in developing goals, measures, and instruments. It also enters into dialogue with other parliaments, particularly in the European Union. Lastly, the Advisory Committee evaluates the sustainability impact assessment of the Federal Government.

The impact assessment was one important way to mainstream sustainable development at the national level in Germany. The NSDS provides the framework and benchmark for improving sustainable development in Germany, and in order to further help the national government implement sustainable development policies that reflect the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, a web tool, [electronic sustainability assessment](#), was developed to help policymakers with the impact assessment. Policymakers must go through this online tool whenever they draft a new policy or regulation. This was an important development, because it was clear that not all policymakers were aware of how their policies could have an impact on some of the SDGs. This web tool for the impact assessment of new policies helps with this issue.

Another important factor in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Germany is vertical policy coherence between the national level and the regional level. While the German Federal States (*Länder*) are not legally bound to implement the NSDS, exchange between the two levels is very important. Exchange happens between the heads of the *Länder* chancelleries and a periodic exchange between the federal and *Länder* levels at a working level.

The representative from the Federal Chancellery identified two major challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, mainly the need to strengthen policy coherence and involve stakeholders to a greater degree:

To increase the importance of sustainability policy and coherent treatment in the individual ministries, the ministries have appointed a single central contact person (ideally at Director-General level) for issues relating to sustainable development. The tasks for the ministry coordinators for sustainable development are:

- Serve as the central contact person for issues relating to sustainable development;
- Must be involved at interdepartmental level in the implementation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and the 2030 Agenda in the policy of respective ministry; and
- Must be involved at the interdepartmental level in promoting the consideration of sustainability aspects in the legislative and regulatory process and in ministry strategies.

In regards to the challenge of greater stakeholder participation, a Sustainability Forum was established that seeks to provide a platform for regular dialogue with social stakeholders, in which the Government presents progress on the implementation of 2030 Agenda, and the social organisations report on steps to implement 2030 Agenda, as well as comment on the progress of implementation by the

Government. Another Platform, the Scientific Platform Sustainability 2030, has the aim to highlight the progress and shortcomings in implementing the SDGs in Germany and is done in close cooperation between science, society, and policymakers.

There is also a Dialogue Group that is currently being planned for, which will be made up of 15 NGOs/stakeholders, who would be participating in the preparation of meetings or State Secretaries' Committee

The next steps for Germany include: 1) the further development of indicators; 2) Federal Government decides on supplementing aims and changes with new indicators; and 3) International independent Peer Review of Council for Sustainable Development.

Belgium

A representative from the Belgian Federal Office for Sustainable Development shared the Belgian experience at the national level of implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. As Belgium is a unique federalized country, it is necessary to understand the basic institutional set-up and context of the country in order to better understand the mechanisms necessary for successful implementation of the SDGs.

Regarding the federal structure and institutional set-up of Belgium, there are three distinct branches that share equal power in the decision-making process of the entire country: 1) Federal Authorities, which include the King, the Federal Government, and the Federal Parliament; 2) The Communities, which include the Flemish, German-speaking, and French Communities; and 3) the Regions, which include, Wallonia, Flanders, and the Brussels-Capital Region. While each of these branches have equal power, they do have different competencies.

Since these three branches have equal power, cooperation between the three is key for any successful policy actions to take place. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are no exception. Belgium has in place programs that seek to enhance this need for cooperation. One of the mechanisms in place is the Inter-Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development (IMCSD), which gathers the respective ministers in charge of sustainable development and Development Cooperation of the different authorities. They are "mandated to follow-up the implementation of the Agenda "in Belgium" by, among other work, coordinating the preparation of reports on progress made and challenges faced", such as by contributing to the Voluntary National Review (VNR). The IMCSD then serves as the administrative steering group, which has formed 3 working parties: 1) Working Party on National Strategy for Sustainable Development; 2) Working Party on Public Procurements; and 3) Working Party on International Relations.

Regarding Belgium's National Sustainable Development Strategy (31 May 2017), there is an overarching framework and strategic documents. The overarching framework includes a:

- Common vision based on the 5 P's;
- A selection of priority collaborative themes:
 - Advocacy;
 - Monitoring progress (twice per legislature, for example 22 November 2017);
 - Sustainable public procurements;
 - Sustainable living and construction;
 - Sustainable nutrition;
 - Instruments to stimulate sustainable development.

The strategic documents include:

- Federal level: Long Term Vision, Federal Plan for Sustainable Development;

- Flanders: Vision 2050;
- Wallonia: 2nd Walloon Strategy for Sustainable Development;
- Brussels-Capital Region: Regional Plan for Sustainable Development;
- German Community: 2nd Concept of Regional Development.

The Belgian Federal Sustainable Development Strategy was last revised in 2010. The main actors in the drafting of the Strategy were: 1) The Federal Institute for Sustainable Development (FISD); 2) The Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD); 3) The Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) of the Federal Planning Bureau; and 4) The Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD), which includes stakeholders. The instruments that are employed in the drafting and revising of the Belgian Sustainable Development Strategy follow a do→plan→act cycle. The FISD and the ICSD plan and monitor the process, the TFSD reports on the current situation, evaluates policy, and deals with forecasting and indicators. The FCSD serves as the stakeholder advisory council, which sees the participation of major stakeholder groups.

Some of the other federal instruments that are in place to help aid in the development of sustainable development policies are that each ministry has to adopt an action plan on sustainable development on a yearly basis. Each manager must also integrate sustainable development objectives into their management plans. Finally, each Minister has to indicate in their yearly policy note the impact of its Federal Plan for Sustainable Development its actions towards sustainable development.

