

# **Governance approaches and tools for SD integration: good practice (what has worked where and why) at national level**

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## Summary

This paper focusses on the governance approaches for SD integration at the country level, such as SD and other overarching strategies, institutional (organizational) arrangements, and processes incl. supporting tools. While the terms "tools" is on the one hand widely used, and similarly for the toolbox in the make, there is also the rather common understanding of tools in a more narrow/technical sense. It is therefore proposed to introduce in the toolbox a category for "governance approaches" as coined in this paper for more generic "tools" for SDI integration, sandwiched between the "conceptual frameworks" and the more technical tools.

The paper presents key steps to take for translating the SDGs in national policies and processes. Five key governance principles and respective integration approaches for SD are highlighted: Horizontal and vertical coordination/integration, participation (equal rights/empowerment), reflexivity (integration of knowledge), intergenerational justice (long-term thinking). The paper introduces the Hofstede model for national cultures. The model is based on empirical research and identifies six cultural dimensions: power distance (from large to small), individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance (from weak to strong), long-term vs. short-term, indulgence vs. restraint. For a number of countries in Europe and globally (the GEJP pilot countries Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, as well as Costa Rica and Bhutan) the 'scores' are put together in an overview (Table 5) and some interpretation is offered (for four dimensions) for the relation of SD integration approaches/tools to the cultural background and the governance environment, including the connection to the governance styles hierarchy, network and market. The paper furthermore highlights some lessons learned in countries that had already earlier tackled the challenges of SD integration, with some specific experience in fine-tuning such approaches.

Five conclusions are drawn:

### **1. Governance approaches for SDI must be applied in context**

It is imperative that the governance approaches and tools for Sustainable Development Integration (SDI) are seen in the different contexts of different countries. Context matters a lot, and not putting tools in that perspective is prone to governance failures.

### **2. Insights in the national cultures are useful for understanding the governance environment**

The Hofstede model of cultural dimensions (and possibly other models of that kind) can help to understand the "mental programming" and with that essential parts of the governance environment, in which all efforts to address the governance challenges of SD integration and to make governance better work for SD, take place. There are in general no 'best' combinations of aspects in these cultural dimensions: each of them may be an advantage or disadvantage, and there are more factors that a model does not cover. Some surprises might also occur when taking into account the two dimensions not yet analyzed with SD lenses (long-term and indulgence), e.g. regarding consumption patterns.

### **3. Understanding the governance environment as "starting point" is a prerequisite for applying governance approaches and SDI tools**

*"You need to know where you are to know where you go next"*: Analyzing the governance environment including which governance approaches have so far worked better and less, is an important step when departing on SDG implementation, taking into account the five principles: horizontal coordination of sectorial policies and plans, vertical coordination of different levels, participation of stakeholder groups, reflexivity and integration of different knowledge arenas, the long-term dimension. The government environment is at this starting point given, and approaches should adapt and find the most promising next step as well as a good process design. While there is the observation that countries that undertake efforts in governance approaches for SD in a way move towards a kind of balance of the different governance styles, this will unlikely result in a uniformity, as the individual country characteristics remain beautifully divers.

#### **4. Making SDI context-sensitive and fit-for-purpose can benefit from using a metagovernance approach**

Metagovernance of SDI implies acknowledgement of the normative dimension of governance and the link to cultural diversity, and helps - with this understanding as a basis - creating (national) governance frameworks that situationally combine elements of different governance styles. Such an approach can be useful to analyze governance and tools failure, to design a new framework and to choose the most appropriate (i.e. performing) selection of tools from the SDI Toolbox in a given country.

#### **5. Stock-taking of governance environment & tradition in countries is urgent**

The principle of common but differentiated governance for implementing the SDGs and SDI in general requires at the level of differentiation (e.g. countries) a good overview of the existing governance environment, current traditions and history, and the relevant geographical conditions per country. Currently, such information is only ad hoc, dispersed, incomplete and where available, not comparable across countries. Stock-taking of this with a common methodology would not only benefit individual countries but also enable peer review among countries. Last but not least, it would help inter- and supranational organizations to better focus their capacity building support and funding.

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## **1. Introduction: SDGs' Integration Challenges, Tools, Scope**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015, reinforce the ever existing need for policy coordination to achieve policy coherence and to integrate the (three basic) dimensions of sustainable development (SD) in policy making (and with that in everyday life). They reinforce this need, as the set of SDGs offers a comprehensive view on short- and long-term results across the economic, social and environmental dimensions. Coherently with the interconnected nature of the SDGs an effective policy response must entail a comprehensive and integrated approach to sectoral policies, as well as across levels of policy making (global, national, local, and regional where applicable).

