

OECD Policy Coherence Scan of the Slovak Republic

Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for
Sustainable Development



Foreword

In a world marked by rising geopolitical instability, accelerating climate impacts and persistent inequalities, advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has become more urgent than ever. These global pressures are increasingly interconnected and cut across traditional policy boundaries, demanding strategic leadership and effective co-ordination across the whole of government.

Against this backdrop, the Slovak Republic has taken important steps to advance sustainable development. Strategic frameworks, such as Slovakia 2030 and the National Investment Plan (2018-2030), help articulate long-term ambitions and promote an integrated, whole-of-government approach to sustainable development. Efforts to strengthen decision-making processes and co-ordination structures have also contributed to embedding sustainability considerations more firmly across public policy.

This report examines how the Slovak Republic's strategic, institutional, policy and legal frameworks enable the government to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). It highlights progress made and identifies areas where government arrangements and capacities could be reinforced to enhance the impact of public action. The scan provides targeted, practical recommendations to strengthen the role of the centre of government in advancing cross-cutting policy priorities linked to the SDGs and sustainable well-being.

This report is part of the European Union (EU)-funded project Building Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in Austria, Italy and the Slovak Republic. The component for the Slovak Republic was requested by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Recovery Plan and the Knowledge Economy (ODPM) to the EU Technical Support Instrument. Implemented as a multi-country initiative, the project enables peer learning and the exchange of good practices on strengthening PCSD in support of SDG implementation. It contributes to broader OECD efforts to help countries integrate PCSD throughout their policymaking processes.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CoG	Centre of government
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation (EU)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DNS	<i>Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie</i> , Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
IT	Information technology
ITI	Integrated territorial investment
KPI	Key performance indicator
MIRDI	Ministry of Investment, Regional Development and Digitisation of the Slovak Republic
MPK	<i>Medzirezortné pripomienkové konanie</i> , Inter-ministerial comment procedure
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Recovery Plan and the Knowledge Economy of the Slovak Republic
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCSD	Policy coherence for sustainable development
PPK	<i>Predbežné pripomienkové konanie</i> , preliminary comment procedure
RIA	Regulatory impact assessment
SAO	Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SG REFORM	European Commission Reform and Investment Task Force
Slov-Lex	Legislative and Information Portal of the Slovak Republic
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
VNR	Voluntary national review
WISE	Well-being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal

Executive summary

The Slovak Republic has established important foundations for sustainable development through strategic frameworks such as Slovakia 2030, the National Investment Plan (2018-2030) and ongoing work towards a new long-term national vision, Slovakia 2040, as well as a new strategic investment framework, Investment Plan Slovakia. Together with recent reforms to strengthen strategic planning, policy coherence and whole-of-government co-ordination, these initiatives reflect the Slovak Republic's commitment to implementing the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda and promoting more integrated approaches to policymaking. Nevertheless, challenges remain in translating long-term ambitions into coherent and measurable outcomes. Policymaking remains largely sector-driven and links among strategic planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes are not yet sufficiently developed.

Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) provides a practical governance approach for achieving these objectives. As an adherent to the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the OECD Recommendation on PCSD), the Slovak Republic has committed to strengthening whole-of-government approaches, managing policy trade-offs and fostering mutually supportive policies across economic, social and environmental dimensions. This report provides a focused assessment of the Slovak Republic's governance arrangements against the OECD Recommendation on PCSD. It identifies opportunities to strengthen the role of the centre of government (CoG) in supporting sustainable development and well-being.

Main findings

Commitment to sustainable development is evident, but not yet consistently reflected across government

The Slovak Republic demonstrates political commitment to sustainable development, but sustainability is not yet consistently positioned as a long-term priority cutting across sectors. Government programmes contain numerous objectives related to sustainability and recent reforms have sought to strengthen strategic leadership from the CoG in support of long-term planning and policy coherence. However, sustainable development remains largely addressed through sectoral policies rather than a shared government-wide agenda supported by common goals, joint accountability and co-ordinated delivery mechanisms.

Long-term strategic planning is developing but fragmentation remains a challenge

The Slovak Republic has established long-term frameworks, including Slovakia 2030, and is developing a new national vision through Slovakia 2040. Nevertheless, the large number of sectoral strategies, limited use of strategic foresight and weak mechanisms for strategic alignment create risks of duplication, inconsistency and siloed policymaking.

Policy integration is improving but links to budgeting remain weak

Recent initiatives to strengthen strategic planning, performance management and investment prioritisation demonstrate growing efforts to integrate policies across sectors. However, budgetary processes remain insufficiently connected to long-term priorities, limiting the government's ability to translate strategic objectives into co-ordinated investments and reforms. While European Union (EU) funds play an important role, stronger mechanisms are needed to ensure that EU and national funding streams are complementary and contribute to long-term sustainable development.

Co-ordination mechanisms exist, but their strategic potential is underused

The Slovak Republic has established multiple co-ordination mechanisms, including government councils, working groups, task forces, and consultation procedures to support cross-government co-ordination. However, co-ordination can occur late in the policy cycle and focus more on procedural compliance than on strategic problem solving, limiting its contribution to addressing cross-sectoral priorities and trade-offs.

Engagement across levels of government and society remains uneven

Regions, municipalities, civil society organisations, academia and other stakeholders contribute to sustainable development processes, including the preparation of major strategic frameworks such as Slovakia 2030, Slovakia 2040, Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 and the NRRP. However, the timing of their involvement varies across institutions, and engagement may take place too late to meaningfully shape policy design. Although formal consultation mechanisms exist, their effectiveness often depends on individual ministries and teams, with capacity constraints further limiting meaningful participation and shared ownership of reforms.

Impact assessment frameworks have broad coverage but are not yet used strategically

The Slovak Republic's regulatory impact assessment system covers a broad range of economic, social and environmental dimensions. However, impact assessments are often conducted late in the policymaking process and treated as compliance exercises rather than as strategic tools. Limited use of alternative policy scenarios, cost-benefit analysis and assessment of cross-sectoral and cross-border impacts reduces their ability to identify policy interactions, manage trade-offs and assess coherence with long-term sustainable development and well-being objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation capacities are being strengthened

The introduction of a key performance indicator-based monitoring framework, the use of spending reviews and the development of a sustainable well-being framework indicate increasing attention to results-oriented governance. However, existing monitoring systems focus mainly on sectoral performance and do not yet adequately capture cross-sectoral outcomes or long-term impacts on sustainable development and well-being.

The centre of government can play a stronger role in enabling policy coherence

Ongoing reforms provide an opportunity to strengthen the CoG's role in strategic planning, co-ordination, monitoring and implementation. Through the Strategic Co-ordination Centre, the Central Database of Strategic Documents and the emerging network of Strategic Co-ordination Units, the CoG is developing tools to guide long-term priorities, support co-ordination and collaboration across ministries and strengthen alignment among policies, budgets, investments and performance systems, playing a central role in enabling PCSD and supporting sustainable well-being.

Main recommendations

To strengthen PCSD and accelerate progress towards the SDGs, this scan recommends that the Slovak Republic:

1. Establish Slovakia 2040 as the overarching long-term vision for national development, with sustainable development and well-being as central objectives and PCSD as a governance approach. Use the vision to guide future government manifestos, sectoral strategies and investment priorities across electoral cycles underpinned by political leadership and cross-ministerial ownership.
2. Strengthen the strategic role of the CoG by building on recent reforms, including the Strategic Co-ordination Centre, the Central Database of Strategic Documents and the network of Strategic Co-ordination Units. Enhance its capacity to promote alignment among policies, investments and reforms across government.
3. Strengthen links among strategic planning, budgeting and public investment decisions through medium-term and long-term planning frameworks, performance-based approaches and clearer connections between priorities and resource allocation. Leverage Investment Plan Slovakia and the NRRP to better align investment decisions and funding streams with long-term national priorities.

1 Introduction

The Slovak Republic has established important strategic foundations for sustainable development, but challenges remain in translating long-term objectives into coherent policies, budgets and measurable outcomes. This introductory chapter outlines the strategic, fiscal and institutional context for sustainable development in the Slovak Republic. It presents policy coherence for sustainable development as a governance approach for managing policy interactions and trade-offs and strengthening co-ordination across sectors and levels of government. It also considers how a stronger strategic role for the centre of government can support coherent government action and introduces the scope and methodology of this scan.

The Slovak Republic has established important strategic foundations for sustainable development through frameworks such as the Long-Term Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic, hereinafter Slovakia 2030, and the National Investment Plan (2018-2030), which set out long-term sustainable development and investment priorities. The country has made progress in several areas covered by the United Nations 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including relatively strong performance on selected environmental and employment indicators. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to translate long-term ambitions into coherent and measurable outcomes. Assessments, including the European Semester country reports and the Slovak Republic's 2023 voluntary national review (VNR), highlight continuing challenges, including performance below European Union (EU) average in areas covered by 10 of the 17 SDGs (European Commission, 2024^[1]; Slovak Republic, 2023^[2]). This introductory chapter presents the case for strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development and explains the scope and methodology of the scan.

Efforts to implement the SDGs are taking place in a challenging and rapidly evolving European and global context. Across OECD countries, overlapping crises and shifting priorities require governments to respond more quickly and adaptively. Governments are increasingly pursuing long-term sustainability objectives alongside immediate priorities related to energy security, defence and geopolitical stability, creating new trade-offs and placing additional pressure on governance systems to maintain coherence across sectors. Navigating this complexity requires forward-looking and resilient governance systems, capable of steering long-term transformation while responding effectively to short-term shocks. As highlighted in the Slovak Republic's 2023 VNR, several structural challenges continue to affect implementation, including difficulties in integrating long-term SDG-related objectives into financial frameworks and the national budget, fragmented governance arrangements, limited stakeholder engagement and insufficient co-ordination across levels of government. Although institutional frameworks for sustainable development are in place, their links to budgeting, implementation and monitoring remain underdeveloped. Similar challenges are faced across many OECD countries.

The Slovak Republic faces challenges in connecting its long-term development ambitions with operational and financial planning. Moderate gross domestic product (GDP) growth, inflation consistently above the euro area average and pressures on public finances following the Covid-19 pandemic and measures to mitigate high energy prices, have constrained the country's fiscal environment for long-term investment (European Commission, 2024^[3]). Recent OECD analysis estimates a non-housing investment gap of around 29%, indicating persistent structural barriers to investment (OECD, 2026^[4]). Fiscal pressures are also limiting the space available for public investment, including in long-term sustainable development priorities. Stronger links between strategic goals, government priorities and budget processes, will be important for financing and implementing Slovak Republic's long-term development objectives.

Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) provides a governance approach for integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development into domestic and international policymaking and supporting the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2019 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the OECD Recommendation on PCSD), to which the Slovak Republic is an adherent, calls on governments to strengthen their capacity to promote mutually supportive policies across sectors and levels of government, manage trade-offs and address domestic and transboundary impacts in pursuit of long-term sustainable outcomes (OECD, 2019^[5]). The OECD Recommendation on PCSD provides an internationally agreed standard for strengthening the institutional mechanisms needed to enhance PCSD.

PCSD provides the Slovak Republic with a practical approach for managing policy complexity, connecting short-term decisions with long-term goals and supporting co-ordinated and cost-effective action across sectors and levels of government. This is particularly relevant to efforts to strengthen public trust, including confidence in government's capacity to address complex and cross-cutting challenges (OECD, 2024^[6]). A PCSD can help governments connect strategic plans with implementation, address institutional silos and

embed sustainable development considerations into decision-making and budgeting processes. The Slovak Republic's second VNR recognises interlinkages among SDGs and the pivotal role of PCSD in advancing them in an integrated manner. Strengthening PCSD could therefore help translate the Slovak Republic's international and European sustainable development commitments, including the SDGs and the European Green Deal, into more coherent domestic policies and reforms, potentially contributing to public trust through more effective and accountable government action.

The Slovak Republic has taken steps to strengthen its institutional arrangements for strategic planning and whole-of-government co-ordination, with the centre of government (CoG) – notably the Office of the Government, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance – playing a central role. Recent reforms, including the relocation of strategic planning functions to the Office of the Government and initiatives to consolidate governance structures, provide a basis for strengthening strategic leadership and co-ordination.

CoGs are increasingly expected to play a strategic role in supporting integrated policy outcomes. Traditional ways of working are often insufficient to address complex challenges that span multiple sectors and institutional responsibilities. CoGs are therefore taking on stronger roles in whole-of-government co-ordination and in supporting the integration of cross-sectoral policy priorities. In the latest OECD survey conducted in 2023, 79% of responding CoGs reported an increase in the scope of their responsibilities, including stronger roles in monitoring, setting vision and long-term strategic planning (OECD, unpublished^[7]).¹ The CoG can drive strategic agendas, and support and facilitate interministerial co-ordination, translate political vision and priorities into tangible outcomes and promote coherence across the policymaking cycle. Fulfilling this expanded role nevertheless presents Institutional and capacity challenges. In the Slovak Republic, as in many other countries, it may require the CoG to complement its traditional executive support function with a stronger capacity for strategic stewardship. This includes helping government address complex, longer-term cross-cutting national priorities such as well-being, sustainable development and the SDGs. In doing so the CoG can act as a steward of policy priorities, a guide to public administration, a stabiliser during crisis, a communicator of government policy and a bridge between the technical and political levels of government (see Figure 2.2).

The project Building Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in Austria, Italy and the Slovak Republic, supported by the EU Technical Support Instrument and implemented by the OECD in co-operation with the European Commission's Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM), aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms for PCSD in the three participating countries. In the Slovak Republic, the project supports ongoing reforms to strengthen the strategic role of the CoG's, improve cross-government collaboration and better connect policies and financing with sustainable development objectives. It also contributes to the development of a sustainable well-being framework connected to the implementation of the SDGs. Co-ordinated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Recovery Plan and the Knowledge Economy, the project also contributes to the effective governance of European Cohesion Policy Funds. Over the long-term these activities are intended to support progress towards the SDGs by contributing to more coherent, efficient and accountable governance.

This PCSD scan provides a focused diagnostic of the Slovak Republic's strategic, institutional, policy and legal arrangements relevant to strengthening PCSD. It identifies selected institutional challenges and opportunities and provides targeted recommendations for strengthening the CoG's contribution to coherent whole-of-government action for sustainable development. Its methodology combines desk research undertaken in 2024-2025 with stakeholder consultations conducted during the OECD fact-finding mission to Bratislava on 2-4 April 2025. Preliminary findings and factual information were subsequently discussed through online and in-person workshops held on 14 October 2025 and 12 November 2025. The analysis also draws on two capacity-building activities held on 13 November 2025 and 11-12 March 2026. Similar scans undertaken in other countries support peer-learning and help identify common institutional challenges.

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Note

¹ n=26, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Türkiye, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, United States.

2 Strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development in the Slovak Republic

This chapter provides a focused diagnostic of the Slovak Republic's institutional arrangements for strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development. Guided by the OECD Recommendation on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, it examines political leadership, long-term planning, policy integration, whole-of-government co-ordination, stakeholder engagement, impact assessment, and monitoring and evaluation. It identifies opportunities to strengthen the centre of government, connect strategic objectives with budgeting and investment, improve early co-ordination, and manage policy interactions and trade-offs. The chapter also considers how evidence-informed tools and a nationally tailored sustainable well-being framework can support coherent government action and sustainable development across the Slovak public administration.

This chapter provides a focused diagnostic of the Slovak Republic's strategic, institutional, policy and legal arrangements relevant to strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development. It draws on desk research, 17 interviews with senior civil servants from institutions with key responsibilities for implementing the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda, and subsequent online and in-person stakeholder engagements and capacity-building activities. The analysis is guided by the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (hereafter the OECD Recommendation on PCSD) (OECD, 2019^[8]), which provides an internationally agreed framework for strengthening institutional mechanisms to promote coherent government action for sustainable development.

Supporting the Slovak Republic in its ongoing efforts in developing a sustainable well-being framework, the analysis also explores the use of sustainable well-being approaches for creating an evidence base for informing people-centred and integrated policymaking across the many dimensions that matter for people, the planet, prosperity and future generations (OECD, 2026^[9]). The analysis builds on two decades of OECD expertise on sustainable well-being measurement and policy applications, underpinned by the OECD Well-being Framework, adopted in 2011 and revised in 2019, under the oversight of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy, gathering senior representatives of the national statistical offices of OECD countries (OECD, 2020^[3]) (OECD, 2024^[4]).

The diagnostic follows the OECD Recommendation on PCSD's structure, organised around three core pillars and eight guiding principles (see Figure 2.1).