Regarding the integration of the SDGs into Belgian federal policy, there are five steps that are being undertaken: 1) Updating and integration of the SDGs in the existing instruments of the federal sustainable development strategy; 2) Achieving the SDGs through the functioning and policy of the federal public services; 3) Promoting a coherent approach to the SDGs between the federal and regional governments; 4) Communicating the SDGs to civil society ; and 5) Building partnerships between the government and civil society stakeholders around the SDGs.

The Belgian representative also identified challenges that Belgium has been encountering in its implementation of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda:

- Many powerful instruments, but there are difficulties in them reaching their full potential;
- Political support could be stronger;
- Civil society engagement could be stronger;
- Ownership of sustainable development and the SDGs, examples of which are solutions for the gaps that have been noticed
- National cooperation and the Belgian context;
- Avoid business as usual and reaching transformative action.

Regional Level Experiences

Piedmont (Italy)

A representative from the Piedmont region in Italy was the first presenter from the regional level to discuss about the implementation of a Regional Sustainable Development Strategy (RSDS). In the case of Piedmont, the current RSDS is called the Regional Strategy for Climate Change and they are in the process of transitioning to the Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development.

The Regional Council of Piedmont had a deliberation on July 3, 2017, in which they discussed the purpose of the Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is:

- A guidance document on the different policies, sectorial Plans and Programmes.

- It acknowledges that green and circular economy action models are primary tools for the implementation of the Regional Strategy for Climate Change and of the envisaged Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development; and
- It supports a coordinated and integrated action at the regional level, and involves all the regional directorates.

As the region begins its transition to the new SDS, it has factored in many different stakeholders into the process:

- Stakeholder involvement;
- Institutional discussions (both horizontal and vertical); and
- Sharing of knowledge and experience.

The region has also attempted to raise the awareness of stakeholders about sustainable development through:

- Transforming knowledge into competence;
- Supporting education for sustainable development;
- Encouraging and implementing sustainable development solutions; and
- Communication.

Regarding the set-up of a more horizontally inclined atmosphere at the regional level, Piedmont is setting up of an inter-directorate working group, which is now a reference point in different fields (e.g. Transport, Air quality, etc.), and serves as an institutional coordination tool. The regional has also developed an initiative based on the sharing of knowledge, in which internal regional training courses (5 training days, with around 90 participants) work together for the creation of a common and shared base of knowledge. This involved topics, such as what climate change is, the international commitments, adaptation experiences, economical impact and tools to deal with climate change, and climate change in the Piedmont region.

Horizontal institutional discussion was specifically established by the Piedmont region as an interdepartmental working group that manages the procedures for the environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment, institutional coordination tool in an integrated way. Since many plans already exist, there is a need to be able to streamline them all and the 2030 Agenda became the framework that can link everything together.

The Piedmont regional went retroactively went back to documents and actions already taken to see how they may be in line with the 2030 Agenda, such as with water and energy.

When it comes to measuring sustainable development, the Piedmont regional publishes an annual report on the state of the soil, water, and air, and tries to address and link it to the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs.

Saarland (Germany)

The Saarland is a small Federal State in the west of Germany with around 1 million inhabitants. In 2015, the government of Saarland decided to launch their RSDS through dialogue with civil society and other stakeholders, which saw broad participation in the form of: 1) an Interministerial working group led by the sustainability officer; 2) Council for Sustainability; 3) Sustainability conference with six workshops; and 4) Online participation.

The RSDS deals with six fields of action: 1) Education, knowledge, innovation; 2) Financial sustainability; 3) Demography and sustainable settlement development; 4) Climate and resource protection; 5) Preservation and strengthening of the economic and industrial location; and 6) Mobility.

The process of establishing Saarland's RSDS was as follows:

- Kickoff workshop: council for sustainability and interministerial working group. Conference took place with 140 participants;
- 230 contributions were received from an online survey on how to make Saarland sustainable;
- Education for Sustainable Development is key to the development of society and is one of the most important fields of sustainable development;
- Conference of the ministers of education and cultural affairs. Meets 6 times a year with all 16 German Federal States;
- ESDD Expert-net;
- Round table for Education for Sustainable Development and global learning;
- One world promoters program;
- Network for Education for Sustainable Development Saarland; and
- Education for Sustainable Development mentoring and monitoring for schools and teachers.

Saarland has also initiated some Lighthouse Projects, such as the "The little smartphone and the big world: our mobile phone campaign." The objective was to draw attention to global interconnections and the social and ecological problems connected to our consumption behaviour and the problematic use of finite resources.

Vertical integration policy integration happens along 3 levels: 1) Federal level; 2) Regional level; and 3) Cities/towns level. 13 out of 52 municipalities in Saarland wanted to participate in the Saarland SDS.

Wallonia (Belgium)

A representative from the Walloon Government's (Walloon Public Service) Department of Sustainable Development provided insights into how the Belgian region of Wallonia is addressing its implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The Walloon government has chosen the 2nd Walloon Sustainable Development Strategy (WSDS) as the mechanism through which to integrate and implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Wallonia. The WSDS was adopted by the Walloon government in July 2016. The process leading up to the adoption of the WSDS was appropriately timed, as the elaboration of the 2nd WSDS occurred during the time of the 2030 Agenda negotiations, and so an alignment of the WSDS was made easier.