### ***SDG integration challenges***

The *universality* of the SDGs, one of their key characteristics, requires a significant change in the way in which policy agendas are being built: it obliges all countries, both developing/emerging and the developed ones (where the legacy of existing and well established practices is larger), to address current and future challenges from a holistic perspective. This means at the forefront, reinvigorating horizontal coordination of sectoral ministries (and potentially rethinking the current division of labor among them), addressing and integrating the domestic and the international cooperation perspectives, including the impacts of domestic policies (of the North, and emerging countries where applicable) on developing countries (in any case, on LDCs). A serious commitment to achieve the SDGs implies very strong policy coherence.

The SDGs reinforce the challenges to both domestic and international policies, and action to achieve them needs to be pursued in three key parallel tracks<sup>2</sup> that require coordination or integration where possible:

- *domestic policies to be pursued by all countries to improve their national conditions* (human rights, governance, rule of law, education, health, income equality within nations, environmental protection, etc.);
- *domestic policies and actions that have an impact on other regions and countries* (consumption and production patterns, GHG emissions, resource use, agriculture and fisheries, transboundary environmental pollution, etc.);
- *international policies* (development cooperation, trade, migration, financial systems, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> See e.g. European Commission Expert Group on "The role of STI policies to foster the implementation of the SDGs" (forthcoming); Weitz et al. (2015).

These categories and their integration needs are particularly relevant for OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries (see e.g. OECD proposal for PCSD in section 3.) below, but also increasingly for emerging economies (see e.g. Chinese investments in Africa), and for all countries universally regarding reciprocal effects (e.g. environmental integration and migration).

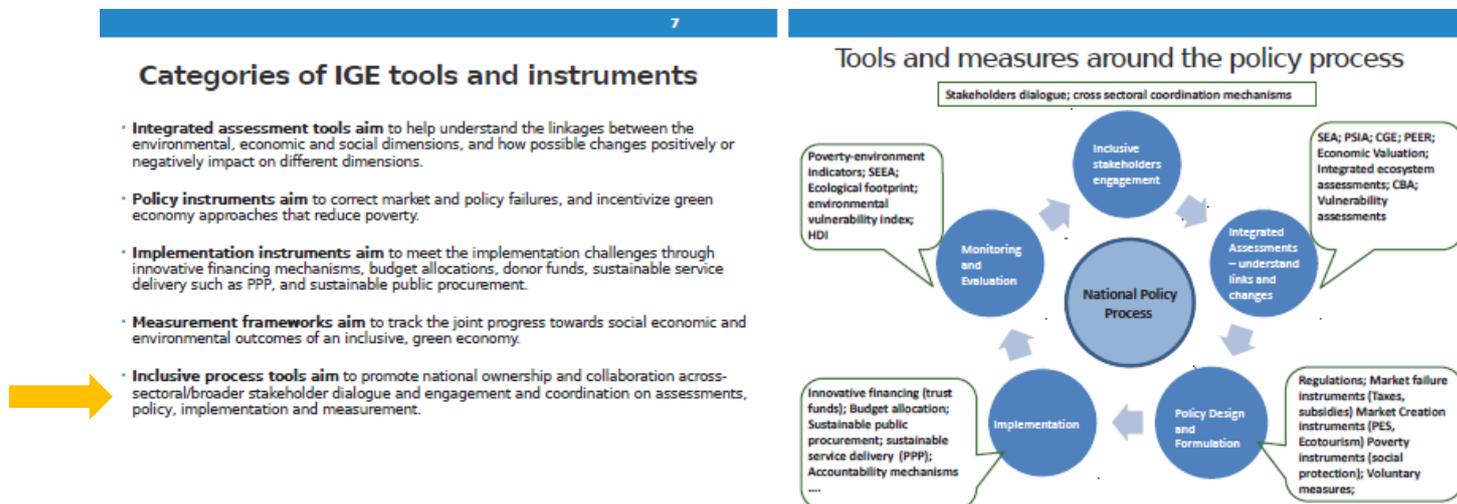
**Toolbox: Frameworks, Approaches and Tools**

The preparation of the Geneva Workshop in October 2015, with the aim of constructing a Sustainable Development Integration Toolbox/Toolkit (SDIT) uses a wide definition of the term "tools", to include the whole range from conceptual frameworks (as covered by the paper of Steven Bass) to tools as understood in a more narrow sense, such as methodologies, guidelines, indicators, models and scenarios (as covered for environmental policy integration by the paper of Hens Runhaar). The draft SDIT also includes a vision (objectives and targets users, principles), challenges (inequality, political economy/governance, planetary boundaries), as well as a guidebook for capacity development, policy formulation and implementation.