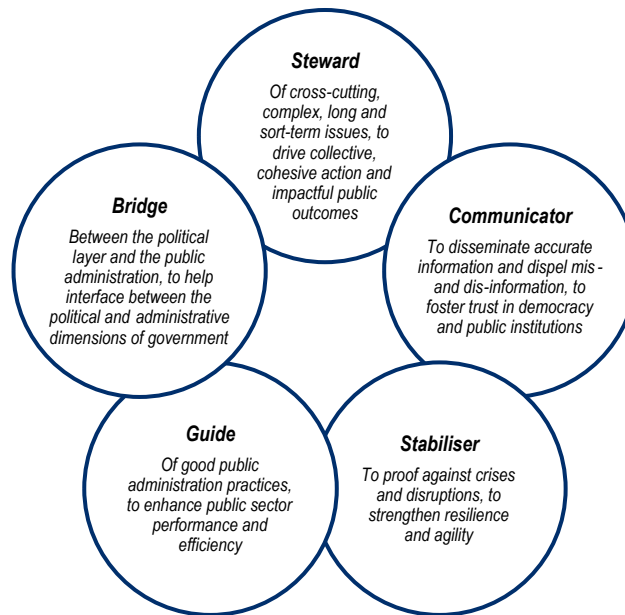
Figure 2.1. The three core pillars and eight guiding principles of PCSD



Source: OECD (2019^[8]), *Recommendation of the Council on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development*, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/oecd-legal-0381>.

The analysis is further informed by the framework developed in the OECD compendium *Steering from the Centre of Government in Times of Complexity* (2024^[5]), which takes a functional view of the centre of government (CoG).

Figure 2.2. Centre of government framework



Source: OECD (2024^[5]), *Steering from the Centre of Government in Times of Complexity: Compendium of Practices*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/69b1f129-en>.

The CoG can play a key role in stewarding the government’s long-term strategic vision and supporting whole-of-government action for sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda, as part of its responsibility to translate goals into clear priorities through the strategic planning process. It is also in a position to encourage and streamline the use of tools that can support strategic learning and provide evidence to inform policymaking processes.

Political commitment and leadership

High-level political leadership and sustained commitment are essential for advancing coherent, integrated action on sustainable development. This entails embedding the 2030 Agenda as a shared national objective, aligning domestic priorities with global commitments and maintaining momentum beyond electoral cycles.

State of play

The Slovak Republic has demonstrated commitment to sustainable development through several strategic initiatives, notably through its Long-term Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Slovak Republic (Slovakia 2030). This strategy builds on the proposal for National Priorities for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which outlines six key national priorities: i) a transition towards a knowledge-based, environmentally sustainable and circular economy with demographic change and a changing global environment; ii) education for a decent life; iii) good health; iv) sustainable settlements, regions and landscapes in the context of climate change; v) poverty reduction and social inclusion; and vi) rule of law, democracy and security (Slovak Republic, 2020^[6]). In 2025, the Slovak government launched the preparation of the Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2040 (Slovakia 2040).¹

The preparation of Slovakia 2040 has been entrusted to the Slovak Academy of Sciences, which has positioned the initiative as an evidence-based, non-partisan and cross-sectoral exercise aimed at

improving quality of life through greater competitiveness, innovation, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. The Vision is structured around four pillars: i) a Dignified Life; ii) a Successful Slovakia; iii) a Sustainable Country; and iv) a Modern State. The process provides an opportunity to establish a broader long-term strategic vision capable to guide policymaking beyond electoral cycles and provide a coherent basis for future development priorities.

While direct references to the 2030 Agenda or the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain limited, the 2023-2027 Government Manifesto includes several sustainability-related priorities. These include environmental protection, climate resilience, sustainable economic growth, clean energy transition, waste management, regional disparities, quality of life and access to education, employment and social protection (Slovak Republic, 2023^[7]). These priorities broadly align with current European Union (EU)-level trends, where a shift towards competitiveness, defence and security, sustainable growth and affordable housing can be observed (European Commission, 2024^[8]).

The manifesto emphasises the importance of public consultation and social dialogue to strengthen inclusion and rebuild trust, with a focus on equality in education and employment reforms. For various policy areas, the manifesto also seeks to establish short-term, medium-term and long-term commitment, for example addressing energy prices and energy poverty in the short term; advancing climate commitments and energy efficiency measures, such as retrofitting, in the medium-term; and investing in renewable energy generation infrastructure over the long term.

The Government Manifesto further attempts to identify cross-sectoral synergies, for example by integrating climate and energy objectives into its goals for industrial and infrastructure policy or by proposing investments in green skills to support labour market resilience. Integrating SDG related objectives into various policy areas, setting time-bound objectives and identifying policy interactions can provide direction to government activities, encourage strategic planning and promote inter-ministerial collaboration.

Opportunities for improvement

Embedding sustainability across government

Despite positive developments, efforts to integrate sustainable development considerations remain largely sector-specific, rather than part of a co-ordinated government-wide agenda. While Government Manifestos are politically negotiated by the coalition partners at the highest political level and naturally reflect varying priorities, they nevertheless serve as a key framework for guiding government activities across all sectors. The current Government Manifesto, however, does not position sustainable development as a government-wide strategic priority with shared headline targets for the entire government. Instead sustainable development related objectives are dispersed in individual policy areas and are not brought together under a shared government-wide framework. This may reinforce sectoral approaches and make sustained cross-government action more difficult.

In this context, the CoG could better support the prioritisation process following the agreement of the Government Manifesto, enabling better alignment with sustainable development objectives and policy coherence over both the short and long terms. This could include working with ministers to help identify concrete commitments and actions defining responsibilities along with the level of priority and timeline for delivery. The CoG could also support the identification of risk areas in the delivery of those priorities by mapping against existing priorities and strategies, stakeholder interests and potential consequences of different policy options. Designing and stewarding the use of digital tools such as dashboards clearly articulating the priority areas in support of sustainable development could be an asset in the monitoring of those priorities and how they are being delivered. More generally, by supporting cross-ministerial co-ordination and ensuring consistency across strategic priorities, the CoG could contribute to embedding sustainable development more firmly as a shared reference point for government action. The recent establishment of the Government Council for Sustainable Development and its Financing is a step forward,

but its potential to elevate sustainable development agendas as a central political priority remains uncertain (see the section on whole-of-government co-ordination).

Box 2.1. Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy promotes a coherent approach to sustainable development

Germany's Sustainable Development Strategy (*Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie*, DNS), last updated in 2025, serves as the country's overarching framework for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Several elements strengthen the DNS' promotion of a coherent approach to sustainable development:

- **Inclusive, society-wide ownership:** The DNS was developed as a shared vision through a comprehensive dialogue process with all sections of society. The most recent update included: conferences with dedicated workshops for each "transformation area" of the DNS and high-level political representation; a dedicated website for online dialogue that allowed users to post comments on the draft DNS; and additional workshops with representatives from key groups such as youth organisations, unions and employer associations, and women's organisations. This structured engagement reinforced the social dimension of sustainability by valuing inclusion and universal participation as an important basis for social cohesion, key to the 2030 Agenda pledge to leave no one behind. Furthermore, these efforts ensured the necessary broad-based commitment to a shared long-term vision.
- **Strategic alignment of planning and budgeting:** The DNS serves as a framework for aligning budgetary decisions with SDGs. A central operational tool of the DNS is the Programme of Sustainability Measures, which identifies specific measures to achieve sustainable development within the remit of the federal government, in areas such as sustainable procurement, mobility, event management, catering or health. Progress is tracked through annual reporting.
- **Systematic integration into legislation:** Following a decision by the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development on 14 November 2022, the SDGs must be considered at an early stage in drafting legislation and legal ordinances. This has been reinforced by the DNS, which requires that new policies and legislation undergo sustainability impact assessments. These assessments are carried out by the ministry responsible for the legislation in question and supported by a computer-assisted electronic sustainability assessment tool, the eNAP. This tool guides users systematically through relevant DNS principles and objectives, improving the quality of regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) and making them easier to perform.

Source: Federal Government of Germany (2025^[9]), *Shaping transformation fairly together: Germany Sustainable Development Strategy Update 2025*, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/998440/2354316/e41c43aab6ad2a8d5aec54e9264a48b3/2025-05-13-dns-2025-en-data.pdf?download=1>.

Elevating high-level leadership for sustainable development

The Competence Act no. 575/2001 and Government Resolution no. 95/2016 establish shared responsibility for sustainable development between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the Recovery Plan and Knowledge Economy (ODPM) and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. However the absence of a single, clearly visible political lead may make it more difficult to sustain attention and accountability for sustainable development across the government.² The CoG – for instance the Office of the Government or ODPM – with its cross-cutting mandate and proximity to executive decision making,

could be well positioned to fulfil a stronger role by anchoring sustainability at the highest political level and ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) across ministries and policy areas.

The CoG's potential to lead on sustainable development and policy coherence is further shaped through its unique position at the interface between the political and administrative spheres of government. In the Slovak Republic, this bridging function is often exercised informally, relying on the initiative of directors-general or the ODPM when communication gaps emerge. Political leaders frequently turn to the CoG for data and strategic framing, particularly under time pressure or in response to EU requirements. Yet, its ability to co-ordinate effectively across government is highly dependent on individual relationships, informal networks and the skills of political advisors, rather than on structured mechanisms or institutionalised processes. Strengthening the CoG's mandate and challenge function and improving co-ordination across ministries could significantly enhance its capacity to drive a coherent approach to sustainable development.

Possible ways forward to strengthen political commitment and leadership

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Establish sustainable development and well-being as central objectives of Slovakia 2040 and use PCSD as a governance approach to support their achievement:** Position Slovakia 2040 as the overarching long-term framework for guiding future Government Manifestos, sectoral strategies and investment priorities across electoral cycles. Use the strategy development process to identify policy interlinkages, trade-offs and co-benefits across strategic areas, such as the green transition, digitalisation, social inclusion and fiscal sustainability. Engage stakeholders through a structured and participatory process to promote transparency, accountability and broad ownership of the strategy's goals and implementation pathways across government and society.
- **Clarify responsibility at the highest political level for stewarding sustainable development:** Build on recent reforms by formally mandate the CoG to lead, co-ordinate and oversee sustainable development and PCSD across the government. Equip the CoG with the authority and capacity to align sectoral policies, manage trade-offs and support strategic alignment, cross-ministerial co-ordination and monitoring. Operationalise this role through a two-pillar CoG model, with responsibilities shared between the Office of the Government and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, supported by strategic units within ministries. Define complementary institutional responsibilities, address overlaps and strengthen mandates where needed to ensure that all relevant actors contribute effectively to a whole-of-government approach to PCSD and the 2030 Agenda. Leverage the network of Strategic Coordination Units, the Central Database of Strategic Documents and the integrated monitoring system to strengthen policy coherence, align strategic priorities and investment, and support whole-of-government co-ordination.

Strategic long-term vision

A long-term strategic vision can help align government and stakeholder action around shared sustainable development objectives, including the SDGs. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD encourages governments to define long-term outcomes and use forward-looking tools such as strategic foresight, scenario planning and systems thinking to guide co-ordinated action across sectors and levels of government. A well-articulated and widely communicated vision helps anticipate future challenges, align short-term decisions with long-term priorities, and safeguard the well-being of future generations.

State of play

The Slovak Republic has taken important steps to establish strategic frameworks that support long-term national sustainable development. Through an inclusive process that involved the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for the Development of Civil Society as well as subnational levels of government, academia, business associations and civil society, the Slovak Republic established six priorities for implementing the 2030 Agenda at the national level: education; sustainable economy; poverty reduction and social inclusion; sustainable settlements; rule of law, democracy and security; and public health (Government Decision no. 273/2018). This formed the basis for drafting Slovakia 2030, which provided a structured long-term framework for translating sustainable development priorities into national policy (Government Resolution no. 41/2021). Slovakia 2030 aimed to integrate SDGs into national and sectoral policies, ensure coherence between short-, medium- and long-term strategies, encourage co-ordination mechanisms for more integrated policymaking and set up an SDG monitoring framework. It further provided guidance on aligning sectoral and local strategies with sustainable development objectives and aimed to lay the groundwork for the operational programmes of various EU funds during the 2021-2027 programming period. For example, Slovakia 2030 integrated priorities of the national strategy for regional and territorial development while the *Methodology for the Programme of Economic and Social Development* at the regional and local levels draws on the priorities outlined in Slovakia 2030. One positive example is Bratislava 2030, the strategic plan of the capital city of Bratislava, which is structured around the SDGs.

The National Investment Plan (2018-2030) was adopted as a core strategic planning instrument to link public investments with national priorities and the SDGs, supporting the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda (Government Decision no. 11/2017). The plan included a list of projects drawn from existing sectoral strategies, but as they are mostly funded via EU funding instruments, the plan did not play a significant role in steering project selection. As for national budget allocations, it appears that the SDGs did not provide the main reference point for investment decisions. To address these shortcomings, the government adopted Resolution no. 613/2025 on the creation of Investment Plan Slovakia, a new strategic framework to strengthen prioritising and co-ordinating public investments. The new approach seeks to create a longer-term pipeline of priority investment projects and improve coherence between strategic priorities, reforms and public investment decisions. However, as the framework is still under development, its ability to ensure that investments are systematically guided by strategic priorities cannot yet be assessed.

The Slovak Republic has also integrated the SDGs into its external policy through development policy, building on its Concept for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the International Environment (Government Resolution no. 5/2017). The Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation (2025-2030) reaffirms the SDGs as a strategic priority of Slovakia's development policy. By integrating cross-cutting themes – notably environment, climate change and gender equality – into all projects and activities of SlovakAid, the strategy seeks to strengthen coherence across development policy interventions.³ Anchoring development policy firmly in the six national SDG priorities and advocating for a stronger integration of development priorities into domestic policy, the strategy aims to ensure that national actions contribute positively to global goals while minimising potential negative impacts abroad. At the international level, the preparation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs) has also supported the long-term vision and cross-government co-ordination and collaboration, and increased the visibility of the SDGs in the national policy agenda. The Slovak Republic's first and second VNRs (2018 and 2023) were the result of the country's efforts to establish the 2030 Agenda as one of its strategic governance frameworks. The process involved extensive public consultations and helped mobilise key stakeholders across government and civil society (Slovak Republic, 2018^[17]; Slovak Republic, 2023^[18]).

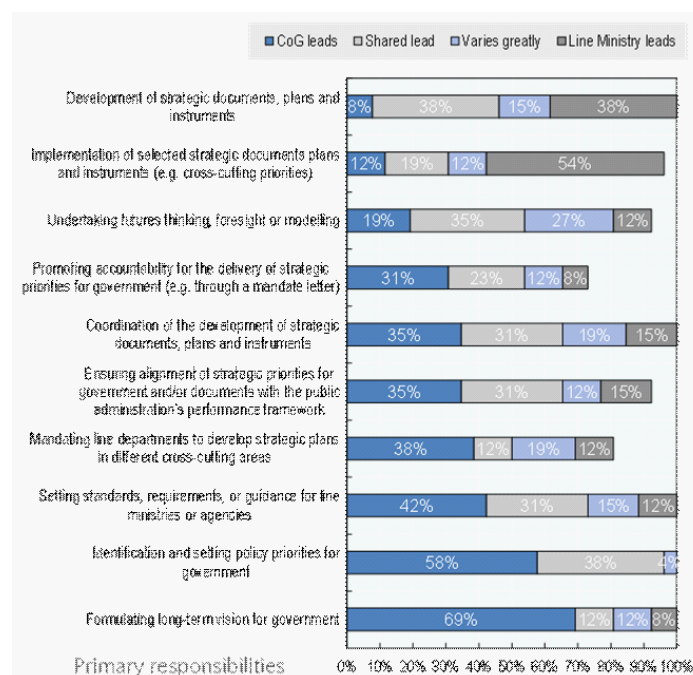
Ongoing reforms aim to further enable strategic leadership directly from the CoG and embed strategic long-term planning into policymaking. The two key CoG institutions, namely the Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister and the Office of the Government, are currently working to enable better co-ordinated and consistent cross-government engagement for long-term strategic planning. In this context, Government Resolution no. 40/2026 established a Strategic Coordination Centre within the Office of the Government as the central co-ordination unit for strategic planning, prioritisation and monitoring of government performance. The resolution also mandates the creation of a Central Database of Strategic Documents containing objectives, indicators and measures from existing strategic frameworks. These developments strengthen the CoG's role in improving visibility and co-ordination among national strategies, reforms and investments including their links to subnational frameworks. To support implementation, the resolution recommends establishing Strategic Coordination Units within line ministries. These units are expected to serve as single contact points for communication with the Strategic Coordination Centre, co-ordinate the provision of data to the Central Database of Strategic Documents and support the preparation of strategic planning documents, including Slovakia 2040, Investment Plan Slovakia and the National and Regional Partnership Plan.⁴

To complement these efforts, the Office of the Secretary General of the Civil Service is working to embed a more performance-oriented and collaborative approach to strategic planning. This includes the introduction of cascading goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) across government departments, and a new framework for monitoring implementation of the Government Manifesto. Reforms also involve plans to update the methodology for drafting strategic documents, aiming to improve consistency and coherence across government strategies.