How the WSDS will be implemented is as follows:

- Long-term Vision;
- Diagnosis of weaknesses;
- Short-term and mid-term objectives: 17 SDGs and 121 targets relevant for Wallonia towards their long-term vision; and
- Action Plan: 100 thematic and transversal actions that contribute to the SDGs.

Some of the specific actions for promoting and monitoring SDGs at the regional level in Wallonia are:

- Elaboration of the 1st report about implementation of the SDGs in Wallonia;
- A new process was introduced that requires policymakers to clarify how the policies they develop contribute to the SDGs when they present them to the government; and
- Communication actions (website – Movies Festival – future campaign for specific audiences).

The 1st report about the implementation of the SDGs in Wallonia was finished in April 2017 and was subsequently used in Belgium's Voluntary National Review in July 2017. This first report provided Wallonia with a very valuable progress report by providing an:

- Inventory of regional strategies, programs, and plans contributing to the SDGs;
- 70 indicators for monitoring the SDGs in Wallonia;
- Examples of concrete actions contributing to the SDGs from public authorities; and
- Examples of concrete actions contributing to the SDGs from civil society.

Regarding the new process by which policymakers need to clarify how their policies relate to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, it was shared that this looks good only at first sight. The Walloon representative shared that this process became little more than a 'box ticking' exercise for policymakers and that this process did not change the way in which policies were being made by the policymakers. This resulted in policies being developed that were not necessarily guided by the SDGs.

However, Wallonia tried to counter this issue by providing training opportunities to civil servants on the SDGs, where they play games on how they can better integrate the SDGs into their policy-making processes. Additionally, SDG impact assessments done by policymakers will switch from being *ex-post* evaluations to *ex-ante* evaluations, so as to raise the chances that the SDGs can influence and steer the policy-making process.

The Walloon government is currently preparing the next WSDS for 2019 and is looking at how they can further and better integrate the SDGs in terms of content and processes. There have already been challenges that have been identified:

- Reinforcing civil society participation;
- Reinforcing vertical integration: from regional to local level, support to bottom-up initiatives;
- Reinforcing horizontal integration and place the WSDS in regional policies;
- Updating and improving the list of indicators for monitoring the SDGs in Wallonia; and
- Need to exchange with other European regions and countries.

Question and Answer Session

After each country and region presented on their activities regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the floor was opened up to the participants to ask the country and regional representatives questions. The exchanges between the participants and the presenters were as follows:

One question a participant asked was addressed to **Italy** for both the **national** and regional level. The question pertained to whether Italy has conducted gap analyses with respect to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The representative from the national level answered that at the beginning of the process, an analysis of Italy and the 2030 Agenda was performed. For every objective, indicators were used and based on this, they were able to define their system objectives. The gap analysis also allowed for the discovery of strengths and weaknesses. This then formed the basis that was worked upon to build on the systems in place, national priorities, and objectives.

The representative from the **Piedmont region** also answered this question and stated that climate change was the starting point for Piedmont. The initial approach was not to build on the regional strategy, as that is happening now. Now that Piedmont has established an approach, it can now do a gap analysis. Over the next few years the RSDS will be set up along the lines of climate change and the SDG indicators.

Another question was addressed to the **Piedmont region** with respect to Education for Sustainable Development at the national and local level and whether both these levels have the same goals. The Piedmont representative answered that in Piedmont, they are trying to find a pathway between the NSDS and the regional level. At the regional level, a pathway needs to be found that balances national

and regional needs. One of the main challenges that still remains is the integration of the national and regional level.

There were two questions that were directed at the **German national level** representative. One of the questions was regarding the level within the ministries that Sustainable Development Coordinators are typically chosen. The national level representative answered that most of the Sustainable Development Coordinators are located at the level of a director and that there are only 1-2 instances in which this is not the case.

The second question addressed the topic of **Germany** using the NSDS as a benchmark for policy-making, to which the national representative shared that they NSDS, itself, should be the benchmark for all that the government does and serve as a guiding principle.

The **Saarland** representative also received two questions. The first question that was asked was also about Education for Sustainable Development and whether the national and local levels have the same goals. The Saarland representative answered that there was already quite a bit of vertical policy coherence between the German NSDS and the Saarland SDS.

The second question was in regards to how **Saarland** involves rural communities in the 2030 Agenda and SDG process that goes beyond providing such communities with money and funds. The Saarland representative stated that Saarland was at the beginning of the process of involving local communities and that a Local Agenda project was begun and that 13 out of 22 communities in Saarland support this program. The representative also shared that this issue is also an issue in all the Federal States in Germany regarding implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in rural areas.

A further two questions were addressed to the **Belgian national level** representative. The first question addressed the concept of working with businesses as stakeholders, and if the national level was only working with bigger companies, or if they also worked with SMEs. The national level representative answered that businesses can be SDG Voices, but that it is still unclear and not yet visible how businesses are implementing the SDGs.

The second question that was addressed to the **Belgian representative** was in regards to ministerial managers, where the participant asked if these managers were mandated to use the annual report that uses the GRI-4, since that is unique. The Belgian representative answered that each ministry needs to create a report, but that some do not.

The last three questions were addressed to the **representative from Wallonia**. The first question that was asked was about the trainings offered to civil servants regarding sustainable development and whether these trainings were a one-off exercise or happened more regularly. The representative from Wallonia answered that these types of training sessions will be organized more than once a year, but that the trainings are voluntary.