It seems useful to bear in mind that a tool in general is a *well-defined* (in terms of its features, including procedures) *means* to reach a *specific end*. A toolbox (or: "workshop" or "library", depending on the understanding of "tool" and "toolbox") should therefore provide a structure according to the *end*: What is the purpose of applying the tool, what is its aimed function, and/or in which phase of the policy cycle can it be usefully applied. Tools can be detailed in terms of features and usability (hammer, screwdriver) or more general (carrot, stick). In particular when the *end* is complex – like with sustainable development - one tool is not enough. To quote Maslov: "If you only have a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail". Therefore a 'toolbox' is needed (or different ones), filled compatible tools.

A previous Workshop on the Green Economy Joint Program (GEJP) had categorized tools and instruments along the policy cycle, as shown in Figure 1 below. In this terminology, the focus of this article plugs in the category of "(inclusive) process tools".

**Figure 1: Tool and measures categorized around the policy cycle (Usman, GEJP Workshop 2013)**



This approach is rather common and used, for example, by

- o "SDplanNet", an initiative that has aimed at bringing together SD practitioners to share good practice. Among the three existing regional sub-groups, the SDplanNet Asia-Pacific provides a pragmatic toolbox that is also structured along the policy cycle<sup>3</sup>;
- o the UN DESA Workshop on *Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation* (27-29 May 2015, New York) followed the steps "Mainstreaming SDGs into National Planning" (with sections e.g. on mainstreaming SD, and gender, into National Development Plans),

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sdplannet-ap.org/Pages/Toolbox.aspx>

"Monitoring and Reporting" and "Reviewing and Supporting SDG Implementation", as well as the underlying governance dimension of "Fostering an Enabling Environment for SD Implementation";<sup>4</sup>

- the recently published UN Development Group Reference Guide "*Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Interim Reference Guide to UN Country Teams*"<sup>5</sup> relates to the "Mainstreaming"<sup>6</sup> component of the MAPS approach (**M**ainstreaming, **A**cceleration and **P**olicy **S**upport) adopted by the UNDG and identifies eight implementation guidance areas as shown in Figure 2, which again roughly follow the policy cycle<sup>7</sup>, but is zooming into the implementation "phase" (and also frames multi-stakeholder approaches as a need throughout the entire cycle).

**Figure 2. Implementation Guidance Areas (UNDG, 2015)**



Taking this into account, it seems useful to define:

- a) and insert in the Toolbox structure a category for "governance approaches" (for what is framed in Figure 1 as "process tools"), sandwiched between "conceptual framework" and "tools", - to include approaches such as comprehensive strategies for SD, establishment of, for example, coordination bodies or multi-stakeholder bodies for advice and engagement, establishing a system for impact assessment (to design processes and to improve the knowledge base, including lay knowledge, in decision-making), and for monitoring and review that might serve several ends;
- b) "policy instruments" (combining "policy instruments" and "implementation instruments" of Figure 1), for example Regulation (and enforcement), Voluntary agreements (and a stick behind them), or Market-based instruments (MBIs);
- c) tools as policy supporting instruments like impact assessment (which is a hybrid, - both a process and an analytical tool), and other analytical tools (broadly with the end to improve the knowledge base of decision-making), and tools in the more narrow sense such as tools *for* impact assessment (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, multi-criteria assessment, modelling etc.), measuring (indicators, aggregated indices etc.), stakeholder analysis (actor and relation analysis, ring of influence etc.).

<sup>4</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8506IASD%20Workshop%20Report%2020150703.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/sustainable-development-goals/mainstreaming-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development.html>

<sup>6</sup> while complementary guidance on the other components (acceleration and policy support) are expected by the end of the year, to include guidance on national reporting, capacity development (for data, monitoring and review) and applying SDG-based analytical tools to accelerate progress (UNDG 2015: 10). The ongoing Toolbox work under the work stream to which this paper is contributing seems useful to feed into this planned guidance.

<sup>7</sup> It is stating that the guidance is not intended to provide guidance at the policy design level, "although many of the approaches and tools listed might also be applicable at both the strategy and policy levels" (UNDG 2015: 11).