Considered together, these initiatives have the potential to support multi-year planning, strengthen performance-based governance, improve coherence between strategic planning, investment decisions and implementation, and foster a culture of collaboration, transparency and accountability across the public administration. However, realising these benefits will require sustained engagement from line ministries and buy-in across all levels of government to ensure effective implementation (see the section on policy integration).

Figure 2.3. Most CoGs play a leadership role in formulating long-term vision for government



Source: OECD (2023_[19]), "Survey on strategic decision making at the centre of government", OECD, Paris

Opportunities for improvement

Strengthening long-term planning and foresight

While Government Manifestos play an important role in setting priorities and steering government action, they are subject to change with electoral cycles. To ensure sustained progress on large-scale investments and reforms, it is important to complement manifesto commitments with other long-term strategic frameworks that extend beyond political mandates. The use of strategic foresight tools in policy design and implementation – such as scenario planning, trend analysis and systems thinking – remains limited, despite the existence of analytical capacity within the government (see the section on policy and financial impacts). More systematic use of these tools could strengthen the Slovak Republic's capacity to anticipate long-term risks, identify policy trade-offs and develop adaptive responses.

Box 2.2. Foresight through long-term insights briefings in New Zealand

New Zealand's Public Service Act 2020 requires chief executives of government departments, independently from ministers, to produce a **long-term insights briefing (LTIB) at least once every three years**. The LTIB should explore future trends, risks and opportunities, and is expected to provide information and impartial analysis, as well as policy options for responding to risks and seizing opportunities. The development of such LTIBs is based on eight high-level steps, which include engagement with citizens both on the subject matter and on the draft briefing itself. The first LTIB was presented to a parliamentary select committee in mid-2022. After parliamentary scrutiny, it was made available in the public domain. Public consultation on draft briefings is a requirement of the process.

Prior to the Public Service Act 2020, New Zealand's senior policy community had discussed the challenges of building long-term issues into policy formulation, including the relative dearth of foresight capacity across the public service. It held workshops on a future policy heat map and policy stewardship. While there is no associated programme to build capability in strategic foresight, the LTIB requirement process may catalyse demand for strategic foresight capabilities.

Source: OECD (2023^[13]), *OECD Public Governance Reviews: Czech Republic: Towards a More Modern and Effective Public Administration*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/41fd9e5c-en>.

Building a more coherent strategic framework

Like in many OECD countries, the fragmentation from diverse sectoral strategies creates policy coherence challenges. The existence of over 200 sectoral strategies and the absence of a central co-ordination mechanism to align them under a unified national vision risks policy fragmentation and siloed decision making. From the CoG perspective, this creates difficulties in ensuring alignment with national priorities (such as the SDGs) and in translating political commitments (such as the Government Manifesto) into meaningful and measurable policy outcomes. A shared information technology (IT) platform for tracking strategies, primarily driven by the Office of the Government, has been in place since 2017, but with low awareness and limited enforcement. Once strategic documents are adopted, there is generally no systematic follow-up; implementation depends on the initiative of individual civil servants who may advance action plans informally. In some cases, ministries have developed their own internal systems in response to international reporting demands, for example as seen in the Ministry of Environment's database of strategies and goals. Other pilot initiatives, such as with the education and transport sectors, illustrate potential for more coherent management of strategic documents, but without a centralised framework, they risk remaining isolated efforts. As discussed in the previous section, the Central Database of Strategic

Documents intends to bring together information on strategic objectives, reforms and investments in a single platform and has the potential to improve transparency, facilitate the identification of overlaps and inconsistencies and strengthen the CoG's ability to co-ordinate government action around shared priorities. However, as the system is still under development, its effectiveness in reducing strategic fragmentation and strengthening whole-of-government coherence remains to be seen once it becomes fully operational.

While frameworks like Slovakia 2030 have provided a useful reference point in positioning the SDGs as a guiding framework for government activities, the limited enforceability and lack of integration into budgeting and legislative processes have constrained its impact. Its integration into sectoral planning has been inconsistent, suggesting that high-level political endorsement has not effectively translated into alignment at more technical levels. In practice, strategy development often remains reactive and siloed, with inter-ministerial consultations occurring too late to shape direction. However, recent efforts by the CoG, such as the development of performance monitoring systems and growing interest in standardising strategic planning methodologies, offer a foundation for more co-ordinated and coherent policymaking. Many CoGs play a role in the strategic planning process by helping to foster alignment and broker trade-offs between competing priorities, working from their position which affords them an overview of priorities and offers them proximity to political leadership. The CoG could play a stronger convening role by helping to streamline strategic priorities, fostering cross-ministerial dialogue earlier in the planning process, and serving as a central hub for integrating long-term vision with sectoral action.

Box 2.3. Finland's anticipatory governance is strengthened by inter-ministerial engagement and support from the CoG

In Finland, co-operation and wide-ranging participation are integral to the government's work on the future. For example, all ministries are involved in a joint foresight working group, co-ordinated by the Prime Minister's Office, which acts as a disseminator of foresight information and a forum for communication on foresight within the government. The group is also responsible for co-ordinating joint foresight work between ministries, such as the Government Report on the Future. Produced once every electoral term, the report maps the strategic environment over the geopolitical, economic, social, technological, environmental and legislative drivers of change affecting Finland's future. This horizontal approach generates a more comprehensive assessment of the challenges Finnish society may face in the future (OECD, 2024^[5]).

Inter-ministerial perspectives are also leveraged to inform coherent action across electoral cycles. Ministries' permanent secretaries present a joint outlook – Opportunities for Finland – that identifies challenges and possible solutions on the key questions for the next two government terms, designed to support change in government. These outlooks cover issues such as the green transition, making connections with existing programmes and key actions such as investment in research and the circular economy.

Finland's foresight activities also benefit from effective support at the CoG. The Prime Minister's Office appoints representatives from all ministries to the working group for the co-ordination of government research activities (Government working group for the co-ordination of research | Harnessing knowledge). This body works to transmit research data – including findings from foresight activities – between ministries and for use as a centralised source of data to guide government planning. This approach works to eliminate overlap, ensure continuity and strengthen evidence-informed decision making across government institutions

Sources: Finnish Government (n.d.^[14]), *National Foresight Network*, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/foresight-activities-and-work-on-the-future/national-foresight-network>; OECD (2024^[5]), *Steering from the Centre of Government in Times of Complexity: Compendium of Practices*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/69b1f129-en>.

Possible ways forward to strengthen strategic long-term vision

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Use long-term strategic frameworks to guide policy and investment decisions on sustainable development:** Establish a clear and transparent relationship among Slovakia 2040, future Government Manifestos, sectoral strategies and national investment plans, while respecting their distinct legal and political functions. Use Slovakia 2040 as a long-term reference for strategic and investment planning across electoral cycles. Consider tasking the CoG with co-ordinating key strategic whole-of-government or cross-cutting policy frameworks, such as Slovakia 2040, Investment Plan Slovakia and the National and Regional Partnership Plan, to ensure alignment with long-term sustainable development priorities. Enable these frameworks to guide sectoral action of line ministries, in line with existing legal mandates. Define a set of joint headline targets on sustainable development through a participatory, whole-of-government process to promote shared ownership, policy alignment and accountability for results.
- **Leverage policymaking tools to anticipate risks and enhance coherence:** Systematically embed forward-looking tools, such as scenario planning, strategic foresight, systems thinking or trend analysis in strategy design to anticipate long-term risks, policy interdependencies and potential trade-offs across sectors. Embed sustainable development and policy coherence objectives into existing policymaking processes, establish permanent scientific and analytical support for the CoG and co-ordinate existing analytical capacities within line ministries to support strategic evidence-based decision making, long-term planning and coherence of public action.

Policy integration

Policy integration is critical for ensuring that economic, social and environmental objectives are pursued in a balanced and co-ordinated manner. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD encourages governments to embed sustainable development into all phases of the policy cycle – from planning and budgeting to implementation and monitoring – and to adopt integrated approaches that help identify and manage trade-offs and synergies across government.

The CoG can support greater policy integration with its stewardship role on cross-cutting policy priorities and ability to work across traditional division of responsibilities. Strengthening the CoG's capacity to provide methodological guidance, co-ordinate between agencies and institutions to better link budgeting and planning aims, and steer target setting and performance monitoring can be a key enabler for coherent implementation of a strategic vision.

State of play

The Slovak Republic has introduced several initiatives to support more integrated policy approaches, particularly through recent efforts to strengthen strategic co-ordination and management from the CoG. The Institute for Strategy and Analysis has created a database of all targets in the Government Manifesto and requests that ministries identify ten priorities (balanced between short-, medium- and long-term).⁵ The system aims to align commitments in the Government Manifesto with strategic goals and sectoral KPIs and can help identify cross-sectoral policy interactions and develop joint action plans. This initiative enjoys political backing and includes inter-ministerial consultations, signalling growing momentum toward more coherent and co-ordinated governance.

EU legal and funding requirements provide important incentives for policy integration in the Slovak Republic. For example, the EU funding architecture and more specifically Cohesion Policy Funds,

requires co-ordination, complementarity and coherence between various EU funding streams.⁶ As a result, Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 brought together various EU funding programmes (European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, Just Transition Fund and European Social Fund Plus) to pool funding and ensure coherence and complementarity of investments. Aligning national budgetary frameworks with EU investment cycles can create additional opportunities for more efficient allocation of financial resources and facilitate large-scale investments and reforms (Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic, n.d.^[15]).

The European Semester framework provides an additional incentive for aligning economic, social and fiscal policies, structural reform needs and investments in EU Member States. For example, in the country reports, the European Commission assesses the Slovak Republic's progress in implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, advancing towards EU headline targets on employment, skills and poverty reduction, as well as achieving the SDGs. Implementing the Country-Specific Recommendations of the European Semester often necessitates close collaboration across ministries.

Sustainability commitments such as the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda and climate neutrality by 2050 also underpin sectoral strategies mandated by EU law. For example, drawing up and implementing the Slovak Republic's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 (Government Resolution no. 606/2019) requires co-ordination across different government departments.⁷ The plan establishes key objectives – for instance reducing, by 2030, greenhouse gas emissions by 64.3% (excluding Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (LULUCF)) compared to 1990 and non-ETS greenhouse gas emissions by 22.7% compared to 2005 – and matches them with corresponding measures. The plan is also supported by a comprehensive impact assessment that aims to evaluate the effects of the proposed measures across a range of areas, including macroeconomic performance, health, the environment, employment, skills, social outcomes and the just transition (Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic, 2025^[16]).

Further progress is expected through the new Investment Plan Slovakia, currently under preparation. The plan aims to improve how public investments are identified, prioritised and co-ordinated over the long term. It is developed in consultation with regional and local governments and stakeholders and will be linked to Slovakia 2040, the National and Regional Partnership Plan and national spatial planning documents. Once operational, the plan could support a more strategic combination of funding sources, such as EU funds under shared management, competitive EU programmes and the national budget. Greater transparency around long-term public investment planning could further help attract private funding and foster collaboration with other government actors (e.g. municipalities) as well as private stakeholders (e.g. investors, businesses). Given the Slovak Republic's strong reliance on EU funds, establishing clear national investment priorities and earmarking potential projects for Programme Slovakia 2028-2034 can help the development of a project pipeline, which could support more timely preparation and implementation of projects financed during current and future programming periods.⁸

Opportunities for improvement

Adopting a more strategic and performance-oriented approach to budgeting and investment planning

While current budgeting practices remain largely annual and focus primarily on financial planning, there is an opportunity to better align fiscal policy with long-term strategic priorities. For example, a credible multi-year budgetary framework linked to long-term reform and investment priorities could help increase predictability and policy coherence over time.

At present, long-term priority strategies are not substantively linked to the national budgeting process, reflecting limited formal links between strategic planning led from the CoG and fiscal planning led by the Ministry of Finance. There is currently no formalised joint process between the CoG and Ministry of Finance for setting national priorities early in the budget cycle, resulting in fiscal planning and strategic planning

proceeding on parallel tracks. While informal dialogue exists, it is insufficient to bridge the gap between policy ambition and resource allocation.

Stakeholder interviews noted limited strategic debate at the beginning of the budget process. Instead, budgetary preparation is largely an annual technical exercise, with ministries submitting requests in parallel to developing or revising sectoral strategies, but without a mechanism to ensure these strategies guide resource allocation. This disconnect means that cross-sectoral priorities such as the SDGs or long-term visions like Slovakia 2030 have limited influence over how fiscal resources are planned or distributed.

In addition, a systematic approach to identifying synergies, overlaps and potential contradictions across the national budget, and to strategically combining different funding sources to support, for example, large-scale infrastructure projects remains limited. While Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 brings together various EU funding sources, its focus is largely on ensuring complementarity with the Cohesion Policy Funds. Existing mechanisms to ensure complementarity, such as the risk flagging system under Programme Slovakia 2021-2027, primarily aim to prevent double financing and place less emphasis on maximising synergies, enhancing impact or proactively managing trade-offs. More broadly, there is scope to ensure that national funding and EU funds are planned as complementary sources of investment, and that national priorities are reflected, where appropriate, in the programming and implementation of EU funds within the applicable EU framework. Without a stronger strategic investment framework linking funding decisions to national development objectives, there is a risk that available resources may be directed towards projects that make only a limited contribution to broader objectives such as reducing regional disparities or supporting long-term structural transformation. Strengthening this strategic and long-term complementarity will be particularly important as the Slovak Republic prepares the National and Regional Partnership Plan for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034, which will require a more integrated and forward-looking approach to investment planning in support of long-term policy priorities, including sustainable development.

Currently, discussions on budgeting are largely confined to the technical level with limited involvement from political leadership. Budget allocations are often driven by intermediate goals of individual line ministries and there is no mechanism to reallocate funds depending on performance of financed measures. Spending reviews, introduced in 2016, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of existing expenditure and policies, including their outcomes, and identify opportunities to improve performance through savings, reallocations or alternative measures. There is scope to make more systematic use of their findings in budgetary decision-making and resource allocation, including through stronger follow-up on the implementation of review recommendations. (IMF, 2024^[17]).

Furthermore, SDGs and well-being considerations are not systematically embedded into budgeting or procurement processes. The Ministry of Finance does not currently track expenditures that contribute to cross-cutting priorities such as gender equality or environmental protection through budget tagging or similar tools.

Reinforcing the CoG's stewardship role

Recent reforms have expanded expectations of CoG's strategic and co-ordination functions. As in many OECD countries, the CoG in the Slovak Republic is increasingly expected to steer and co-ordinate government action in support of long-term sustainable development and well-being. This transformation has required new competencies and skillsets for those working in the centre but also a cultural shift toward integrated thinking and horizontal governance. As part of a broader reform strategy and as mentioned above, the Office of the Government is currently testing a new framework, which would allow it to monitor initiatives of all line ministries, including the implementation and performance of sectoral strategies, using KPIs aligned with priorities and targets set out in the Government Manifesto. Under this framework, ministries are expected to report to the Office of the Government twice per year. The first monitoring report, submitted in November 2024, included key targets of the Government Manifesto and related KPIs.

However, aligning strategic goals and KPIs remains challenging due to overlapping priorities, unclear division of responsibilities among ministries and a lack of consensus on long-term objectives.

Stakeholder interviews suggested that, despite existing inter-ministerial consultation processes, there are no formal incentives or requirements for ministries to collaborate during the policy development process, which can result in siloed working practices and fragmented outcomes of efforts towards sustainable development and well-being objectives. The lack of early engagement reduces the potential to identify cross-sectoral impacts or jointly address policy trade-offs. A similar pattern was observed during the development of Programme Slovakia 2021–2027, where limited consultation with key ministries and regional actors in the design phase led to misalignments in implementation. Strengthening the mandate and convening power of the CoG could help address these gaps by fostering more structured collaboration and ensuring joint ownership of strategic priorities such as sustainable development and well-being.