The second questions was in regards to the Action Plan in **Wallonia** and its thematic fields and overarching fields. The participant wanted to know what added value was seen in taking thematic actions. The representative from Wallonia answered that the thematic fields came from the government and that the Walloon SDS was really the only way to elaborate policies. For the next strategies there will be another approach suggested.

The last question was how **Wallonia** involved rural communities in the 2030 Agenda and SDG process and if there are ways to support them that go beyond money and funds. The representative from Wallonia answered that there was a consultation phase for municipalities and cities to make remarks on the WSDS. However, there is not really any action in the Action Plan that focuses on these levels. It

is a weakness in the current strategies that are in place. Consultation was open to citizens with concrete suggestions.

Space for Learning 2: “Speed Dating” - Exchanging experiences, learning from examples -“Learning by exchanging”

“Space for Learning 2” was the first of two interactive sessions during the Peer Learning Platform. Here participants were asked to participate in a speed dating, one-on-one exchange with other participants, activity in order to jointly reflect on the results of the presentations from ‘Space for Learning 1’. Participants were asked to identify some take-home messages from these presentations and their own experiences in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Apart from some take-home messages, participants were also asked to reflect on the success factors, challenges, and potential solutions that could be used to ensure a more successful implementation of the SDGs.

In order to complete this activity, participants were given 3 moderation note cards to write down their take-home messages. These messages were then collected by the ESDN Office and clustered together based on common trends and themes. These results were then fed back into the main group as a summary of the two Spaces for Learning. The results of the speed dating interactive activity were clustered by the ESDN Office team into 5 distinct categories that participants thought were important take away messages from the first session: 1) Governance Requirements; 2) Stakeholder Involvement/Communication; 3) Vertical and Horizontal Policy Integration; 4) Challenges to Address; and 5) Global and European Support.

Governance Requirements, participants thought there is a *need to integrate sectorial policies into the wider national framework and national strategies*. Important questions that were raised were how this can be done and who must do it. Another message was the *need to integrate the 2030 Agenda into the preparation of new legislation*. It was also identified that it is important for *institutional cooperation to happen more*. Also in countries with *many different strategies regarding sustainable development, it becomes very important to be able to focus them*. Last, but not least, strong *engagement of the political level* is also a very important aspect and governance requirement for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Stakeholder Involvement/Communication was also a very important take away message. Participants raised the challenge of how to better involve stakeholders in the 2030 Agenda implementation process, as well as involve civil society very early on in the process. There is a need to *develop a smart communication strategy* using easy and simple messages, clear targets, awards, etc., so that a greater amount of stakeholders can understand. This type of communication strategy could also *highlight the positive aspects for people, politicians, and other stakeholders*. Overall, there needs to be *more focus on communication and awareness raising*, especially at the regional level.

Vertical and Horizontal Policy Integration was also a very important theme that many participants addressed in their take away messages, focusing on the interplay between the national level and the regional level. Participants mentioned that there was a *need for greater coordination between the two levels* and that there needs to be *more horizontal integration at the regional level*. *Local authorities also need to be included more* when it comes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Some of the Challenges to be Addressed were that *countries and regions need to be ready and able to react quickly to address upcoming challenges*. Some participants asked themselves *if the SDG strategies are the good frameworks for quality of life* and that actions are needed.

Global and European Support was the last thematic cluster and participants reflected on the importance the global and European level can have on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as this type of *global or European pressure*, such as the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), *can push national*

action. At the European level, it was mentioned that the European Structural Funds that support the implementation of the sustainability policies at the national and regional level are very helpful.

Space for Learning 3: Designing your 2030 Agenda/SDG Implementation Success Story - “Learning by doing”

In ‘Space for Learning 3’ was the second interactive session that focused on group work. Participants were asked to form 5 different groups of 6-8 people based on their interest in discussing the particular SDGs that are in the focus of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018. The 5 SDGs that are in the focus are SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15. Participants were then asked to think and discuss about what actions are needed to achieve the successful implementation of their group’s respective SDGs. Participants were encouraged to draw upon their own country’s or region’s experiences. The purpose of this session was for participants to provide concrete action steps for implementation on the short-term, medium-term, and long-term with respect to governance mechanisms and the targets set out under their specific SDG. The short-term was defined as taking place from the present until up to 3 years in the future, for the mid-term this was extended to up to 5 years, and the long-term was characterized by anything taking place over 5 or more years. The results of the group work can be seen below in Tables 1-5.

Table 1: Concrete Action Steps for SDG 6


6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Governance		<p>Target 6.3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academia, ministries, and civil society boosts companies in water impact assessment (stewardship communities), link to SDG 12 Role of municipalities in residual water collection and treatment (monitoring) <p>Target 6.4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming impact on quality and quantity (awareness and funding mechanisms), link to SDGs 13 & 15 <p>Target 6.5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated water management (set institutional governance), link to SDGs 11, 13 & 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreading of the initiative Urban planning → regulatory programming framework Elimination of harmful subsidies Restructuring agro-funding schemes Take into consideration ecosystem services and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public/private partnerships Integrated water action plans Revised funding schemes, new cultures, and techniques
	Addressing Targets	<p>Target 6.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize water distribution network losses Imported water (food chain and water footprint), link to SDGs 2 & 12 <p>Target 6.6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River contracts as a means Natural capital ecosystem services, link to SDGs 14 & 15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desalinization plants (renewable energy and 0 impact on energy), link to SDG 7 “Union for Water” (dealing with the same resource) Tools for assessment of impacts on ecosystem services (all the values to be assessed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saltwater intrusion (barriers) Integrated policy assessment regulative framework (harmonization, less can be more)