This paper focusses on the governance approaches for SD integration in various countries, including SD strategies, institutional (organizational) arrangements, and processes (incl. supporting tools such as impact assessment). It first presents a step-by-step approach for translating the SDGs in national policies and processes, including countries who are already tackling it (section 2.), then presents common governance principles and integration approaches for SD in the (given) multi-sector, - level and – actor environment, as well as ideal-type governance styles (hierarchy, network and market) (section 3). It then embarks on the cultural dimension and introduces the Hofstede model for national cultures, provides the scores and their interpretation for a number of selected countries in Europe and globally (inter alia the GEJP pilot countries) and explains the relation of SD integration approaches/tools to the cultural background and the governance environment (section 4). It furthermore highlights some lessons learned: in countries that had already earlier tackled the challenges of integration, with some specific experience in fine-tuning such approaches and arrangements, as well as with hints for how to tackle country-specific situations, e.g. when starting with SDG implementation, building on the governance environment and experience already made (section 5). Section 6 provides a number of conclusions.

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## **2. Steps to take for national level implementation of the SDGs in light of SD integration**

Wherever a country stands in the process of moving on a sustainable path of development, whatever approaches, policies, strategies and policies it already has, the globally agreed SDGs require translation in each country. This typically starts with an inventory, mapping etc., before considering or selecting tools to support future SD integration and SDG implementation. The following list is a tool in itself to support designing a translation and implementation process:

- 1) Each country to translate and implement the globally agreed SDGs at national level by establishing the process and related governance for a SDG framework of their own, embedded in the overall governance framework, starting with:
  - a) Taking stock of existing goals and targets in sectorial and overarching plans and of the planning system and compare them with the SDGs (in Europe, this is now widely called "gap analysis");
  - b) Performing a SWOT analysis of the existing governance framework for SD, taking account of the five principles as addressed in section 3: horizontal coordination of sectorial policies and plans; vertical coordination of different levels; participation of stakeholder groups; integration of different knowledge arenas; the time dimension;
- 2) Analyzing the governance of SD, i.e. the culture and characteristics of the political and administrative system with SD lenses, i.e. identifying the (cultural) dispositions in terms of governance styles, the starting point, the direction along which to move and the missing elements;
- 3) Establishing a process for SDG implementation, based on the national stocktaking and analysis (see steps 1 and 2), with appropriate governance approaches / SDI tools. This also means embedding the SDG governance in the national systems, building up on what is already there, learning from what has so far not worked well, and what has.

According to current insight from various "mapping and gap analyses" carried out by a number of countries (see Table 1<sup>8</sup>) there are differences in approaches, and therefore in fact a "meta-analysis" would be useful and needed. So far the mappings are *policy* gap analyses that should also be complemented by an *implementation* gap analysis. It would also be recommended to include an analysis how science (and especially science-technology-innovation (STI) tools) could help in supporting actions aimed at filling the gaps, in getting more knowledge and a better understanding of interlinkages between goals and targets, and in improving policy coherence. In any case, these gap analyses need to go systematically through all goals and targets, and map the 'distance to target'. The forthcoming study in the Netherlands<sup>9</sup> applied an assessment matrix of this kind with the categories:

- a) implementation of the existing policy will likely achieve the target;
- b) ... will achieve outcomes around the target, and the policy can be made more robust for unexpected events;
- c) ... will likely not achieve the target, but possible to realize with intensifying the existing policy;
- d) ... will likely not achieve the target; realization requires fundamental revision of the current approach in the respective area.

Countries will set their own targets for the mid-term, and specify targets to their own situation. However, a prioritization should focus on the time horizon / urgency (short term, mid-term, longer term actions required), and should not be a "selection" of goals and targets in terms of cherry-picking. The SDGs are a comprehensive framework that needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way, and "priorities" is an unfortunate term. At the same time building on what is already there, matching future actions to existing policies, programs and instruments makes perfectly sense ("starting point"), but assessing their functionality and effectiveness needs to be included in the gap analysis.