Box 2.4. Strengthening policy coherence through CoG screening and quality assurance in Romania

At the CoG in Romania, the General Secretariat of the Government performs an upstream review of draft strategies, legislation and policy proposals prior to cabinet consideration. This function serves as a policy coherence screening mechanism, assessing alignment with whole-of-government priorities, the Government Programme and existing strategic commitments. Where proposals fail to meet basic coherence requirements, they may be returned for redesign, enabling early correction of inconsistencies before political decisions are taken.

This role has been reinforced through Government Decision no. 379/2022, which mandates the CoG to assess consistency, complementarities and potential contradictions across sectoral and intersectoral strategies. The approach supports early identification of synergies and trade-offs and reduces risks of fragmentation arising from parallel strategies, overlapping co-ordination bodies or externally driven initiatives.

Romania's experience illustrates how embedding coherence checks within existing cabinet routines strengthens the CoG's capacity to support integrated, sustainable policy outcomes.

Source: OECD (2023^[18]), "Coherence and co-ordination at the centre of government in Romania", <https://doi.org/10.1787/3feaa33e-en>.

Enhancing capacities for managing policy interactions

The Slovak Republic's Methodology and Institutional Framework for Developing Public Strategies from 2017 (Government Resolution no. 197/2017) creates a unified approach for preparing, developing, implementing and evaluating strategic documents within the public administration. It introduces a hierarchy and categorisation of strategies and mandates an evidence-based approach to policymaking by embedding RIAs in the strategy development process. However, the methodology's systematic application across ministries and implementing agencies remains limited and it is in the process of being updated to reflect current needs. Many institutions still lack clear responsibilities, incentives and practical tools to consistently identify synergies across policy areas or reconcile conflicting objectives. Despite existing co-ordination platforms (e.g. monitoring committees, thematic subcommittees), collaboration on strategic priorities across levels of government remains ad hoc.

Although the ODPM has methodological responsibility for policy development, stakeholder interviews suggest that its capacity to challenge proposals and support early policy alignment remains limited in practice. The legal framework gives the ODPM ownership of policy development tools, but this role does

not appear to be systematically enforced. According to stakeholder interviews, early co-ordination and policy development generally takes place within line ministries, while inter-ministerial consultations are often treated as a formality rather than an opportunity to strengthen alignment. Officials noted that line ministries may perceive consultations as a procedural burden and may seek to avoid scrutiny of policy proposals, reflecting the fact that this process often takes place too late in the policy development cycle. A clearly defined mandate, combined with the ability to challenge potential misalignments and identify opportunities for further refinement, would enable the ODPM to play a more effective role in shaping policies before they are elevated to the political level. This would help improve the coherence and evidence-based of policy proposals and support their alignment with long-term national strategies and commitments, including the SDGs.

Box 2.5. Capacity building in skills for PCSD

Poland: The Capacity-Building Program for Public Administration to Support the Implementation of the SDGs and Sustainable Development

In Poland, a capacity-building programme was launched to improve staff competencies and strengthen governance frameworks for an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to SDG implementation. Based on an institutional mapping and skills assessment of the Polish civil service, tailored training modules were developed to promote engagement with the 2030 Agenda, complemented by an online knowledge-sharing platform.

These resources are open to public administration and other institutions involved in decision-making processes, designed to enable better integration of the SDGs in national and sectoral strategies, budgeting and monitoring processes. The programme has also raised awareness and interest among users and strengthen a whole-of-government approach to sustainable development.

Portugal: The Integrated Training Path of Capacity-Building in Sustainability for Public Administration (PICSAP)

PICSAP, promoted by the National Institute of Administration (NIA), plays a key role in building civil service capacity. Its modules – ranging from “Concepts and principles of sustainable development applied to public administration”, “Smart cities and sustainability”, “2030 Agenda– From strategy to action: Integrating SDGs with management instruments”, to “Leadership for sustainability” – combine fundamental concepts with practical implementation approaches.

PICSAP actively promotes awareness of the SDGs and encourages participants to adopt sustainability-oriented administrative practices. This approach strengthens individual skills and contributes to creating a more sustainable organisational culture within the public administration. Interviews with innovators and sustainability experts, innovation workshops, webinars on cross-cutting issues and informal meetings like CaféINA to discuss sustainability topics complement PICSAP, providing a holistic approach to capacity building and SDG integration. Together, these initiatives play an important role in integrating the SDGs into NIA’s activities, fostering continuous dialogue and idea exchange among INA members and guests.

Sources: Republic of Poland (2023^[19]), *Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Poland: The 2023 National Report*, <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2023/VNR%202023%20Poland%20Report.pdf>; OECD (2025^[20]), *OECD Policy Coherence Scan of Portugal: Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for Sustainable Development*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5f8b9473-en>.

Possible ways forward to strengthen policy integration

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Align strategic frameworks with budgeting to enhance coherence and impact:** Use the national budget as a strategic tool to connect long-term objectives, as set out in, for example, Slovakia 2030 and the forthcoming Slovakia 2040, with investment decisions, sectoral planning and performance monitoring. Consider moving beyond the current annual (N+1) budgeting approach by developing a credible multi-year budgetary planning framework linked to long-term policy and investment priorities. Strengthen coherence and efficiency by identifying policy synergies, overlaps and trade-offs, through mechanisms such as budget tagging for cross-cutting priorities, including the SDGs, and by integrating insights from spending reviews. Leverage the preparation of the National and Regional Partnership Plan and Investment Plan Slovakia to define and sequence joint national investment priorities, supported by a stronger co-ordination role for the CoG to better connect long-term strategic planning with financial decision making. Ensure that national funding and EU funds are planned as complementary sources, and that national priorities are reflected, where appropriate, in the programming and implementation of EU funds within the EU applicable framework. Strengthen mechanisms for prioritising investments based on their expected contribution to national objectives, including reducing regional disparities, and strengthen territorial cohesion to avoid fragmentation of resources and maximise the impact of available funding.
- **Strengthen the strategic role of the CoG in driving policy coherence:** Consider assigning clear responsibility to the CoG for co-ordinating key strategic frameworks, including Slovakia 2040, Investment Plan Slovakia and the National and Regional Partnership Plan, to allow for a more systematic monitoring of sectoral initiatives, identify opportunities for joint action and improve transparency. Leverage existing analytical and co-ordination capacities within the National Implementation and Coordination Authority, developed through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, to strengthen the CoG's ability to perform strategic steering and co-ordination functions. Use the KPI system to identify shared outcomes, policy interactions, and potential trade-offs among government priorities, and to promote cross-ministerial collaboration and joint ownership of cross-cutting and long-term objectives, including sustainable development and well-being.
- **Build civil service capacity to manage policy interlinkages and trade-offs:** Provide structured and practice-oriented training to equip civil servants with the skills to identify policy interdependencies, manage trade-offs and design coherent policy solutions, complemented by peer learning opportunities. Strengthen the methodology for strategy development by incorporating practical guidance on identifying policy interlinkages, assessing trade-offs and synergies, and aligning strategies with long-term sustainable development priorities. Promote the systemic use of the revised methodology across government and throughout the policy making cycle, including planning, implementation and evaluation, to improve coherence, policy quality and long-term impact.

Whole-of-government co-ordination

Whole-of-government co-ordination is fundamental to ensuring coherent and aligned action across ministries and levels of government. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD calls on governments to use effective institutional mechanisms to address policy interactions across sectors and align actions across levels of government. This includes leveraging existing high-level co-ordination mechanisms – such as inter-ministerial committees and co-ordination bodies located within the CoG or a lead line ministry – as

appropriate. These mechanisms should have clear mandates, authority, leadership and sufficient capacity to enable integrated decision making and ensure that sectoral policies support sustainable development (OECD, 2024^[12]; OECD, 2019^[8]).

CoGs can play a key role in this process by convening ministries, connecting political priorities with implementation and facilitating the resolution of cross-sectoral issues. Supporting whole-of-government co-ordination and policy coherence requires COGs to engage with a range of complex governance challenges, including strategic prioritisation, the management of trade-offs, and the operationalisation of long-term policy objectives, all of which are central SDG implementation (OECD, 2023^[19]).

State of play

The Competence Act (Act no. 575/2001)⁹ obliges ministries and other central bodies of the state to work together in carrying out their tasks. A range of co-ordination mechanisms – including government councils, working groups and task forces – exist to facilitate collaboration on cross-cutting issues such as sustainable development. For example, the mandate of the Coordination Committee for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic includes addressing possible policy inconsistencies across sectors and co-ordinating activities to align with the country's development objectives.¹⁰ Notably, the new Government Council on Sustainable Development and its Financing (established in January 2025)¹¹ consolidates three previously separate councils focused on the 2030 Agenda, the European Green Deal and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan and aims to ensure coherence between policies and funding for sustainable development and now includes broader priorities. This consolidation could simplify the institutional landscape and provide a platform for discussing the relationship between sustainable development priorities and financing. The resolution establishing the government council also explicitly links well-being to sustainable development, mandating the Statistical Office, the ODPM and the Office of the Government to develop a concept for measuring well-being linked to the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda. Given the absence of a dedicated co-ordination mechanism for well-being, the proposed national concept for measuring well-being recommends establishing a voluntary taskforce within the framework of the Government Council on Sustainable Development and its Financing, to encourage inter-ministerial co-ordination on well-being related policies and promote a shared understanding and application of the well-being framework across ministries.

A mandatory inter-ministerial consultation process via the Legislative and Information Portal of the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (Slov-Lex) allows ministries to consult with other government bodies on draft strategies, laws and national negotiating positions related to EU legislative proposals. In parallel, the RIA process, led by the Ministry of Economy, includes an initial commenting and consultation phase to support information exchange and co-ordination at the early stages of policy development. Additionally, the network of Strategic Coordination Units within line ministries, serving as single contact points for communication with the CoG, has the potential to improve information sharing, transparency and more integrated and strategic planning across ministries. However, these arrangements are still being implemented and their effects on whole-of-government co-ordination cannot yet be assessed.

In practice, however, whole-of-government co-ordination remains challenging, as formal platforms and mechanisms often function more as procedural channels than as forums for joint-problem solving and the management of cross-sectoral trade-offs. Strengthening operational leadership and creating clearer incentives for collaboration could help make existing structures more effective in supporting coherent, whole-of-government policymaking

Opportunities for improvement

Strengthening cross-government co-ordination structures

Inter-ministerial knowledge sharing largely relies on the initiative and goodwill of individual civil servants or teams, rather than on formalised structures or processes. While the annual Plan of Legislative Tasks, led by the Ministry of Justice, provides an overview of planned legislative activities, it offers limited insights into their scope or potential implications for other policy areas and does not cover non-legislative initiatives. More broadly, no fully operational mechanism currently provides ministries with a consolidated forward view of planned legislative and non-legislative initiatives and their potential cross-sectoral implications.¹² Most ministries lack a designated inter-institutional unit capable of monitoring developments in other ministries, and the role of the cabinet varies significantly across ministries. Until recently, there was also no functional network of inter-ministerial focal points. This fragmentation limits the ability to identify synergies across policy areas or anticipate potential trade-offs and negative impacts across sectors. The development of a central database of strategies, combined with the network of strategic co-ordination units within line ministries could help address these gaps by improving transparency and enabling a more systematic identification of synergies across policy areas.

The CoG does not yet have a clearly defined mandate under the Competence Act, nor sufficient capacity to lead whole-of-government strategic planning and support horizontal co-ordination across ministries. This limits its ability to promote early alignment, clarify responsibilities for cross-cutting issues and institutionalise collaboration beyond ad hoc processes. Strengthening the CoG's convening role during policy design and priority-setting stages could enable strategic focal points across ministries to engage earlier, rather than primarily at the end of the process. As elaborated in the following sections, stakeholders noted that consultations often take place too late to support meaningful discussion, joint problem-solving and alignment. While some promising pilot initiatives are underway, for example processes of reporting on KPIs to the Office of the Government, line ministries continue to operate largely independently. The CoG could further strengthen its stewardship function by creating a trusted space for line ministries to discuss whole-of-government priorities, monitor progress and identify opportunities for joint action.

Box 2.6. Portugal: Strengthening the internal structure for SDG co-ordination

PLANAPP – the Centre for Planning and Evaluation of Public Policies – is a state body based within the CoG, responsible for steering strategic planning, delivering forward-looking policy analysis and co-ordinating SDG implementation in Portugal.

PLANAPP's co-ordination role is strengthened by several elements:

- **High-level mandate:** Under the Council of Ministers Resolution no. 5/2023, PLANAPP is tasked with mapping and monitoring national plans and other public policy instruments that contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and their targets, with a view to ensuring coherence across sectors, including water management, clean energy, industrial innovation and urban development.
- **Inter-ministerial network:** PLANAPP co-ordinates REPLAN, a network that strengthens co-operation and knowledge sharing on strategic planning and foresight, helping align sectoral policies with cross-cutting strategies.
- **Anticipatory governance:** Portugal 2050: Scenarios and Vision is a forward-looking project by REPLAN that aims to build a long-term strategic vision for the country. This vision will be defined by exploring future scenarios in consultations with national and international actors.
- **Ex ante analysis:** Together with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, PLANAPP conducts ex ante reviews of planning instruments, providing recommendations to integrate sustainability into public policymaking, promoting greater strategic coherence for sustainable development.
- **Methodological tools:** PLANAPP has developed guidance for legislative impact assessments, requiring consideration of environmental, social and economic impacts.

Source: PLANAPP (n.d.^[21]), "PLANAPP – Presentation", <https://planapp.gov.pt/planapp-presentation/>.

Improving inter-ministerial co-ordination for integrated policymaking

While the Competence Act mandates inter-ministerial co-operation, it assigns responsibilities largely along sectoral lines and does not fully reflect the cross-cutting nature of many policy challenges. Ministries are not formally required to consult one another on draft strategies or laws. As a result, practices of co-design and co-creation remain limited. When consultations do take place, they often occur late in the policy process, or consulted ministries may not respond in a timely manner, reducing opportunities for substantive input and early alignment. This is particularly relevant for the preparation of common positions for Council of the EU negotiations, where late consultation of the responsible ministry or limited responsiveness from consulted ministries, can undermine policy coherence and make it more difficult to reflect diverse sectoral perspectives and priorities.

Inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms are often established on an ad hoc basis, for example in response to specific events or to support the preparation of individual strategies, and may meet infrequently or remain inactive.¹³ The newly merged Government Council on Sustainable Development and its Financing illustrates this challenge. While it has been formally established, it has yet to hold its first meeting or set a work plan. As a result, strategic priorities that require cross-sectoral collaboration (e.g. sustainable development or well-being) may face risks of fragmented or inefficient implementation. While government councils can adopt resolutions recommending government action on a specific matters, they do not have formal decision-making authority and tend to function primarily as platforms for information exchange rather than joint policy development. Strengthening their strategic role and their capacity to formulate joint advice, monitor follow-up and escalate unresolved issues for political decision, could support overcoming

sectoral silos, encourage collaboration and ultimately contribute to more coherent and integrated policymaking.

Box 2.7. Luxembourg: Working methods for inter-ministerial co-ordination and communication

The Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development, chaired by the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and Biodiversity (vice-chairs: Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and Ministry of the Economy) is the leading body to promote the implementation of Luxembourg's National Plan for Sustainable Development. In doing so, the commission, in which all ministries are represented, is also an important inter-ministerial forum to promote PCSD across all policy areas as well as to discuss potential synergies and trade-offs between sectoral priorities.

Luxembourg has also adopted new working methods to better integrate the national and international dimensions into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. A close link has been established between the work of the Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development, which is the central co-ordinator of domestic sustainable development policies, and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Development Cooperation, which discusses policies likely to have an impact on developing countries. This co-ordination ensures that the two approaches to sustainable development are consistent and complementary.

Finally, the mechanism of the "Pre-Conseil meeting", held in preparation of each government ministerial meeting, allows civil servants to solve policy tensions, balancing ministerial views and potential trade-offs before moving the decision to a political level. Although this mechanism does not specifically hold a responsibility for ensuring PCSD, it is where, in practice, policy arbitration takes place.

Sources: OECD (2023^[22]), "Luxembourg Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD): Light-touch institutional scan", [https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PCSD\(2023\)1/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PCSD(2023)1/en/pdf); OECD (2024^[23]), *Unleashing Policy Coherence to Achieve the SDGs: An Assessment of Governance Mechanisms*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a1c8dbf8-en>.