Table 2: Concrete Action Steps for SDG 7



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the education program • Enhance public programs on sustainable energy • Increase investments in research and technology • Promote some laws to forbid the use of coal for electricity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon tax • Forbid, at an international level, the business on coal power stations and mining • Foster the distribution of clean fuel for transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Structural Fund /Cohesion Policy • Promote research and development on alternative, renewable energy
Addressing Targets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the cost of green energy • Planning a set of measurements for the sharing economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the shift towards clean, mixed energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the global citizenship and the sense of belonging of the natural world

Table 3: Concrete Action Steps for SDG 11

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved impact assessment • Integrated approach that includes many sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved urban planning (more holistic, more circular, and life cycle approach) • Tax incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefinition of cities
Addressing Targets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving public transportation (make it more attractive to people) • Sharing economy • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve infrastructure for public transportation (+ bikes) • Awareness raising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No net loss (EU Strategy 2050)


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen target 11.3 (stakeholders) 	
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Table 4: Concrete Action Steps for SDG 12

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Governance		<p>Target 12.7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is perhaps the most central challenge of the SDGs, as it interlinks with many of the SDGs • Governments need to walk their talk (Governments are always ready to tell others they need to move, but do not do it themselves) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get finance and financial instruments on board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules of the game need to change, as SDG12 is not about a more effective and efficient energy system anymore, but rather a different economic perception that is needed from the current one
Addressing Targets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green public procurement is difficult for policymakers, as it is hard to justify spending more on greener options • Business as usual sees negative externalities that affect the environmental and social spheres of 		

	sustainable development pushed onto other entities		
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Table 5: Concrete Action Steps for SDG 15

		Short-Term	Mid-Term	Long-Term
Governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives for voluntary conservation • Compliance enforcement through legislation • Awareness raising and stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National plan for increasing protected areas • Regional plans • Specific conservation plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National authorities • Regional-local level authorities • Education at all levels
Addressing Targets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase coverage by protected areas of important sites for biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate biodiversity values into national and local planning

Peer Learning Visit:

Introduction

The 3rd ESDN Peer Learning Visit on 13 June 2018 was designed to allow policymakers to receive an in-depth overview of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Italy at both the national and regional level. The Visit took place over half a day and witnessed five presentations from the national level and five different examples from Italian regions on how they are dealing with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The topics of the presentations can be seen below, as well as the Italian regions that presented.

National Level

Implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy: tools for territorial governance

Due to the NSDS and the laws that have been enacted, Italian regions have 12 months to make their regional strategies coherent with the NSDS objectives and to identify the provided contribution to their achievement. Regional strategies will define objectives, tools, priorities, and actions to be carried out. Regions and Autonomous Provinces must also ensure the coherence of planning activities and the participation of citizens and their associations.

In order to ensure regions are able to align their strategies to the NSDS, there are many governance tools that are being made available to help the regions develop their strategies in time. These tools focus on: 1) Empowerment; 2) Collaboration; 3) Sharing; and 4) Monitoring.

Empowerment began with a public notice addressed to Regions and Autonomous Provinces to support the implementation of the regional strategies for sustainable development, which includes economic contribution - full autonomy/responsibility. EU funds were also made available, such as through the PON GOV and CReIAMO PA projects, which offer mutual training and follow-up during the regional strategy elaboration process.

The public notice focused on 3 points:

- Setting up of RSDS governance;
- Engagement of civil society; and
- Defining the RSDS.

The CReIAMO PA Project offered 7 territorial integrated paths, which are regions grouped by territorial proximity or thematic interest with 1 leading region. The Project offers the regions workshops and technical assistance on demand.

The **collaboration** tool offers a NSDS Working Table (CReIAMO PA) to the Forum for Sustainable Development (IMEIS), Regions, and Autonomous Provinces and meets twice a year (first meeting: 4th of April) and is where methodological sharing can take place, in which a space for defining tools for the elaboration and presentation is provided to the regions.

Sharing takes the form of the Forum for Sustainable Development, as well as economic support to initiatives, as there are few available economic resources. Therefore, such resources are being channelled to support projects which can implement the NSDS and giving substance to 2030 Agenda principles. 2 calls for tenders for projects have also been provided.

Monitoring in Italy should aim to measure equitable and sustainable well-being by evaluating the progress of society not only from an economic point of view, but also from a social and environmental one.

Therefore, Italy is looking for a set of indicators coming from ISTAT (Italian Statistical Office) IAEG SDGs and BES (equal and sustainable wellbeing indicators) that focus on the selection criteria: 1) Policy sensitivity; 2) Territorial availability (at least regional level); 3) Time line credibility; and 4) Updatability.

The presentation was closed by the presenter, in which they mentioned some of the challenges that have been present.

- One of the challenges is in defining the relationship between the NSDS and the 2030 Agenda and which one wins out.
- There are also issues of complexity versus the apparent ease of communication and the burdening the 2030 Agenda puts on actors, as it is the 'strategy of strategies'.
- It has also been challenging to work and act with the lack of an EU framework for the 2030 Agenda, as it could act as a very stimulus.
- The implementation plan has also been challenging, as it requires the setting up of quantitative targets, as well as identifying rules and roles. It is often difficult to know who is leading this process and playing the game and how they are playing it.
- Engaging all ministries has proved to be challenging.
- Communication, awareness raising, and outreach have also been difficult. The Forum for Sustainable Development and the Italian Sustainable Development Festival attempt to provide synergies of a different nature and a voice to everyone.
- Finally, integrated monitoring is also a very real and relevant challenge, especially when having to take into account the regional level.