**Table 1: Examples of countries that have already started with "what do the SDGs mean for us"**

Europe	Recent ESDN Conference (European Sustainable Development Network):
Belgium	Planned: renewal of (SD) strategies, integration of SDGs in sectoral policies, communication; institutional framework needs political support, EU boosts...
Finland	Gap analysis, recent meeting of SDC, communication+societal commitments, adapting indicator set; aimed: action plan adopted by Parliament end of 2016
France	"National Strategy of Ecological Transition towards Sustainable Development" (SNTEDD) 2015-2020; think the SDG job is done with this
Germany	Progress report SDS 2016 to include the SDGs; challenge: reflect universality
Latvia	Mapping by 2016; policy impact assessments 2017, NDP MTR 2018
Netherlands	Gap analysis on env. related SDGs; possibly better coordination of Ministries
Switzerland	Renewed SDS 01/2016; transition phase 2016-17 (gap analysis, indicator system); challenges: better coordination domestic and foreign policy
EU	Gap Analysis, internal dithering on approach and who (leads, does what...)
Sweden	SEI analysis "SDGs for Sweden: Insights on Setting a National Agenda"
Global *	
Bhutan	Revision of the "Nat. Env. Strategy for SD", stocktaking of SDGs related to it
Columbia	Gap analysis, setting own targets, awareness of coordination needs

\* only ad hoc information; Columbia: Minister for Planning, Simon Gaveria, at the UN Summit, 27 September 2015

<sup>8</sup> and more will likely be presented at the forthcoming UNOSD Sustainable Development Transition Forum, 17-19 November 2015 in Incheon, Korea. <http://www.unosd.org/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=46&menu=177>. See also IGES (2015).

<sup>9</sup> PBL (forthcoming).

### 3. Governance styles, principles and approaches for SDI

SDI requires systemic thinking: *comprehensive* approaches (taking into account all relevant aspects) and, in addition, a *holistic* view. The latter implies trying to keep in mind the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts, both horizontally and vertically (downstream as well as upstream)<sup>10</sup>. Such a systemic approach requires a very broad definition of governance, as to cover all thinkable tools and not excluding one from the SDI toolbox. The term governance is in fact a relatively recent ‘invention’, which was necessary when in the 1990s in many countries it became clear that governments cannot direct, guide, protect and inform societies on their own anymore, and that the classical, in most cases rather top-down way of working of governments should at least be opened up for additional approaches.

Governance is about *how* goals and targets are achieved, and with whom. It is about which approaches, instruments and tools are applied – including formal and informal institutional arrangements, laws, communication, collaboration, coordination and coherence, and which roles for governmental and other actors. It is the “hardware”, whereas the concrete policies are the *what*, the “software”.<sup>11</sup> Over the last 25-30 years many governance approaches have evolved, but they can be brought back to three basic styles, from which governance frameworks for real cases are built (Table 2). The three styles support, undermine or ignore each other on at least 35 dimensions of governance, including with regard to the integration tools they tend to prefer.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2: Drivers for SDI tools: Three basis governance styles and some of their features<sup>13</sup>**

Governance styles	Examples of typical features of the styles
Hierarchical governance	Rational, reliable, stability, legitimacy, justice, accountability, risk averse, government-centered, centralised, planning and design, authoritative, instructions, one-way communication, dependency, subordinates, obedience, rules-based, command and control
Network governance	Partnerships, collaborative learning, co-creation for innovation, informal arrangements, trust-based, harmony, communication as dialogue, process management, diplomacy, mutual dependence, mutual gains approach, consensus, voluntary agreements, covenants
Market governance	Rational, cost-driven, flexible, competition as driver for innovation, price, marketing, decentralised, bottom-up, individualist, autonomy, self-determination, empowering, services, contracts, incentives, awards and other market-based instruments

Table 3 puts together several governance principles and integration needs that meanwhile can be considered as more or less universal, also given that there is quite some convergence on the side of scholars and practical guidance.<sup>14</sup>

These universal principles need to be translated in the national context along the illustrative steps as presented in step 2) and 3) in section 2. As addressed there, choices of governance approaches and their design, and what is recommendable how to shape this, are reflecting more than often realized the politico-

<sup>10</sup> Meuleman & Niestroy (2015).

<sup>11</sup> In political science the differentiation of polity, politics and policy has become common. With the broad definition used, governance comprises polity and politics (in the meaning of processes in a wider sense, not the system of e.g. party politics).

<sup>12</sup> Meuleman (2014)

<sup>13</sup> After (ibidem).

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. UNDP (2015); Waage & Yap (2015).

administrative setting, national or subnational preferences for governance styles, and with that on the underlying cultures (values and traditions). The cultural dimension of SDI governance will be discussed in section 4. This embedding in the governance environment will also apply to some extent to the use of tools (see section 4.4).