Possible ways forward to strengthen whole-of-government co-ordination

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Enhance inter-ministerial knowledge sharing and co-ordinated policy responses:** Build on existing platforms – such as the Plan of Legislative Tasks – and leverage current initiatives – such as the development of a central database of strategies – to make information on upcoming legislative and non-legislative initiatives and their expected cross-sectoral impacts available in a structured and timely manner. Consider establishing or designating strategic co-ordination units or focal points within ministries, to monitor developments in other policy areas and contribute to policy proposals with interlinked impacts. Strengthen the role of the CoG by giving it a clear procedural function to identify major or cross-cutting policy proposals, convene relevant ministries early in the policy design stage, and follow up on agreed actions before proposals enter formal consultation. Assess whether the Competence Act or supporting government rules should clarify relevant co-ordination functions and responsibilities.
- **Embed inter-ministerial consultation at the policy design stage:** Strengthen existing mechanisms such as Slov-Lex and the early phases of RIAs, by promoting early consultation for proposals with cross-sectoral impact while there is still scope to shape policy options. Introduce common deadlines and structured feedback loops to ensure timely, consistent and meaningful input across ministries, and to improve the quality and coherence of policy proposals.

- **Make co-ordination mechanisms more strategic and outcome-oriented:** Clarify and streamline the mandates of existing co-ordination bodies – including government councils, working groups and task forces – by defining work plans, meeting schedules, expected outputs and follow-up procedures, and by tasking them with reviewing major cross-cutting policy proposals, identifying potential spillovers, synergies and trade-offs, and proposing options to support coherent implementation. Clarify participation arrangements for co-ordination bodies to ensure that relevant ministries, the CoG and, where appropriate, external stakeholders are involved consistently, at the appropriate level of seniority, and with clear responsibilities for contributing evidence and following up on agreed actions. Use the development of Slovakia 2040 as a pilot to test a structured whole-of-government co-ordination process, including early engagement of relevant ministries, identification of policy interlinkages and trade-offs, agreement on shared priorities and follow-up on implementation. Lessons from this process could inform co-ordination practices for other cross-cutting policy areas.

Subnational engagement

Effective engagement with subnational levels of government is essential for designing coherent policies and supporting their implementation across levels of government. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD encourages governments to develop tools that support local and regional government in applying PCSD, localising the SDGs and promoting synergies among national regional and local policies within the scope of their respective responsibilities. The CoG can support more effective engagement with subnational actors by providing opportunities for regional and local authorities to contribute to the early design of national priorities with territorial implications.

State of play

The Slovak Republic's legal framework defines the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of governance¹⁴ and allows the involvement of the subnational level in the legislative process. In line with the Law on the Lawmaking Process (Act no. 400/2015) and the Government Legislative Rules (*Legislatívne pravidlá vlády*), subnational stakeholders have the possibility to comment on draft laws and strategic documents as part of the inter-ministerial comment procedure (*medzirezortné pripomienkové konanie*, MPK). Ministries are not formally required to respond to comments submitted by self-governing regions, municipalities or representative associations, but stakeholder consultations suggest that ministries often do so in practice to maintain constructive working relationships and facilitate future co-operation. While not mandatory, consultation is also possible as part of the preliminary comment procedure (*predbežné pripomienkové konanie*, PPK), allowing for subnational engagement at the early stages of the policy design.

There are examples of a more systemic subnational involvement in the design of strategies and plans. For instance, regions contributed to the development of Slovakia 2030 and the National Investment Plan (2018-2030) and participated in discussions related to the Ukraine agenda, demonstrating the potential for inclusive and collaborative policymaking. Additionally, several municipalities have established more structured working relationships with line ministries, particularly on technical matters. These examples suggest that effective co-operation between national and subnational levels often depends not only on formal consultation requirements but also on established working relationships and regular dialogue between institutions. At the same time, the extent of subnational engagement continues to differ across ministries and often depends on the initiative and approach of the team leading the strategy in question.

Subnational governments, including municipalities and self-governing regions, play a critical role in delivering essential public services and often act as frontline responders in times of crises, demonstrating greater agility and responsiveness, as seen during the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis. Some

regions have developed long-term visions to set out the direction and strategic priorities of the regional development. One example is the *Economic and Social Development Programme of the Self-Governing Region of Bratislava* worth highlighting (Bratislava Region, 2021^[24]). The programme is data-driven and covers a broad range of policy areas, including demographic trends, sustainable development, labour market developments, social inclusion or technical infrastructure. It sets overarching goals and strategic priorities for each area and links them to specific targets, KPIs, investment needs and key investment projects. The region systemically involves local stakeholders – such as mayors, businesses, social partners and academia – in design, implementation and evaluation processes of the programme. Given that the region contributes to almost 30% of national gross domestic product (GDP) and accounts for 69.4% of the Slovak Republic's foreign direct investment, its commitment to sustainability is particularly relevant (Bratislava Region, 2021^[24]). Its economic weight can inform national priorities, provide a model for forward-looking and integrated policymaking and support broader national progress towards the SDGs.

Voluntary local reviews offer another means to engage regions, cities and municipalities in SDG implementation. They can help bring the 2030 Agenda closer to people, while serving as tools for long-term strategic planning and implementation, supporting more coherent policymaking and vertical coherence across levels of government. For example, the Self-Governing Region of Bratislava has actively advanced integrated policymaking through strategies such as Bratislava 2030 and its City Development Plan 2022-2030 (Bratislava Region, 2022^[25]).

EU Cohesion Policy, one of the EU's main investment programmes which aims to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion across the European Union has been cited as another channel for regional involvement in national policy planning. In the Slovak Republic, this is reflected in Programme Slovakia 2021-2027, which offers regions various platforms (e.g. monitoring committees and thematic subcommittees) to contribute to shaping investment priorities and development objectives.

Opportunities for improvement

Strengthening subnational governance and capacities

The Slovak Republic operates under a three-tier governance structure – comprising the state, self-governing regions and municipalities – but structural barriers limit meaningful subnational engagement in national policymaking. Around 91% of the country's 2890 municipalities¹⁵ have fewer than 3 000 inhabitants, yet municipalities broadly hold similar competences irrespective of their size and administrative capacity (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, n.d.^[26]). Many municipalities lack sufficient financial and human resources to meet their growing responsibilities, which remain largely limited to implementation rather than decision making. This hampers their ability to plan strategically or participate meaningfully in national policymaking. As a result, subnational engagement in national decision making remains largely procedural rather than substantive, weakening vertical coherence between levels of government. Moreover, the fragmented territorial structure makes co-operation and information exchange across municipalities and regions more difficult, including their ability to co-ordinate on their engagement with the national level. Subnational governments also depend heavily on EU funds to deliver basic services to citizens. Public administration reform, as called for by various subnational level actors, could help improve efficiency of the public service, reduce costs and contribute to consolidating the national budget in line with EU fiscal requirements and support better alignment of activities across levels of government (SK and ZMOS, 2026^[27]).

Broadening subnational participation in national policymaking

Although formal mechanisms for co-ordination between national and subnational levels are mandated by law, they often fall short of enabling meaningful collaboration in practice, particularly in strategic, cross-cutting areas such as sustainability and infrastructure planning. Seeing that involvement in the

preliminary comment procedure (PPK) is not mandatory, subnational authorities are rarely involved in the early stages of policy design. When consulted, for example as part of the inter-ministerial comment procedure (MPK), they are often presented with final draft proposals, which limits opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the outcomes. This disconnect can result in national strategies and programmes that are not flexible enough to adapt to different regional contexts and needs. Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 was cited as an example where limited regional involvement during the design phase is leading to implementation challenges given the fact that execution largely depends on subnational governments. The CoG could help bridge this gap by aligning regional and national priorities with EU funding cycles and fostering earlier, more systematic engagement of regional actors.

Although regions are expected to develop their own strategic plans, they receive limited guidance on how to align these with national priorities. Short-term political considerations can override long-term, evidence-based planning, contributing to a persistent mismatch between national and regional priorities and weakening policy coherence. Large-scale investments tend to focus on factors such as land availability, transport connectivity and natural resources and broader socio-economic suitability of the area is not always assessed comprehensively. Recent industrial park developments illustrate the importance of considering territorial conditions and engaging local authorities and communities early in the investment process. Stakeholder interviews indicate that experience has varied across projects, depending on their location, historical context and the nature of the proposed investment. For example, the proposed battery plant in the Šurany Industrial Park (Nové Zámky District, Nitra Region), generated petitions and protests after positive initial expectations, while the brownfield redevelopment of the Handlová Industrial Park (Prievidza District, Trenčín Region) has benefitted from more transparent and continuous communication with municipal representatives and residents, contributing to a more positive public reception (MH Invest, 2025^[28]) (City of Handlová, 2026^[29]). This highlights the value of strengthening early consultation, territorial impact assessment and transparent decision-making processes for projects with significant territorial implications.

Possible ways forward to strengthen subnational engagement

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Strengthen local administrative capacity for coherent policy implementation:** Invest in structured and recurring capacity-building programmes for municipal and regional civil servants, focusing on strategic planning, financial management, evidence-informed policymaking and policy evaluation. Provide regions with practical guidance, templates and examples to support the alignment of regional development strategies with national priorities and sustainable development objectives. Introduce local and territorial impact assessments into the revised methodology for developing public strategies to better account for differentiated impacts across places. Promote inter-municipal and inter-regional co-operation, including through shared services, joint planning arrangement and knowledge sharing platforms, to pool expertise and resources, reduce administrative costs and strengthen vertical co-ordination.
- **Deepen subnational engagement through structured national-regional dialogue:** Define a clear process for the CoG to support vertical coherence by involving regional and local authorities early in the design of policies with significant territorial impacts, including through RIAs and preliminary comment procedure. Consider specifying this co-ordination role in the Competence Act or supporting government rules, where appropriate. Strengthen regional participation in government councils by clarifying expected contributions, establishing regular meeting schedules and introducing follow up mechanisms for adopted resolutions. Use the preparation of the National and Regional Partnership Plan as a pilot test structured national-regional dialogue, including joint identification of investment priorities, assessment of territorial impacts and regular follow up on

agreed actions. This could help strengthen complementarity between EU-funded investments, national priorities and regional sustainable development objectives.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is a cornerstone of sustainable development. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD calls on governments to engage proactively with stakeholders – such as civil society, the private sector, social partners and academia – across different phases of the policy cycle, including through the exchange of knowledge and expertise. Such engagement can help ensure that policies reflect diverse needs and perspectives, strengthen accountability, raise awareness of sustainable development commitments and foster broader support for coherent policy outcomes.¹⁶

State of play

The Slovak Republic has established a formal framework for stakeholder engagement in policymaking. In line with the Law on the Lawmaking Process and the Government Legislative Rules, government-initiated legislative proposals and strategic documents submitted to the National Council are subject to public consultation as part of the inter-ministerial consultation procedure (MPK).¹⁷ This process allows stakeholders to provide comments. Draft proposals may be exempted from the consultation procedure or subject to shortened consultation periods in duly justified cases such as threats to public health, national security and natural disasters. In addition, the preliminary comment procedure (PPK), taking place prior to the inter-ministerial consultation as part of the RIA, provides another avenue for stakeholders to comment. Co-ordinated by the Ministry of Economy, it predominantly targets business stakeholders likely to be most affected by the proposal. Consultations with civil society and other non-industry organisations is possible but remains at the discretion of the policymaker.

Building on reform activities to accede to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, one of the first steps to strengthen stakeholder involvement was through the Open Government Initiative, which the Slovak Republic joined as one of the first countries in 2011 (Sloboda, Staronová and Suchalová, 2022_[30]).¹⁸ To further strengthen dialogue and co-operation between civil society organisations (CSOs) and government institutions, the government established the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for the Development of Civil Society (through Resolution no. 309/2012) (hereafter Office of the Plenipotentiary). This office also leads a national project with 14 umbrella organisations, aimed at building and strengthening CSO capacities to be equal partners in policymaking (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, n.d._[31]).¹⁹ It also plays a key role in establishing standards for top-down-managed participatory processes across governance levels. To improve transparency and participation of stakeholders in the law-making process, the Slovak government launched Slov-Lex in 2016, an online platform providing access to draft legislative and non-legislative acts and facilitating consultation between ministries as well as external stakeholders (Sloboda, Staronová and Suchalová, 2022_[30]).

These early reforms have since been complemented by further efforts to institutionalise stakeholder engagement and strengthen co-operation between government and civil society. The Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations serves as an advisory, co-ordinating and initiating body to support dialogue between ministries, state agencies and representatives of umbrella CSOs. The Strategy of Civil Society Development for 2022-2030, together with its Action Plan for 2022-2026, sets out key challenges, strategic objectives and concrete measures to support the development of civil society, strengthen open government and deepen co-operation between civil society and the public sector. In addition, the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic 2024-2026 represents a further effort to foster participatory policymaking (The Office of the Plenipotentiary of the

Slovak Government for the Development of the Civil Society, 2023^[32]), in line with the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017^[33]),.

Since 2025, the responsibility for nominating civil society representatives to participate in co-ordination bodies involved in managing EU funds has been assigned to the Chamber of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations under the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organisations, a role previously shared with the Office of the Plenipotentiary.²⁰ This change is intended to strengthen the independence and legitimacy of CSO participation in management of EU funds and to support more structured stakeholder engagement in financial and investment decisions.

However, CSOs active in advocacy have raised concerns about the coherence of some policy initiatives. According to consultation feedback environmental groups have highlighted perceived inconsistencies between stated climate priorities, and budget allocations, as well as to the continued use of fossil fuel subsidies in the absence of a clearly defined phase-out strategy (also highlighted in the latest update of the National Energy and Climate Plan). Similar concerns were raised in relation to selected Infrastructure projects, which some stakeholders viewed as insufficiently aligned with broader sustainability objectives.

Opportunities for improvement

Strengthening structures for systematic stakeholder engagement

Despite existing legal obligations for public consultation, challenges remain regarding their enforcement and stakeholder engagement is not systematically embedded throughout the policy cycle to inform policy design, implementation and evaluation. Engagement tends to be limited to business associations and trade unions and often takes place only after draft proposals have been prepared (OECD, n.d.^[34]). Meaningful stakeholder involvement in the early stages of policy design therefore largely depends on the responsible team within the respective line ministry. The Office of the Plenipotentiary has developed methodological guidelines in 2021 to establish standards for top-down managed participatory processes, however following the most recent election and change in government, the documents are still pending formal approval. The Office of the Plenipotentiary is currently working on a new methodology to guide the structured and centrally supported involvement of CSOs and the public as part of the methodology for developing public strategies.

Recent political developments may create challenges for establishing and maintaining a structured and constructive stakeholder engagement. The European Commission's 2024 Rule of Law Report noted concerns that the criminal law reform, including amendments to the Criminal Code and the dissolution of the Special Prosecutor's Office, were adopted through fast-track legislative procedure and without appropriate consultation, raising concerns about the process and content of the reform (European Commission, 2024^[35]). This underlines the importance of ensuring that accelerated legislative procedures are used only in justified circumstances and do not limit opportunities for meaningful consultation where standard procedures would be feasible. While EU funding is excluded from the scope of the measure, stakeholders have expressed concerns that increased reporting and labelling requirements could disproportionately affect organisations involved in advocacy, monitoring government actions and promoting right-based agendas.

While CSOs are represented in most government councils, these meetings tend to be formal and high level, and are not always well suited to regular, in-depth dialogue between policymakers and civil society. This limits opportunities for CSOs to provide early input, contribute evidence, identify implementation challenges and support follow-up on policy outcomes.

Supporting civil society capacity for effective participation

Many CSOs face constraints in contributing effectively to policymaking, largely due to limited human resources and gaps in technical expertise. Their funding is predominantly project-based and often provides limited support for core functions such as advocacy, research, data collection and engagement with communities. While the national project supporting 14 umbrella CSOs (mentioned above) is expected to help strengthen financial support for these types of activities, stakeholders reported that recent budget cuts across several ministries have affected the operational capacity of some CSOs reliant on public funding. Stakeholders also highlighted tensions arising from competition between municipalities and CSOs for limited public funds, which can make it more difficult to foster constructive stakeholder engagement at the subnational level and to design coherent policies that integrate diverse perspectives.