The Italian Position Paper on Circular Economy

The Italian Position Paper: "Towards a Model of Circular Economy for Italy [Overview and Strategic Framework](#)" was jointly promoted by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Economic Development, with the support of ENEA and technical experts. It was launched on 29/11/2017 along with the Manifesto on Circular Economy promoted by the Alliance for Circular Economy. The framework focuses on the Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency, Decoupling, as these concepts will be crucial for the implementation of the NSDS.

The principles and objectives of the Circular Economy are efficient and sustainable resource use and a new and integrated production-distribution-consumption model. The presenter then went on to discuss the Circular Economy in the international context, the European context, as well as the challenges and opportunities Italy has.

This then transitioned into discussing about paradigm shifts in production, consumption, and economic instruments that would be needed to more successfully integrate the concept of the Circular Economy within Italy.

Lastly, the speaker presented on the transition process for Italy, which involves the rethinking of the concept of waste, the public sector, resources and products, as well as indicators and how they are measured.

The Italian Catalogue of Environmentally Harmful and Environmentally Friendly Subsidies

Italy classifies its subsidies, with respect to the environment, as either:

- Environmentally Friendly Subsidy (EFS), which is aimed to protect the environment and possibly justified through scientific literature;
- Environmentally Harmful Subsidy (EHS), which is justified through scientific literature, impact indicators, guidebooks on external costs evaluation, etc.;
- Uncertain, meaning either positive and negative environmental impacts may appear, but that further investigations are needed; and
- Neutral, which is characterized as not having a significant impact on the environment.

As a general rule, all public subsidies should either be “environmentally friendly” or “neutral” (namely, not impacting significantly on the environment). However, according to the Catalogue, environmentally harmful subsidies (EHSs - SADs) totalled 16.2 billion Euros. The so-called “uncertain” subsidies, which entail both positive and negative environmental impacts, account for 5.8 billion.

The presentation looked more in-depth at the main causes and sectors benefiting from environmentally harmful and environmentally friendly subsidies.

The presentation was concluded with recommendations on how to use the Catalogue and some of the lessons learned from it, namely that:

- The Catalogue is an informative instrument, and as such it should be properly disclosed;
- Institutional monitoring of the environmental impacts and of the related external costs of subsidized activities must be strengthened;
- The introduction of specific environmental requirements/conditionalities in each subsidy regulation can improve subsidy performance (from ‘uncertain’ or ‘neutral’ subsidies to ‘friendly’ subsidies);
- Calling upon fiscal allowances and tax expenditures seems to have facilitated the approval of measures clashing with the environment, while opting for direct transfers apparently makes such measures more easily consistent with their environmental goals. Towards an ex ante environmental compatibility assessment of new subsidies?

The Catalogue should be conceived as a work in progress that seeks to provide:

- Continuous update of the financial impact of subsidy schemes;
- Gradual extension of the scope of analysis to consider new forms of subsidies to be classified as EHS or EFS and quantified;
- Improvements in data collection; and
- Stable cooperation with the Expert Commission on tax erosion, with the Ministry for Economy and Finance and with other central public bodies (responsible for sectoral public expenditures).

The Natural Capital Report

This presentation focused on Italy’s Natural Capital Report, which seeks to measure the effect that public policies have on the state of Italy’s natural capital. The Italian Natural Capital Committee (INCC), which is made up of: 1) 10 Ministries (lead Ministry of the Environment 2) 5 Public Institutions; 3) 2 Representatives Regions / Cities; 4) 9 Experts; 5) Scientific Support (public research centers and universities); and 6) Technical and Drafting Support (Ministry of the Environment) is responsible for: 1) Preparing, each year by the end of February, an Annual Report on the state of Natural Capital in Italy, including: Environmental data on both physical and monetary units, according to the UN and EU

environmental economic accountability systems (SEEA, MAES), as well as ex ante and ex post assessment of impacts of public policies on Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services. The Committee also promotes the adoption, by local administrations, of environmental accounting systems and environmental budgets / reports.

The Italian Green Finance Dialogue: The Italian Observatory on Sustainable Finance and the Financial Centres for Sustainability

The last presentation from the national level centred on the ways in which the Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea is attempting to make finance available in order to better address the objectives and goals set out in the 2030 Agenda and presented by the SDGs and the Paris Climate Goals. Italy has three main initiatives in place with respect to finance: 1) National Dialogue on Sustainable Finance; 2) The Italian Observatory on Sustainable Finance; and 3) The International Network of Financial Centres for Sustainability.

After COP21, at the beginning of 2016, the Italian Ministry of Environment (MATM), in cooperation with UNEP Inquiry, activated a National Dialogue on Sustainable Finance with the involvement of main Italian banks, insurances, institutional investors, their associations, and the main Financial Authorities. Eight working groups cooperated to write a state of the art report on sustainable finance in Italy, with a major role of financial operators rather than individual “experts” in order to favor engagement and responsibility of operators. The Final Report had 18 proposals for specific actions.