**Table 3: Five normative governance principles for SD**

Characteristics of integration	Governance principle	What needs to be coordinated/integrated?	Challenge for a governance for SD
Policy sectors / areas	Horizontal coordination/integration	Multiple sectors: economic, social and environmental policies	Policy coherence
Policy levels	Vertical coordination/integration	Multiple levels: local, subnational, national and supranational	Links/cooperation of governments and administrations at all levels
Actors	Participation, equal rights and empowerment	Multiple actors: decision-makers and stakeholders from politics, business and civil society	Stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, gender inequalities, power asymmetries
Knowledge	Reflexivity	Knowledge and experience from various areas in society ("walks of life")	Continuous reflection of ones decisions
Time	Intergenerational justice	Long- and short-term thinking	Long-term thinking despite short election cycles

(after Niestroy, 2014 a)

In the following some examples of common approaches to support the governance principles and integration needs of Table 3 are presented. They are linked to the principles where they seem to fit best, but of course some can be applied to support more than one principle. While some countries are listed where the respective approach is used, more specific experience is discussed in section 5.2.

#### ***Horizontal and vertical coordination, integration of the three dimensions of SD***

- SD law, SD as objective in the Constitution (e.g. Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, Bhutan). Such a law or objective supports also the other governance principles.
- SD or other overarching Strategies to mainstream SD in sectoral policies; when such a strategy becomes a framework, it typically supports all five governance principles;
- SD leadership of Prime Minister (e.g. Finland, Bhutan);
- Bodies for horizontal coordination within government; this could begin with identifying those who are already responsible for cross-government coordination and for formulating policies that drive investment and economic development (Germany: long-standing tradition of coordinating body of state secretaries of all relevant Ministries);
- Rules and coordination bodies for vertical coordination (between different levels of government)<sup>15</sup>: Federal countries have the strongest and most formalized vertical coordination, not only at technical but also at political level. In other countries various provisions are in place (typically more at technical level) to hold regular meetings on progress between national, subnational and local authorities (e.g. NL).

<sup>15</sup> Niestroy (2014 b); Bertelsmann Foundation (2014).

- "Policy Coherence for Development" (PCD) was introduced by OECD countries (and is enshrined in the EU Treaty) in order to increase the coherence of domestic policies that have an impact on other regions and countries. The approach has apparently led to much reporting without the results as aimed at, and is currently under revision in the EU. With the SDGs at the horizon the OECD and others have started to advocate a shift to Policy Coherence for *Sustainable* Development (PCSD).<sup>16</sup> This aims at a shift from considering coherence for development (specifically) to making policy fully coherent with the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the impacts of domestic policies on developing countries and in the three dimensions of SD. Such a comprehensive coherence approach will involve both horizontal coherence (between sector policies) and vertical coherence (from global through national levels of policy making), including - in the context of the EU – coherence from policy objectives through instruments to action on the ground in Member States.

A typical variable for successful horizontal coordination is the degree of autonomy of individual Ministries, or that the most powerful Ministries are not interested, and that the coordinating body is not high level enough.

### ***Participation, equal rights and empowerment (incl. gender)***

- SD Councils – typically also serve the principle of reflexivity (Belgium, Germany), and partly horizontal/vertical coordination (e.g. Finland), - or even solely this function: in countries where SD councils where actually a coordination body of the government, with no or very limited stakeholder participation, as it often occurred in developing countries (see section 5.2 for types of SD councils);<sup>17</sup>
- Improving the knowledge base by including lay-knowledge (citizens and civil society): co-creation/transdisciplinarity (also serves reflexivity); this may take organized forms such as planning cells and deliberative polling sessions, or "crowd-sourcing" IT approaches (e.g. citizens feeding in environmental observations);
- Engaging the wider public.

Challenges include the absence of organized civil society, establishing a relation to business, and power asymmetries.

### ***Reflexivity / Science-policy interface***

- Monitoring and Review system (through learning and feedback, this also serves reflexivity and knowledge building), if done in a participatory manner, it also serves multi-actor involvement;
- Effective indicators & monitoring systems and practices, Effective evaluation & review practices (incl. peer review);
- Peer learning;
- (Sustainability) Impact Assessments to ensure knowledge based policy preparation (e.g. European Commission's IA system for all policy proposals; UK has Sustainability Appraisals, but only for local plans); Screening tools (e.g. Bhutan, screening of policies against the Gross National Happiness framework); Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA/SEA), Social Impact Assessments including gender IA. As Impact assessments have formal procedural requirements (including on participation) they also contribute to the coordination principle and the participation principle;<sup>18</sup>
- (Scientific) Advisory Bodies, deliberate types of SD councils (see section 5.2).