Possible ways forward to strengthen stakeholder engagement

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Institutionalise stakeholder engagement across the policy cycle:** Strengthen and monitor the enforcement of consultation requirements, including within the inter-ministerial consultation procedure (MPK) and preliminary comment procedure (PPK), to ensure that stakeholder engagement is timely, consistent and able to inform policy design, implementation and evaluation. Build on the efforts of the Office of the Plenipotentiary to establish and apply a common methodology for stakeholder engagement in legislative and non-legislative processes, with practical guidance on stakeholder mapping, consultation timelines, feedback loops and reporting on how inputs are considered. Use the preparations for the next EU programming period (2028-2034) to pilot structured engagement formats, such as early dialogue with CSOs, regional and local actors, thematic working groups, participatory workshops and follow-up mechanisms, particularly for priorities with significant cross-sectoral or territorial impacts.
- **Improve the quality, accessibility and representativeness of stakeholder engagement:** Develop and require the use of practical toolkits and guidance, such as consultation templates, feedback matrices, and indicative timelines, to support consistent and high-quality stakeholder engagement across ministries, particularly at early stages of policy design. Strengthen the representativeness and accessibility of stakeholder participation, including as part of the preliminary comment procedure (PPK), by systematically mapping relevant stakeholders, reaching out to CSOs and underrepresented groups where relevant, and documenting how stakeholder inputs are considered in policy proposals.
- **Strengthen civil society capacity for meaningful policy engagement:** Provide targeted technical assistance, training and peer learning opportunities to CSOs to strengthen their ability to contribute to policy design, implementation and evaluation. This could include support on evidence-informed advocacy, policy analysis, assessing policy impacts and trade-offs, using data, preparing consultation inputs and engaging constructively in legislative and non-legislative processes.

Policy and financial impacts

To advance PCSD, governments should systematically assess the potential positive and negative impacts of policies, financing decisions and investments on sustainable development. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD encourages the use of evidence-informed tools, including impact assessments, cost-benefit analyses and risk assessments, to identify synergies, increase positive impacts and avoid negative spillover effects. This includes adopting ex ante and ex post assessment practices that

take into account transboundary and long-term impacts, with particular attention to economic, social, and environmental effects on developing countries as well as implications for future generations.

State of play

The Slovak Republic's formal *ex ante* RIA system, co-ordinated by the Ministry of Economy, was introduced in 2008 and applies to most legislative and non-legislative proposals. The system includes preliminary commenting, inter-ministerial consultation and a final assessment by the Permanent Working Committee of the Legislative Council (RIA Committee). This committee, housed within the Ministry of Economy, is responsible for ensuring the quality of RIAs and compliance with stakeholder engagement procedures. Proposals must assess expected impacts across seven dimensions: public finances, business environment, social affairs, environment, digitalisation, public services and marriage, parenthood and family. The Slovak Republic is among the few OECD countries that require impact assessments and stakeholder consultations on European Commission legislative proposals already during the EU negotiation stage (OECD, n.d.^[34]). The RIA is included as part of proposals submitted to the inter-ministerial consultation process and, depending on the feedback received from line ministries, the proposal can undergo substantial changes. This supports policy coherence by identifying potential conflicts or trade-offs between sectoral objectives and fostering more integrated approaches to policymaking.

The Slovak Republic is currently working on creating a simplified version of its RIA system, and the recent introduction of proportionality as screening mechanism could help determine the level of analysis required for different proposals, focusing more detailed assessment on those with potentially significant impacts. A planned IT platform is expected to streamline and standardise the preparation of impact assessments, improving usability.

The Ministry of Finance (Value for Money Division) carries out *ex ante* economic assessments of large-scale investment projects. Under the applicable legal framework, public investors are required to prepare and publish a feasibility study for investment projects exceeding EUR 40 million, or EUR 10 million for IT projects. The Ministry of Finance is then required to assess the published feasibility study within 30 days. The feasibility study and the corresponding assessment are subsequently updated before the launch of the public procurement procedure and again before the contract is signed.

The Slovak Republic also carried out an investment reform as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, requiring all investments above a defined threshold to be assessed by the Ministry of Finance using a standardised methodology. The Strategic Investments Act adopted in 2024 (Act no. 142/2024), introduced specific arrangements for large-scale infrastructure projects designated as “strategic” and “in the public interest” in the fields of transport, economy, health, energy, defence and security. Under this framework, the government could decide that the feasibility study for a strategic investment would be assessed by the responsible line ministry rather than by the Ministry of Finance. While preparation and assessment of the feasibility study remained mandatory, this arrangement could reduce the independence and consistency of scrutiny across projects. Amendment Act No. 126/2026, effective from 30 June 2026, removed this provision. Strategic investments are therefore now subject to assessment by the Ministry of Finance under the applicable framework.

In parallel, the Office of the Government's proposed strategic goal management system could help encourage performance and outcome-oriented planning across ministries.

At the funding level, the managing authority for Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 – the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatisation (MIRDI) – assesses potential impacts of project proposals as part of its selection process. The Slovak Republic also introduced integrated territorial investments (ITIs) as a tool for cohesion policy for the first time as part of its Programme Slovakia 2021-2027. ITIs aim to support more targeted and integrated interventions at the subnational level to

increase their impact and exploit the potential of different territories. Territorial strategies form the basis for ITIs and can apply to any geographical area, urban, urban-rural, sub-regional or inter-regional.²¹

Opportunities for improvement

Enhance integration of RIA findings in policy design

The Slovak Republic's RIA is complex with 161 questions and sub-questions, many of which are highly specific. For instance, the social impact analysis alone includes over 70 questions with impacts often focusing on very specific population groups (e.g. asylum seekers) and access to specific services (e.g. information, justice). Similarly, the impact dimension on marriage, parenthood and family contains 22 questions, yet negative impacts were only identified in 1 out of 2 000 cases between March 2020 and December 2022 (Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, 2023^[36]).

The high level of detail and associated administrative burden may contribute to a compliance-oriented approach to RIA implementation. In practice, RIAs are often completed relatively late in the legislative cycle, frequently after the main elements of the proposal have already been developed. Consequently, opportunities for impact assessment to inform early design of proposals may be limited, reducing its potential to improve regulatory quality, strengthen policy coherence across sectors and support long-term cross-cutting objectives, such as sustainable development and well-being. According to stakeholders, feedback received through formal and informal consultation processes is more likely to influence and shape the design of the proposal.

At the same time, the RIA framework does not systematically require a quantitative assessment of costs and benefits or a structured assessment of alternative policy options across all impact dimensions. While these are part of assessing impacts on the business environment, they are not consistently applied across other impact dimensions. This may limit policymakers' ability to compare alternative approaches and assess whether the preferred option is likely to represent the most effective and efficient solution.

As part of RIA, policymakers are required to assess selected impacts for all legislative and non-legislative acts adopted through government resolutions, unless specific exemption conditions apply. The annex on selected impacts (*Doložka vybraných vplyvov*), which forms part of the RIA documentation, asks policymakers to assess the expected impacts of the proposal on affected entities, consider alternative policy options and indicate impacts on a scale of "positive", "none" or "negative" across different areas, which mirrors the RIA questionnaire. This overlap may increase the administrative burden for policymakers without necessarily contributing to a deeper analytical assessment of impacts. Moreover, the identification of impacts relies to a significant extent on the judgement of the responsible policymaker, including whether impacts are expected in specific areas.²²

While the impact on public finances forms part of RIA, there is no systematic ex ante assessment of the proposed spending except for large-scale investments (above EUR 10 million for IT and above EUR 40 million for all other projects). In the context of Programme Slovakia 2021-2027, MIRDl's impact assessment of project proposals as part of the project selection appears to focus primarily on compliance and financial oversight, including the prevention of double financing, rather than on long-term impact of the proposals.

Strengthening consistency and quality of RIA

Ministries are primarily responsible for determining whether their legislative proposal is expected to generate impacts requiring further assessment. If no impact are identified, proposals may not be subject to the same level of scrutiny by the RIA Committee or the detailed assessment process. Although each ministry is responsible for the quality of its own impact assessments, institutional capacities vary. While some ministries are reportedly better equipped to evaluate certain impacts – such as budgetary or social

– environmental impacts appear to receive less attention than certain other impact categories. Other ministries may comment on submitted assessments, but stakeholder interviews suggest that inter-ministerial engagement is rare. The Ministry of Economy is tasked with co-ordinating the RIA system. However, the current framework does not include a systematic assessment of how legislative proposals contribute to sustainable development goals or interact with other policy priorities.

The RIA Committee plays a quality control role but lacks formal authority to revise or block proposals, even when serious shortcomings or risks are identified. While the committee can issue a negative opinion on the impact assessment, ministries are under no obligation to amend or withdraw their proposal. In addition, the committee does not consider overall coherence of the RIA or whether societal benefits outweigh regulatory costs. This may limit opportunities to systematically integrate cross-cutting perspectives and make full use of evidence in policymaking (OECD, n.d.^[34]).

Moreover, strategic documents and legislative amendments can, under certain conditions, be excluded from the RIA process. Exemptions apply, among other things, to proposals developed through the fast-track legislative procedure, initiatives that are considered unlikely to have significant impacts, technical or formal amendments, proposals containing classified information and proposals exempted by the government or the RIA Committee. While these exemptions are intended to reduce administrative burdens, their frequent or broad application may reduce opportunities to identify interactions between policy objectives, potential policy incoherences and long-term impacts at an early stage of the policy process.

Box 2.8. Luxembourg's Sustainability Check: Embedding SDG priorities in regulatory design

The Sustainability Check, adopted by the government in 2022, is a tool for self-assessing legislative acts in terms of their impact on Luxembourg's sustainable development priorities. The check has been mandatory for all introduced draft bills since June 2023.

By embedding the Sustainability Check at the earliest stage of legislative drafting, Luxembourg ensures that sustainability considerations influence regulatory design before decisions are finalised. The tool also promotes ownership among ministries by making them responsible for assessing coherence with the National Plan for Sustainable Development. This creates a feedback loop between regulatory choices and national SDG commitments, reinforcing transparency and accountability.

Crucially, the launch of the Sustainability Check was paired with specific training for civil servants. In addition to strengthening technical capacity and ensuring correct use of the tool, the training sessions themselves have provided opportunities for collaboration between ministries.

Although still evolving, the Sustainability Check illustrates how RIAs can move beyond narrow economic analysis to become a governance lever for integrated policymaking. It demonstrates that even a relatively simple mechanism, when anchored in legal requirements and linked to national strategies, can help governments anticipate trade-offs, manage cross-sectoral impacts and align regulation with the SDGs.

Sources: OECD (2023^[22]), "Luxembourg Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD): Light-touch institutional scan", <https://one.oecd.org/document/GOV/PCSD/2023/1/en/pdf>; OECD (2024^[23]), Unleashing Policy Coherence to Achieve the SDGs: An Assessment of Governance Mechanisms, <https://doi.org/10.1787/a1c8dbf8-en>.

Advancing skills and organisational culture for evidence-based policymaking

In policymaking, data are essential to ensure that decisions are targeted, cost-effective and responsive to societal needs. However, not all Slovak ministries have a dedicated analytical unit capable of providing

data-driven insights on needs, challenges, objectives, expected impacts or desired outcomes. Where such units exist, they often cover broad and complex portfolios – as in the case of the Ministry of Interior which oversees the public administration, police, fire department and crisis management – stretching analytical capacities. Although the Statistical Office is formally responsible for national data collection, its role in supporting policy analysis and evidence generation within line ministries appears to be limited (Act no. 540/2021). The CoG could help strengthen analytical capacity across the civil service by setting common guidelines, standards and frameworks across the government. The Competence Act can also provide a vehicle to frame the mandates and skills requirements to deliver on complex frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda.

The extent to which analytical units contribute to RIAs varies both within and across ministries, and stakeholder interviews suggest that capacity to assess policy interlinkages, spillover effects or transboundary impacts remain uneven. While regular training sessions related to RIAs exist, for example as part of the project Improving the Business Environment in Slovakia and Evaluation of Policies within the Competence of the Ministry of Economy or on new measures introduced in RIAs and financed through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, these workshops tend to focus on the economic impact of policy proposals and are not mandatory or integrated into civil service training for all staff. As a result, policy proposals are not systematically assessed for coherence with other sectoral strategies, particularly beyond the business sphere, and there is no common framework for measuring policy outcomes across the government. Monitoring efforts typically rely on basic KPIs focused on outputs rather than long-term impacts. For instance, while data on development co-operation are collected, they are not systematically used to evaluate the effectiveness of activities.

High turnover of staff, limited access to digital tools as well as low digital literacy to use them may further weaken institutional memory and inter-ministerial collaboration, making it more difficult to create a culture of evidence-based policymaking.

In addition, technical and legal barriers to data sharing persist. Databases used by different ministries are not always interoperable and restrictions on the exchange of micro-data make it more difficult to design targeted and evidence-based policy interventions.

Beyond technical capacity, the effective use of evidence in policymaking also depends on how evidence-informed tools are understood and valued within public institutions. In the Slovak Republic, instruments such as RIAs and evaluations are often perceived as procedural or compliance requirement, rather than as tools to inform policy choices and improve policy design. Stakeholders report that this perception is particularly prevalent at the senior management levels, where time pressures and political priorities can discourage early engagement with analytical evidence. This may weaken incentives to invest in robust data analysis and limit the integration of evidence throughout the policy cycle.

Possible ways forward to strengthen measuring policy impacts

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Use RIA to strengthen PCSD:** Position RIA as a strategic tool to identify potential policy spillovers, synergies and trade-offs early in the policy cycle. Ensure that RIAs are conducted early enough to inform policy design, including through proportionate analysis of cross-sectoral, intergenerational and transboundary impacts as well as alternative policy options. Integrate RIA findings into early (informal) inter-ministerial consultations to inform discussions on trade-offs, and support more coherent and co-ordinated policy responses. Strengthen the role of the RIA Committee by applying minimum quality standards and consider options to reinforce its oversight function and links with strategic decision making. Use the 2026 RIA reform as an opportunity to incorporate practical

guidance on sustainable development and well-being, digitalise the RIA process., reduce administrative burden and improve usability.

- **Enhance analytical capacity for evidence-informed and coherent policymaking:** Reinforce analytical capacity within ministries by strengthening dedicated analytical units or teams and providing structured training on assessing economic, social, environmental and long-term sustainability impacts. Provide practical guidance and tools to support the assessment of cross-sectoral impacts, trade-offs and alignment with long-term national priorities such as sustainable development and well-being, for example as part of the revised methodology for drafting public strategies. Strengthen collaboration with the Statistical Office through data sharing protocols within existing legal frameworks and use inter-ministerial collaboration to improve the quality, coherence and impact of policy decisions.
- **Strengthen leadership incentives and organisational practices for evidence-informed policymaking:** Encourage senior management in line ministries to engage with analytical evidence early in the policy cycle and use tools such as RIAs, evaluations and spending reviews to refine policy options and improve policy coherence. Reinforce the CoG's leadership role by setting clear expectations, guidance and performance standards that frame evidence-informed processes as tools for better policy design and implementation, rather than compliance-driven requirements.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation are essential for tracking progress on sustainable development and assessing policy coherence. The OECD Recommendation on PCSD calls on governments to strengthen monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems to collect qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impacts of policies and financing, and to report regularly on progress in advancing policy coherence for sustainable development. This includes drawing on national, regional and local data sources, using reliable and timely indicators, and publishing regular reports on progress in addressing sustainable development impacts at home and abroad. This enables governments to adapt policies, strengthen governance capacity and better manage complex, long-term sustainable development challenges.

State of play

The Slovak Republic has made notable progress in reinforcing its monitoring and evaluation system. The launch in 2024 of a centralised KPI-based monitoring framework led by the Institute for Strategy and Analysis – the analytical unit in the Office of the Government – represented an important step. This system tracks the implementation of commitments set out in the Government Manifesto.²³ It identifies short-, medium- and long-term strategic priorities, responsible actors and relevant KPIs – such as input, output, process and result indicators – and assesses progress through reporting to the government twice a year, in May and November. KPIs have also been linked, where relevant, to other frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Fiscal-Structural Plans or the EU resilience dashboards. As many commitments span multiple policy areas and ministries, the process of identifying relevant KPIs has encouraged inter-ministerial collaboration through the CoGs convening role to bring line ministries into a dialogue on priority setting and delivery. As a result, the system offers an important opportunity to strengthen the strategic co-ordination role of the CoG. The shared results framework can provide a basis for the CoG to identify gaps, overlaps and inconsistencies between over 200 sectoral strategies and national priorities. The system continues to evolve to integrate strategic investment priorities, recommendations from spending reviews and other strategic goals, including the SDGs and sector-specific agendas. Several ministries have expressed interest in applying the system to the operational level, viewing it as a potential management tool to support the monitoring of their respective sectoral strategies and decisions.