One of the main conclusions that was reached was that more sustainable finance is needed and a standard minimum environmental-climate Company Accounts that is integrated with financial accounts, as it is not only an environmental issue, but also an issue of transparency, accountability, and fairness. Financial markets cannot see the environmental risks if company accounts do not monitor the financial exposure of their assets to both the direct environmental risks and the indirect external costs of their activities. Natural Capital has to be considered within economic decision-making and its value should be integrated in accounts. Markets failures should be properly assessed to be corrected, in order to make the markets work better. The UE directive 2014/95/UE on non-financial information of listed companies represents a first step, but a higher harmonization of minimum environmental information in reporting is needed. The real economy and financial system can jointly improve market competition based on green assets and environmental performances.

The Italian Observatory on Sustainable Finance serves as a follow up of the National Dialogue on Sustainable Finance and of the G7 work on sustainable finance under the Italian presidency. In September 2017, the Italian Ministry of Environment established a National Observatory on Sustainable Finance. One of the Observatory’s Working Groups is aimed at building up an Italian Financial Centre for Sustainability, which would be driven by the financial community (WG co-Chairs are Borsa Italiana and Febaf – The Italian Banking, Insurance and Finance Federation) and supported by the National Financial Authorities. A memorandum of understanding has been developed by the Observatory working group, and is ready to be signed by partners. The Italian Financial Centre for Sustainability is aimed to make feasibility studies on innovative green and sustainable financial instruments. The plan of the Financial Centre is to be operational in the second part of 2018.

The International Network of Financial Centres for Sustainability has also recognized that financial centres are the key locations where the finance demand and supply come together. Financial centres engaged in sustainability are represented by organizations specifically aimed at expanding demand and supply of green and sustainable financial services across banking, capital markets, investment and insurance.

Question and Answer Session: National Level

There were three questions that were generally addressed to all of the presenters from the Italian national level. The **first question** was with regard to the new business model forecasted for the circular economy and what the business model is and what does it look like? One of the national level representatives answered that it meant to produce more services rather than products, and shift from ownership to user-ship.

For the **second question**: One participant shared that the issue of subsidies is topical in Finland and wanted to know what kind of dialogue the Italian Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea has had with the Ministry of Finance and politicians? One of the national level representatives answered that they have tried to cooperate with other ministries for the collection of data. The MoF was the most cooperative one, as they gave us the data on tax expenditures for use in the *Catalogue of Helpful and Harmful Subsidies*, so that the MoE can assess whether the subsidies were environmentally helpful or harmful.

Another national level representative added that: once the *Catalogue* has been published, stakeholders analyse it in a broad way, such as by political parties and members of the parliament. Parliamentary office liked the Catalogue and offered a notated version and shared it with the parliament. The MoE never suggests what to do with resources, but only point out what is harmful and beneficial to the environment. The Ministry does not make any kind of assessment. This type of assessment may be needed, but the MoE does not do this.

The **third question** was made up of many questions that centered on gathering data from the local level and aggregating it to the national and global level. One of the questions was regarding a dialogue between the regional and national strategies, such as a shared governance mechanism, which can also be extended to indicators and monitoring? In order to give the results of the NSDS you need to collect data that is comparable, which is not the result of interpretation. They need to reflect the local level and the local situation at the national level and global level. In the working group gathering the data, how are the regions involved? Regional representatives are not specialized in many of the areas, so how do you address that? One national level representative answered that the NSDS is a pathway that can reflect the 2030 Agenda. We have to work on streamlining this report to make it more understandable. It should avoid extreme complexity, but also avoid oversimplifications. Indicators and statistical indicators are being prepared by ISTAT over 5 years to be used at the regional level. These are indicators the regions can start with to ensure that activities are being monitored. Regions can also expand on these indicators.

Regional Level

Emilia-Romagna

The route to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Emilia-Romagna begins with internal governance mechanisms: 1) Coordination of the works by the President's Office of the Region, supported by an Operational Coordination Booth composed of experts from the competent structures for methodological support and for alignment with the institution's Economic and Financial Document (DEFR); and 2) Establishment of a cross-sector technical working group, made up of representatives of all the company's General Departments, with the role of overseeing the sector-specific themes relating to the 2030 Agenda and the integration of the key dimensions of sustainability (environment, economy, society).

The work plan is as follows: 1) Construction of a base review line to define the positioning of the Region with respect to the SDGs and the objectives of the National Strategy; 2) Analysis of the indicators identified by ISTAT for the monitoring of the SDGs, reclassified according to the competences of the Region and the effective capacity of the regional policies to directly, indirectly or neutrally affect the targets; and 3) Coordination of the existing sectoral planning tools in an integrated logic, with the introduction of the SDGs as a strategic reference.

The circular economy model is a point of strength and driving force in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Emilia-Romagna. The circular economy is recognized today as the engine to make the economy more competitive and more sustainable for the future. The Emilia-Romagna Region has been forward-looking, able to promptly seize the opportunities that derive from the transition towards more circular and more resilient models of economy. This was done starting from the waste policies: a path undertaken starting from 2015 with the approval of the law 16 to support the circular economy and reduce the regional production of waste, and continued with the Regional Waste Management Plan (PRGR) approved in 2016, which represents the operative instrument of law 16.

Some of the instruments and actions for the Circular Economy are: 1) Incentives for municipal administrations; 2) Application of punctual pricing systems; and 3) Promotion of reuse, with other actions constituting: 1) Participatory path through Forum for the circular economy; 2) Supply chain agreements; 3) Coordination with trade associations for by-products; 4) Industrial symbiosis; and 5) Information and education activities on prevention and recovery. The presenter then shared the different ways in which the Emilia-Romagna region was attempting to use these instruments to address the Circular Economy.