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.oecd.org/pcd/TOOLKIT%20FRAMEWORK%20FOR%20PCSD.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Niestroy (2005, 2007, 2011)

<sup>18</sup> Further research on experience with Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), - a term used in certain contexts/countries for comprehensive IAs (such as the one of the EU, that is just called "IA"), is needed and should build on Adelle et al. (2014, and forthcoming).

### ***Intergenerational justice / Long-term thinking despite short election cycles***

- Long-term strategies combined with shorter-term policies (overarching/long-term vs. operational/delivery strategies)
- Possibly: an SD Council or similar body with a longer remit than the national government (example: Greece).

A more systematic stock-taking would be needed to understand the underlying reasons why these governance approaches were taken up in some countries and not in others.

The three typical governance styles and their features, and the five governance principles and their linkages to SDI tools are building blocks for concrete SDI governance. The next section introduces how the different context – especially the cultural context – in each countries influences what the key elements of an SDI governance framework and accompanying toolbox will be (sections 4.1-4.4) and how the metagovernance model could help analyzing and designing an appropriate framework (5.2).

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## **4. Context matters: what works where and why**

### **4.1 The cultural dimension**

As introduced in section 2 and 3, governance approaches to address the governance challenges and hence to make governance work for SD, depend to an important extent on the governance environment, which is a result of:

- Individual values and resulting preferences (incl. education: differences between e.g. scientists, lawyers, engineers, social scientists),
- National/subnational/local (ethnic, religious, linguistic) cultural preferences and values,
- Political culture and the administrative system (type of democracy, constitutional setting, which determines for example the power of individual Ministers), traditions and history,
- Geographical and physical conditions and constraints,

all of which influences, which governance approaches for SD (and integration tools) work where. While these factors might also influence (the absence of) governance requirements such as rule of law, access to justice and freedom from corruption, making the case for the importance of the cultural dimension does not mean that these universally applicable governance requirements are open for differentiation.

The first two points refer to a broad understanding of *culture* as a "mental programming", patterns of thinking and feeling acquired by every person during lifetime through the social environment (family, neighborhood, school, friends, workplace...)<sup>19</sup>. When it comes to national cultures, it is of the one hand said that the concept of common culture applies to *societies*<sup>20</sup> and not to *nations*. However, many nations do form historically developed "wholes", and within nations there are strong forces towards further integration, through, for example, a common language, school system, the political system, etc. It has been argued that nations are the source of a considerable amount of common mental programming of their citizens.<sup>21</sup> Two more reasons speak for using data at the level of nations: on the one side the mere practical

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<sup>19</sup> Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 3). This broader use of the term culture is common among social / cultural anthropologists.

<sup>20</sup> "historically, organically developed forms of social organization" (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 18).

<sup>21</sup> This even applies to multilingual and –ethnic countries such as Belgium and Malaysia. At the same time the tendency for ethnic, linguistic and religious groups to fight for recognition of their own identity and/or national independence has rather been increasing (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 18, and endnote 14). Other commentators point more vigorously to multi-ethnic societies such as India, which would require more differentiation (<http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol2/iss1/8/>)

one that it is easier to obtain data, but – more importantly – the purpose of cross-cultural research is to promote cooperation among nations through better understanding, which applies very much to sustainable development.

While for some scholars the reasons for differences in thinking and acting of and between countries lie in the political-administrative system, legal system and other institutions, for cultural anthropologists such institutions have grown within a culture and "*perpetuate the mental programming on which they were founded. Institutions cannot be understood without considering culture, and understanding culture presumes insight into institutions.*"<sup>22</sup> Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 20) also argue, that as a consequence of this, *simply importing foreign institutions does not change the way people in a country think feel and act.* This insight is also reflected in the concept of "Common But Differentiated Governance (CBDG)" for sustainable development, and specifically for the implementation of the SDGs.<sup>23]</sup>

The last point, on geographical/physical conditions, is about the 'external' (i.e. not societal) factors co-determine the conditions of life in a country. Such factors may induce cultural traits. For example, the ages-old consensus culture of the Netherlands is said to originate from the permanent common battle against the threat of flooding<sup>24</sup>; not surprising as 25% of its surface is below sea level and up to 60% has a high risk of being flooded.