Spending reviews provide the Slovak Republic with another tool to assess the efficiency of public spending. Since 2016, the Ministry of Finance has conducted regular reviews across various areas such as healthcare, education, corrective facilities and energy. These reviews also cover cross-cutting topics such as subsidies, informatisation and research, development and innovation. Each review evaluates the cost-effectiveness of relevant measures and proposes adjustments to financial allocations. By November 2025, 23 reviews have been completed. Reviews attempt to critically engage with the financed measures. For example, the review of energy sector assesses compensation measures for vulnerable households facing high energy prices and recommends that financial support be linked to energy efficiency measures to better address energy poverty over the long term and reduce permanent dependence on public support. It also questions whether air pollution charges adequately reflect the true costs of pollution such as related health complications (Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic, 2024^[37]). The findings and recommendations are publicly communicated to increase transparency, create public awareness and inform the budgetary process. For each spending review, the Ministry of Finance together with the Office of the Government develops an implementation plan with key milestones and KPIs covering a period of at least three years. The plan is approved at the highest political level, and the Office of the Government is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the proposed measures and discussing potential savings with the relevant ministries. An annual summary implementation report is submitted together with the draft general budget for information to the government. This promotes not only high-level political engagement and ownership but also feeds evaluation findings into budgetary decision making.²⁴

The Supreme Audit Office (SAO) plays an important role in evaluating institutional structures, public spending and government activities in the Slovak Republic. Annual audit reports, which are submitted to the National Council, aggregate findings from all audit actions across various areas of state administration and local government. For instance, the *2024 Audit Report* highlighted the absence of a clear vision and strategic goals to advance sustainable development in the Slovak Republic (SAO, 2024^[38]) (SAO, 2024^[39]). Earlier, the *2018 Performance Audit of Preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals* examined whether the former Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatisation and the Statistical Office – as the main responsible institutions – were adequately prepared to implement the 2030 Agenda. The review focused on enabling mechanisms to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence including planning processes, stakeholder engagement, budgeting and financial resource allocation and relevant data collection and monitoring frameworks (SAO, 2024^[40]). Importantly, the SAO's recommendations are binding for audited entities, which are also required to report on the status of their implementation.

At the EU level, the managing authority for Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 (MIRD1) is required to conduct an evaluation of the programme across five dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU-added value.²⁵ The European Commission itself carries out a mid-term evaluation and a retrospective evaluation across the same impact dimensions.²⁶

The Slovak Republic has developed a National Framework for Measuring Well-Being, which is continuously updated to reflect emerging trends and an indicator dashboard, linked to the implementation of the SDGs. This work is led by the ODP, in close co-operation with the Office of the Government, the Statistical Office and relevant ministries and stakeholders.²⁷ The sustainable well-being framework is seen as a tool to inspire a whole-of-government approach, helping to mainstream sustainability considerations across sectoral policies and strengthen the strategic planning capacity of the CoG. It is also expected to feed into the ongoing development of Slovakia 2040. In parallel, the Office of the Government is working on a complementary well-being index to provide regular snapshots of well-being in the Slovak Republic, including comparisons to other EU Member States.

These ongoing efforts present an opportunity to design a nationally tailored framework incorporating best international and country practices, including with the opportunity to inform decision making along the policy cycle and across electoral cycles.

Opportunities for improvement

Enhancing coherence through a KPI-based monitoring framework

While there is high-level commitment towards outcome-oriented evaluation – notably in the Office of the Government – and visible progress towards more integrated and strategic monitoring and reporting, the current KPI-based monitoring framework could be further strengthened to support more coherent policymaking. Most KPIs used focus on outputs, rather than long-term societal impact. Notably, the framework does not yet capture cross sectoral contributions, shared outcomes or important policy interactions, both horizontally across ministry portfolios and vertically between the national and subnational levels. Although it identifies some policy interactions through its methodology of identifying relevant KPIs, performance on these indicators is not shared across ministries. This lack of coherence-focused KPIs makes it difficult to assess whether different policies are aligned towards common national and international objectives, mutually reinforcing or – conversely – duplicative or even contradictory. The new digital platform Jastrab has yet to be adopted uniformly, and ministries often maintain siloed, incompatible systems. These structural barriers undermine integrated strategic planning and monitoring. To fully support integrated policy monitoring, the framework would benefit from incorporating indicators that track how well sectoral strategies contribute to shared national and international goals or how effectively ministries co-ordinate, for instance through inter-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms. In this regard, the CoG could also better leverage its convening power to mobilise line ministries around cross-cutting targets that require joint accountability.

While the work on complex cross-cutting goals like the SDGs will continue to be challenging, the structured nature of the system provides a platform for discussion in negotiating trade-offs and aligning objectives for more joined-up policy outcomes. The CoG, specifically through the ISA, can continue to enhance coherence throughout line ministries in the further development of this framework for better data access and sharing across institutions, and instituting it as a regularised data routine to raise the quality and consistency of indicators over time.

Box 2.9. Finland: Integrated sustainability assessment as a governance tool for policy coherence

Finland's Prime Minister's Office led the 2025 Sustainability Assessment, an innovative governance instrument for embedding policy coherence into decision making. The assessment builds on a five-dimensional framework – security and democracy, social and health sustainability, economic resilience, ecological sustainability, and human capital – and combines trend analysis with forward-looking foresight to identify systemic risks and opportunities over five to ten years. It draws on quantitative indicators across 35 sub-areas, expert judgement and extensive stakeholder consultation. The process produced 42 actionable measures across 8 thematic areas, enabling practical application.

Lessons from Finland underline that integrated sustainability assessments are most effective when they combine robust data with foresight, foster cross-sectoral collaboration and embed clear pathways for influencing decisions. By institutionalising these practices, governments can turn monitoring and evaluation into a governance lever for coherence and adaptive policymaking.

Source: Finnish Government (2025^[41]), *Views on the state of Finland: Sustainability assessment - 2025 English summary*, <https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/ccfd29cd-b527-48ff-a25c-e36d408dc1bb/content>.

Leveraging spending reviews for strategic decisions

Spending reviews have become an important component of the Slovak Republic's public expenditure framework. They assess the efficiency and effectiveness of existing expenditure and policies, including policy outcomes, and identify opportunities to improve performance through savings, reallocations or alternative measures. OECD analysis highlights the importance of ensuring that spending reviews are closely connected to budgetary decision making and supported by clear follow-up arrangements to maximise their impact on public expenditure management (OECD, 2023^[42]). A recent IMF assessment of the Slovak spending review framework identified several opportunities for further development, including more targeted reviews, broader analysis of potential measures, stronger co-ordination with line ministries and closer integration into the budget cycle (IMF, 2024^[50]).

Spending reviews already examine policy performance in addition to expenditure efficiency. There is nevertheless scope to strengthen the use of review findings in strategic decision making and resource allocation. This could include more systematic follow-up on recommendations, stronger links between review findings and budgetary decisions, and clearer connections between spending reviews and broader government priorities. Some stakeholders in the Slovak Republic also noted that selection of review topics may be influenced by immediate fiscal pressures or emerging political priorities. Greater transparency in the selection and sequencing of reviews could help reinforce their contribution to long-term policy objectives.

While the Office of the Government is responsible for monitoring the implementation of recommendations, responsibility for implementing individual measures lies with the respective ministries. Strengthening the connection between the review findings and budgetary decisions could further enhance the contribution of spending reviews to expenditure prioritisation. This would be consistent with the findings of the IMF assessment, which identified closer integration with the budget cycle as an important area for further development (IMF, 2024^[17]).

Finally, spending reviews increasingly seek to consider broader policy outcomes alongside traditional value-for-money considerations. In areas such as public health, the environment and social policy, not all outcomes can be captured in monetary terms. It is therefore important to complement assessments of “value for money” with broader consideration of “value for citizens” including social, environmental and long-term impacts where relevant.

Box 2.10. Good practice: Assessing public spending beyond value for money

The United Kingdom: Incorporating public value into spending reviews through the Green Book

In the United Kingdom, spending reviews are supported by a whole-of-government appraisal and evaluation framework set out in HM Treasury's Green Book. This framework provides models and methods to support the provision of advice to clarify the social – or public – welfare costs, benefits and trade-offs of alternative implementation options for the delivery of policy objectives.

Different features of the Green Book promote a broad assessment of public spending:

- **Costs and benefits are viewed from the perspective of United Kingdom society as a whole, not just to the public sector or originating institution:** For example, proposals concerning the healthcare sector would be considered from the perspective of the local health economy, not simply confined to the effects on the organisation making the proposal.
- **The Green Book explicitly recognises that not all impacts of public spending can be robustly monetised:** A dedicated annex provides detail on specific approaches to non-market

valuation techniques for use in appraisal. This covers environmental effects, life and health and travel time.

- **The framework emphasises the importance of distributional analysis where there may be significant redistributive effects between different groups within the United Kingdom:** Where effects are significant for a group concerned, the guidance states that a clearly presented analysis identifying gaining and losing groups and estimating the effects on their welfare should be carried out.
- **The framework places particular emphasis on long-term and intergenerational effects, and impacts on well-being:** Where the possible effects of an intervention being examined as part of an appraisal are long-term and involve very substantial or irreversible wealth transfers between generations, further analysis is recommended, for example based on supplementary guidance on intergenerational wealth transfers and social discounting.

Sources: OECD (2022^[45]), *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, Volume 2022 Issue 1, <https://doi.org/10.1787/10bfd8e5-en>; HM Treasury (2022^[46]), *The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation*, HM Treasury, United Kingdom; OECD (2025^[47]), "New Zealand's Living Standards Framework", https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/well-being-knowledge-exchange-platform-kep_93d45d63-en/new-zealand-s-living-standards-framework_70e1f17b-en.html.

Advancing sustainable well-being measurement

A well-designed well-being framework can serve as a practical tool to support coherence on cross-cutting priorities like sustainable development and encourage whole-of-government co-ordination on joint horizontal priorities. Drawing on the OECD Well-being Framework, whose principles are also reflected in the recent 2025 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) *Guidelines on Measurement of Well-being* and the 2026 report by the UN Secretary General's High Level Expert Group on *Beyond GDP Counting What Counts: A Compass of Progress for People and Planet*, several key insights could guide the development of an indicator set for a sustainable well-being dashboard for the Slovak Republic, and to facilitate its alignment with international best practice (OECD, 2020^[3]) (OECD, 2024^[4]) (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2025^[48]) (United Nations, 2026^[49]).

Most national and international sustainable well-being frameworks share the following principles:

First, they make a distinction between current well-being, its distribution across population groups and resources for future well-being. By distinguishing between present outcomes and future resources, the frameworks can help policymakers identify trade-offs over time, an essential element of intergenerational policy coherence and long-term sustainability.

Second, well-being is recognised as multidimensional. Frameworks therefore typically cover a broad range of outcomes. The most common dimensions of current well-being recommended by the OECD and UNECE – also aligned with the interim approach by the United Nations High Level Expert Group on Beyond GDP – include subjective well-being, material living conditions, work and leisure, housing, health, knowledge and skills, physical safety, social connections, civic engagement and environmental conditions.

Third, indicator sets typically combine objective and subjective assessments of people's circumstances. Quality criteria for selecting well-being indicators include timeliness and frequency, credibility and compatibility, accuracy, relevance, directional meaning that can be interpreted unambiguously, universality, measurability, disaggregation and understandability. While these criteria should be fulfilled to the extent possible, sometimes the "best possible available alternative" must be selected, based on available data sources and to ensure balance across different well-being dimensions.

Fourth, indicators are, where possible, aligned with international definitions and standards to support comparability over time and across countries, while remaining flexible enough to reflect national priorities

and contexts.²⁸ For example, national frameworks may include dimensions, such as language, diversity, culture, sports, disaster preparedness and collective family and community well-being.

A very large majority of national and international initiatives follow the recommendations of the 2008 *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* in opting for a dashboard approach (Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi, 2008^[50]). However, a few OECD countries calculate composite well-being indices, which can complement dashboards as a communication tool.

Countries with national well-being frameworks are increasingly aligning well-being and sustainable development reporting. Many SDG themes map well against commonly used well-being dimensions. For example, the UN Global Indicator Framework underpinning the SDGs includes overlaps with almost all dimensions of the OECD Well-being Framework, except subjective well-being and social connections. Conversely, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals) indicators emphasise PCSD and countries' contributions towards global public goods, dimensions that are not routinely part of well-being frameworks. An increasing subset of OECD countries are therefore adopting integrated reporting approaches that combine multiple frameworks to reduce fragmentation and improve strategic steering. By integrating analysis of policy interactions, distributional effects, transboundary impacts and intergenerational trade-offs, well-being frameworks can strengthen coherence across sectors, levels of government as well as across borders. They can provide a common outcome-oriented reference for strategic planning, monitoring and reporting, while complementing rather than replacing existing accountability frameworks.

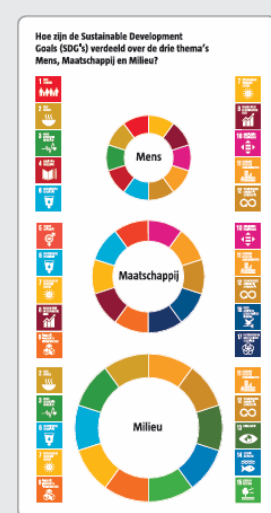
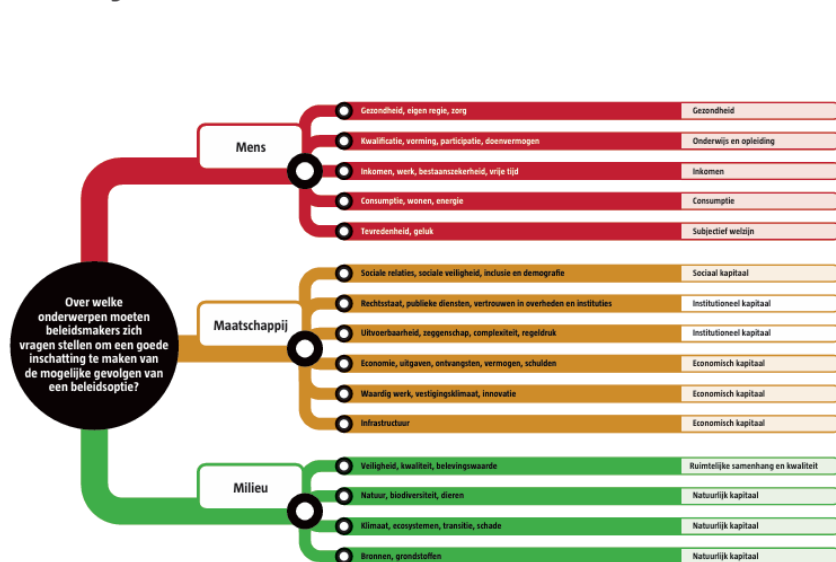
Further discussion on national and international best practice (with concrete national examples), indicator selection and measurement as well as the ongoing process in the Slovak Republic is available in the technical paper supporting the project "Activity 4.2 Conceptualise and Assess Sustainable Well-being in the Slovak Republic" (OECD, 2026^[9]), as well as in the online depository of the OECD Knowledge Exchange Platform on Well-being Metrics and Policy Practice (OECD, 2026^[51]).

Box 2.11. The Netherlands.

The Impact Scan (*Gevolgenscan*) was introduced in 2023 and forms part of a broader Policy Compass (*Beleidskompas*) which brings together mandatory assessments and supporting tools to help policymakers identify and assess the potential impacts of different policy options. The Impact Scan encourages policymakers to consider both the intended as well as unintended consequences of proposed policies across three domains: people (*mens*), society (*maatschappij*) and the environment (*milieu*). In doing so, it operationalises the SDGs by translating the 17 goals into practical impact questions that help policymakers evaluate a policy's effects on the three dimensions.

The Scan takes a long-term and global perspective by inviting policymakers to examine a policy proposal from three perspectives: the 'here and now' (current well-being), the 'later (with regard to future generations)' and the 'elsewhere' (regarding spillover effects on the rest of the world). Distributional effects, such as by gender, age, background, education or region are also taken into consideration. This reflects a core principle of sustainable development: balancing social, economic and environmental outcomes over time and geography.

De Gevolgenscan



Wat zijn de acht thema's van brede welvaart?