Sardinia

Now that the NSDS has been adopted in Italy, Sardinia must also find a way to adhere to it. It has already identified what needs to be done, such as: 1) Acquire the SDS approach at all levels; 2) Map and systematize policies, plans and actions in progress; 3) Identify convergence actions; and 4) Define objectives-actions-resources on the short- and long-term horizon.

The Interregional Table seeks to ensure that the national plan takes into account the specific regional needs, support adaptation initiatives to align regional and local strategies and plans with the SNAC, and conduct monitoring and evaluation of actions.

The speaker then transitioned to the regional level experiences with sustainable development and how these experiences can be used in the future. This was then also extended to the local level. Both of these experiences were discussed in the context of who, the tasks that must be done, and the successes.

For Sardinia, civil society also plays a very important role.

Trentino

The Trentino Sustainable Development Strategy has 26 indicators and contains 5 strategies, 25 objectives, and 116 actions.

This presentation focused on the Energy, Transportation, and Climate strategy, which seeks to: 1) Improve the knowledge system, revision and programming capacities related to climate change; 2) Accelerate the commitment for a Trentino to Zero Emissions through the integration of territorial planning and transport; 3) Redefining the proportion between the different modes of freight and

passenger transport, both in urban contexts and for long distances; and 4) Disseminate the commitments of the various public and private actors for an accelerated and quality energy transition.

Trentino has already begun to introduce initiatives that focus on high energy use sectors, such as living and mobility, which should help it achieve the objectives of the RSDS, as well as contribute to the NSDS and the 2030 Agenda.

Lombardy

In Lombardy, they began by measuring and benchmarking how they currently stand regarding the SDGs and provided measurements in comparison to Italy and Europe for many of the SDGs, showing where they are doing well and not so well. Lombardy also focuses on waste, production, and consumption and how these issues can better fit into the Circular Economy.

The next step for Lombardy was to then integrate the SDGs and the many different existing plans into one document, which is the Strategy for the Environment. The main goals of the Strategy are to: 1) Protect, maintain and improve the natural capital and landscape in Lombardy; 2) Transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, green circular and competitive economy; and 3) Protect citizen health and welfare from risk.

Umbria

For Umbria, circular policies are also important like Circular Economy and Umbria has been working very much over the past few years on creating circular policies.

In order to help in developing circular policies they created a forum on sustainable development and coordination. There were some themes that were developed that dealt with issues such as environment, healthcare, employment, etc.

As of now, Umbria is trying to get stakeholders more involved, as well as draft plans that make the region more resilient to natural environmental disasters, such as floods.

Question and Answer Session: Regional Level

There were two questions that were asked during the regional level question and answer session. The first question was directed at all regional level representatives and the second question only to the representative from Sardinia. **The first question asked the regional level representatives** what the role of managers/people for sustainable development are and if any of the regions has developed an idea of the capacities and skills that these types of engaged people and activators need?

The representative from **Sardinia** began by answering that the main skill should that activators should have is leadership: people who know what is going on in their councils and territories. They need to be able to lead other people. This role is not connected to the tasks performed in the regional councils. They need to be able to convince and lead other people and overcome the initial hurdles. You need to then build up the skills and capacities to be able to do this.

The representative from **Emilia-Romagna** answered that they are working very well in the environmental committee, but that they need a further debate on the strategy. They will need food for discussion with the government. On circular economy and the activation of the forum, it is good to have activators, but the forum can be important, because activators can work in our region when we act as a laboratory and organize working tables with different stakeholders. We can enable activators

in this way to address the issues. As for public administration, stakeholders need to be involved in the working tables and training for capacities for these processes.

The representative from **Trentino** answered that the activators/trained human resources emerged as a priority in order to define a common language/standard to integrate all projects and strategies and work on a common ground. This has been lacking in the past. In the environmental sector, it used to be a marginal sector in the past.

The representative from **Lombardy** shared that it is a bit complex to answer the questions, as many people are not at the same level and public administrators are lagging behind. 3rd parties are very engaged and approached the government to collaborate in projects. We need to work on continuity of relationships with actors and stakeholders and provide timeframes for further steps.

The second question, which was addressed solely to **Sardinia**, focused on how the working tables in Sardinia were managed. The representative from Sardinia answered that they are coordinated by the central planning unit. They want new economic development projects to be launched. We want them to integrate the SDGs and not create new objectives.

Closing of the ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit

After the final round of questions, the 3rd ESDN Peer Learning Platform and Visit came to a close. Both the Italian representatives from the Ministry of the Environment, Land and Sea and the ESDN Co-Chair thanked all of the participants for joining the Platform and hoped they all were able to find some usefulness and utility in what they had learned over the 1.5-day event. They also thanked all of the speakers for sharing their experiences at the national and regional levels and for providing very interesting insights.

The ESDN Co-Chair shared that the next ESDN event will be the ESDN Annual Conference, which everyone present is invited to attend on October 1-2, 2018 in Vienna as an official event of the incoming Austrian EU Presidency. The theme of this year's ESDN Annual Conference will be: "Stakeholder-Policy Cooperation in the Age of the SDGs: What new approaches are required to be successful?"

The next ESDN Workshop will be taking place on November 19-20, 2018 in Berlin. The topic of the ESDN Workshop is: "Communication of Sustainable Development and the SDGs".