- 1 Subjectief welzijn
- 2 Gezondheid
- 3 Consumptie en inkomen
- 4 Onderwijs en opleiding
- 5 Ruimtelijke samenhang en kwaliteit
- 6 Economisch kapitaal
- 7 Natuurlijk kapitaal
- 8 Sociaal kapitaal
- 9 Institutioneel kapitaal (extra thema)

Over de Gevolgenscan
De Gevolgenscan biedt een overzicht van thema's en vragen waarover beleidsmakers moeten nadenken om een goede inschatting te maken van de mogelijke gevolgen van een beleidsoplossing: geplande gevolgen, maar vooral ook niet-geplande gevolgen. De vragen in de Gevolgenscan zijn bedoeld ter inspiratie. Het is zaak ook nog te kijken houden voor hier niet expliciet genoemde mogelijke gevolgen. De vragen in de Gevolgenscan zijn ingedeeld in drie hoofdcategorieën: Mens, Maatschappij en Milieu. De cijfers achter de vragen verwijzen naar de Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) waarop het onderwerp van de vraag betrekking heeft. Ook de acht thema's van brede welvaart zijn gemaakt. Het thema Institutioneel kapitaal is extra toegevoegd.

Elke vraag moet worden beantwoord vanuit de drie perspectieven van duurzaamheid: dat van het Hier en Nu, dat van Later (met oog op toekomstige generaties) en dat van elders (het effect van op afstands-effecten op de rest van de wereld, in het bijzonder ontwikkelingslanden). Het is ook steeds nog voor verdelings-effecten. Denk hierbij bijvoorbeeld aan gender, leeftijd, achtergrond, opleiding of regio.

De Gevolgenscan is onderdeel van het Beleidskompas. Met de vergelijkbare toolten en overige hulpmiddelen brengen beleidsmakers de mogelijke gevolgen van een beleidsoplossing verder in kaart.

Dit kaart is gemaakt door De Argumentenfabriek op basis van vier denksoorten met deskundigen en met de begeleidingscommissie. We danken alle deelnemers voor hun bijdrake. Verder hebben we gebruik gemaakt van de volgende bronnen:
• Aanbevelingen CES (UNICEF et al 2014)
• Naar een Verkenning Brede Welvaart (PBL/SCP/CPB 2017)
• Verkenning Brede Welvaart (PBL/SCP/CPB 2018)
• Brede welvaart in de Begeleidingscommissie (PBL/SCP/CPB 2022)
• Sustainable Development Goals (2015)
• Naar de Basis van het Beleidskompas (2023)
• Denkbaard Brede Welvaart Ministerie van Infrastructuur en Waterstaat en de Argumentenfabriek (2023)

In opdracht van: **Beleidskompas**

Gemaakt door: **De Argumentenfabriek** **De Informatiekaart** © 2023

Source: (Government of the Netherlands, 2025^[52]) Knowledge Centre for Policy and Regulations (2025), Beleidskompas [Policy Compass], <https://www.kcbr.nl/ontwikkelen-beleid-en-regelgeving/beleidskompas/4-wat-zijn-de-gevolgen-van-deze-opties>. (Government of the Netherlands, 2023^[53]) Knowledge Centre for Policy and Regulations (2023), De Gevolgenscan [Impact Scan] infographic, <https://www.kcbr.nl/sites/default/files/2023-03/PDF%20Gevolgenscan%2024%20maart%202023%20Thema%20overzicht-1.pdf>.

Expanding civil society involvement in monitoring and evaluation

Stakeholder interviews revealed that CSOs have limited involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of public policies, particularly in collecting qualitative and quantitative evidence on policy impacts. While CSOs often possess valuable on-the-grounds insights, community-level data and practical experience with affected population groups, their potential contributions are not systematically integrated into monitoring and evaluation frameworks. A stronger involvement of CSOs could not only enrich the diversity of the evidence base, but also enhance transparency and ensure that monitoring and evaluation efforts include a broader range of societal perspectives.

Improving alignment of international reporting requirements

Stakeholders expressed a strong need to encourage greater harmonisation between existing reporting frameworks to streamline the numerous and sometimes overlapping reporting obligations arising from the European Union and international organisations such as the United Nations and the OECD. Currently, different reporting requirements often involve separate data collection processes, definitions, timelines and formats, which can lead to duplication of efforts, inconsistencies in reported data and increased administrative burden for national institutions.

Greater consistency across reporting frameworks, both in terms of indicators used and reporting schedules, could significantly reduce administrative burdens, improve data comparability and quality and free up resources in statistical institutions and analytical units that can be used to better focus on supporting evidence-based policymaking and policy evaluation for example. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of improving co-ordination between EU and international bodies to avoid parallel requests for similar information.

Possible ways forward to strengthen monitoring, reporting and evaluation

To build on progress and seize the opportunities identified above, the following recommendations are proposed to further enhance PCSD in line with OECD standards and international commitments:

- **Use monitoring and evaluation systems to identify policy interactions and shared outcomes:** Use the KPI-based monitoring tool to routinely detect policy interactions, shared outcomes and potential trade-offs, and to track how sectoral strategies contribute to sustainable development and well-being. Consider introducing joint outputs or shared indicators across ministries and linking them to internal decision-making and management processes to incentivise integrated policymaking and shared accountability. Leverage the co-ordinating role of the CoG to support the integration of cross-cutting goals such as sustainable development into sectoral policies and to ensure that evaluation findings inform the design and adjustment of policies.
- **Strengthen the contribution of spending reviews to strategic decision making and resource allocation:** Build on the existing assessment of expenditure efficiency, effectiveness and policy outcomes by strengthening the use of spending review findings in budgetary decision making and resource allocation. Use spending reviews to identify interactions across policy areas, complementarities and potential trade-offs, and to inform discussions on policy priorities and expenditure choices. Strengthen links between spending review findings, budget preparation and long-term strategic frameworks, including sustainable development objectives. Similarly, ensure that Investment Plan Slovakia supports the prioritisation of investments based not only on financial and sectoral considerations, but also on their expected contribution to long-term national priorities including sustainable development and well-being.
- **Enhance stakeholder and CSO involvement in evaluation processes:** Engage stakeholders and CSOs more systematically in evaluation processes to draw on community-level insights, implementation experience and diverse evidence, and ensure that findings better reflect the needs and perspective of affected groups.

- **Develop and use a nationally tailored sustainable well-being framework:** Finalise a set of internationally comparable and nationally relevant indicators covering current well-being, inequalities and resources for future well-being. Clarify its relationship with SDG monitoring, Slovakia 2040 and existing performance frameworks, and establish responsibilities for regular reporting and use in strategic decision making.

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Notes

¹ In July 2025, Government Resolution no. 358/2025 approved the intention to develop a Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2040 (Slovakia 2040), outlining the strategic priorities, objectives and internationally comparable measurable indicators. This was followed by Government Resolution no. 561/2025, which approved the Starting Points and Procedure for the Preparation of the Vision and Strategy for the Development of Slovakia until 2040 (Slovakia 2040), establishing the governance arrangements and timeline for preparing the Vision 2040 and Strategy 2040, and mandated broad stakeholder participation and oversight by a co-ordination group. It set deadlines for preparing the vision by June 2026 and the strategy by January 2027.

² Responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Slovak Republic is divided between two lead institutions. The ODPM is responsible for the internal dimension of the 2030 Agenda (Competence Act, Section [§] 34b(c); Government Resolution no. 95/2016; Law no. 201/2024, § 34b(1)(c) and § 40ay(1)), while the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs oversees the external dimension (Competence Act, § 14; Government Resolution no. 95/2016).

³ The Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (SAIDC) is the budgetary organisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. The agency, under the brand name SlovakAid, is responsible for implementing official development assistance of the Slovak Republic.

⁴ The European Union's new long-term budget (2028-2034) will use national and regional partnership plans to bring together multiple EU funding instruments and identify national and regional development priorities. The plans are designed and implementation between the European Commission, the Member States, regions, local communities and other relevant stakeholders.

⁵ The Institute for Strategy and Analysis is the analytical unit in the Office of the Government.

⁶ Article 5(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (Common Provisions Regulation). The Common Provisions Regulation covers the European Regional Development Fund, the Just Transition Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, the

Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

⁷ Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action requires Member States to draw up an integrated national energy and climate plan.

⁸ EU Cohesion Policy Funds accounted for 48.4% of all public investments between 2014 and 2020, the 6th highest share in the European Union (European Commission, 2022^[54]).

⁹ Section 38 of Act no. 575/2001 on the Organisation of the Activity of the Government and on the Organisation of the Central State Administration.

¹⁰ Decision of the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, no. 9/2020 of 27 January, which establishes the Coordination Committee for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic.

¹¹ Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 3/2025 of 15 January 2025 on the Proposal to Establish the Government Council of the Slovak Republic for Sustainable Development and its Financing.

¹² The Plan of Legislative Tasks of the Government of the Slovak Republic for 2025 contained a total of 109 legislative tasks of the government, of which: i) 95 were draft laws; and ii) 14 were government regulations. All plans can be accessed at <https://www.vlada.gov.sk/vlada-sr/poradne-organy/legislativna-rada-vlady-sr/?csrt=16371894604650701121>.

¹³ Some taskforces have been successfully created to address specific cross-cutting (and often urgent) priorities. This includes the Task Force for Cross-Border Projects, the Task Force for Coordination of Aid for Ukraine and the Task Force for Human Capital, focusing on people from Ukraine living in the Slovak Republic. In addition, a Business Task Force is currently being set up to support Slovak businesses operating in Ukraine.

¹⁴ See Act no. 575/2001 (Competence Act).

¹⁵ This excludes the city districts of Bratislava and Košice.

¹⁶ The OECD Recommendation on PCSD defines “stakeholders” as any interested and/or affected party, including: individuals and national, regional or international institutions and organisations, whether governmental or non-governmental and from civil society, foundations, academia, the media or the private sector.

¹⁷ Slovak legislation does not use the term “stakeholders” but rather operates with the term “public participation” (*verejnoscť*) (see § 2(1) of the Law on the Lawmaking Process, Act no. 400/2015).

¹⁸ More information on the Slovak Republic’s involvement in the initiative can be found at: https://www.mv.sk/?ros_ogp.

¹⁹ The project will run until 2028.

²⁰ Government Resolution no. 394/2024 on the Application of the partnership principle in the European Union’s cohesion policy in the Slovak Republic and the system of co-operation and partnership

management with civil society representatives in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of European Union funds in the 2021-2027 programming period and the related Methodological guidance on the selection and nomination of civil society representatives in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU funds. This transfer of competence was confirmed by a Resolution of the Government Council for non-governmental organisations in March 2025 and amendments to the statutes of the monitoring committee for Programme Slovakia 2021-2027 in June 2025.

²¹ See also Article 28 - 30 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

²² The annex on selected impacts can be found at: https://www.mhsr.sk/uploads/files/nakoCacW.pdf?csr_t=4771860534770963904.

²³ While the current Government Manifesto does not reference the 2030 Agenda directly, it contains various objectives linked to sustainable development.

²⁴ The Office of the Government continuously monitors implementation and discusses progress and potential savings with the responsible ministry in accordance with Section 9(m) of the Budgetary Rules Act no. 523/2004. Under Section 14(4) of the Budgetary Rules Act, the Office of the Government prepares and publishes an Annual Summary Implementation Report. This report is submitted to the Government of the Slovak Republic as a mandatory annex to the Draft General Government Budget.

²⁵ See Article 44 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

²⁶ See Article 45 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

²⁷ Measuring sustainable well-being – or the multiple outcomes that matter for people, the planet and future generations – is increasingly recognised as a more comprehensive and more representative way to assess societal progress, complementing more traditional macroeconomic measures of a country's development, such as GDP. Measuring societal progress beyond GDP has been the subject of a rich and decades-long body of work undertaken at the national, regional and international levels, with major international indicator dashboards including the OECD Well-being Framework, the Global Indicator Framework underpinning the UN SDGs and Eurostat's Quality of Life Initiative.

²⁸ While there is no complete standardisation of the underlying measurement frameworks used at the national level, some degree of harmonisation is possible through common international definitions (e.g. life expectancy, household income and debt). In areas where there have traditionally been fewer international standards, international organisations have developed measurement guidelines, including OECD guidelines on: the distribution of household income, consumption and wealth (OECD, 2013^[55]); subjective well-being (OECD, 2025^[56]); trust (OECD, 2017^[57]); the quality of the working environment (OECD, 2017^[58]); digital platform employment (joint work with the International Labour Organization and the European Union) (OECD/ILO/European Union, 2023^[60]); and population mental health (OECD, 2023^[59]).

3

Conclusions

This chapter concludes that the Slovak Republic has established important strategic foundations for sustainable development, but challenges remain in translating long-term objectives into co-ordinated action and measurable outcomes. Slovakia 2040 and recent centre-of-government reforms provide opportunities to strengthen links among strategic planning, budgeting, investment and implementation. Their contribution will depend on sustained political support, effective co-ordination, institutional capacity and the systematic use of evidence. Further progress in these areas could strengthen public-sector performance and support sustainable development and well-being for current and future generations.

The Slovak Republic has established important strategic foundations for advancing sustainable development and implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Slovakia 2030, the ongoing development of Slovakia 2040 and Investment Plan Slovakia, together with recent reforms to strengthen strategic planning and co-ordination from the centre of government (CoG), reflect a commitment to more integrated and forward-looking governance. These initiatives recognise that complex economic, social and environmental challenges require coordinated action across sectors and levels of government, informed by long-term objectives.

At the same time, important governance challenges remain in translating long-term ambitions into coherent policies, investments and measurable outcomes. Sustainable development considerations are not yet systematically integrated into policymaking tools and processes across the policy cycle, and links among strategic planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting remain underdeveloped. Policy development continues to be organised largely around sectoral responsibilities, while co-ordination mechanisms can come into play too late to support early identification and management of policy interactions, trade-offs and synergies. Consequently, long-term priorities are not always reflected in sectoral strategies and programmes, funding decisions or performance frameworks.

The development of Slovakia 2040 presents an opportunity to address these challenges. If developed as a shared long-term national framework, it could provide a common reference for future government manifestos, sectoral strategies, reforms and investment decisions across electoral cycles, while respecting their distinct legal and political functions. It could also establish sustainable development and well-being as central objectives of national policymaking and strengthen links among strategic objectives, implementation arrangements and resource allocation.

Recent reforms provide an institutional basis for strengthening policy coherence. The establishment of a Strategic Coordination Centre within the Office of the Government, the emerging network of Strategic Coordination Units within line ministries, and the Central Database of Strategic Documents could improve information sharing, strategic steering and co-ordination among policies, reforms and investments. Similarly, Investment Plan Slovakia and the National and Regional Partnership Plan provide opportunities to improve coherence among long-term national priorities, investment decisions and EU funding streams within the applicable EU programming framework. As these reforms remain at an early stage, their contribution will depend on sustained political support, clear institutional responsibilities adequate capacity and broad ownership across the public administration.

Strengthening policy coherence for sustainable development should not be treated as an additional policy agenda. It is a governance approach that can help the Slovak Republic make more effective use of existing institutions, processes, strategies and resources. Applying this approach will require stronger links among strategic planning, budgeting, and investment; earlier co-ordination across ministries; proportionate and timely use of regulatory impact assessment; and greater use of monitoring, evaluation and spending reviews to connect expenditure and implementation with shared outcomes. A nationally tailored sustainable well-being framework could also provide a common outcome-oriented reference for Slovakia 2040, SDG monitoring and strategic decision making, while complementing existing accountability systems.

More systematic engagement across levels of government and society could further support coherent policymaking. Earlier involvement of regional and local authorities may be particularly valuable for policies and investments with significant territorial effects or where implementation depends on subnational capacity. Similarly, engagement with civil society, social partners, businesses and academia at relevant stages of the policy cycle could help inform policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such engagement can broaden the evidence available to government, help identify implementation risks and support wider ownership of reforms.

The CoG can play an important stewardship role in this process. Positioned at the intersection of political priorities, strategic planning, and government wide co-ordination, it is uniquely placed to promote a whole-of-government perspective, support the identification and management of cross-sectoral priorities and strengthen alignment among policies, investments and performance frameworks. This stewardship role could complement the responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance, line ministries, subnational governments and other public bodies. Political support and clarity regarding institutional roles, together with effective collaboration among these institutions, could help sustain attention to shared long-term priorities and strengthen accountability for implementation.

The central challenge for the Slovak Republic is therefore not the absence of strategies but their translation into coordinated and sustained action across government. The reforms underway provide an opportunity to support implementation by developing Slovakia 2040 as a shared long-term national framework, strengthening links among strategic planning, budgeting and investment decisions, improving co-ordination across institutions and levels of government, and building the capacities needed to address increasingly complex policy challenges. Progress in these areas could strengthen public sector performance and support sustainable development and well-being for current and future generations.