## 4.2 National cultures: The Hofstede model

Classifying national cultures, or certain "dimensions" within, started with an emerging conviction in social anthropology (in the first half of the 20th century) that all societies, modern or traditional face the same "problems", and only the answers differ. The first conceptualizing of what are the problems common to all societies is from 1954 and covered already largely the same issues that were then in the 1970s identified by the Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede, who analyzed a large set of survey data about the values of people from more than 50 countries<sup>25</sup>, and developed a four-dimensional model, which has been refined ever since.<sup>26</sup> These common problems, but with solutions differing from country to country and the corresponding cultural dimensions of the model are shown in Table 4. The fifth dimension emerged when dealing with the influence of researchers' own cultural background (Western – Asian) that could not be covered by the four dimensions. In 2010, a sixth dimension was added based on an analysis of the World Value Survey (WVS).<sup>27</sup> In Box 1, the definitions of the six dimensions are displayed.

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<sup>22</sup> Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 20).

<sup>23</sup> Meuleman&Niestroy (2015).

<sup>24</sup> Kickert (2003).

<sup>25</sup> All of them working for a large multinational corporation (IBM). While this seems first odd as it is a rather specific kind of sample, from a social research point of view, these data were highly valuable, as they were similar in all respects except nationality (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 23).

<sup>26</sup> This section can obviously only provide a very rough introduction to the development of the schools of thought in social anthropology and Geert Hofstede's work. It is mainly based on Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) and cannot elaborate in-depth on criticism and discussion about this model. Part of such a discussion has also been the influence of the national origin of the researchers themselves; this has apparently been dealt with in the research of the past 40 years, and led inter alia to adding a fifth dimension (see Table 4, and Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 29-30). See also <http://geert-hofstede.com/> and <http://www.geerthofstede.nl/>, as well as several lectures and illustrations, such as world maps with five cultural dimensions [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-XdlbgFxZo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-XdlbgFxZo;); all results: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=geert+hofstede](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=geert+hofstede).

<sup>27</sup> In 2010 by Michael Minkov; see also Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map with the categories "Traditional values versus Secular-rational values", and Survival values versus Self-expression values: [www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp)

**Table 4: Common problems but different solutions and Hofstede’s six-dimensional model of differences between national cultures**

Societal features	Cultural dimensions
1. Social inequality, including relationship with authority	Power distance (from large to small)
2. The relationship between the individual and the group	Individualism versus Collectivism
3. Concepts of masculinity and femininity: the social and emotional implications of having been born as boy or girl	Masculinity versus Femininity
4. Ways of dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity (which turned out to be related to the ways of dealing with conflicts including the control of aggression, as identified in the earlier concept <sup>28</sup> ).	Uncertainty Avoidance (from weak to strong)
5. Orientation on the future or on the past and present	Long Term versus Short Term Orientation
6. (Importance of) own happiness, control of people's own life	Indulgence versus Restraint

Source: Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 23) and <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Classifying national cultures along a number of dimensions was a new paradigm in the study of cultures, which has subsequently been followed by other researchers (including, though indirectly, the World Value Survey, led by Robert Inglehart). At the same time, choosing the national level has also been questioned and criticized, as there are other factors that influence culture and on which culture can be analyzed. Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 34 f.) conclude that regional, ethnic and religious cultures within or across countries (insofar as learn from birth) can be described in the same way as national cultures, and that basically the same dimensions as found for countries apply to these differences. Gender, generation and social class cultures in contrast can only partly be classified by the dimensions found for national cultures, and should be also described in their own terms, based on special studies. At the same time, obviously the dimension "femininity and masculinity" is relevant, although it only covers part of gender issues. "Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct. Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life." (...) "Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Hofstede’s research has shown that this cultural dimension is distinct across the rich/poor divide. It is also independent from the individualist – collectivist dimension. Some gender scholars have pointed out that the overall achievement of Hofstede lies in the fact that he emphasized the relevance of "masculinity" as rarely done before.<sup>29</sup>

Other criticism of the approach as such refers to its generalization. Here Hofstede clarifies that "*culture is defined as the collective mental programming of the human mind which distinguishes one group of people from another. ...This does not imply that everyone in a given society is programmed in the same way; there are considerable differences between individuals. It may well be that the differences among individuals in one country culture are bigger than the differences among all country cultures. ... Statements about just one*

<sup>28</sup> The first concept was published in 1954 by the American sociologists Alex Inkeles and Daniel Levinson, based on a survey of English-language literature on national culture.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Franz-Balsen (2014).

*culture on the level of "values" do not describe "reality"; such statements are generalisations and they ought to be relative. Without comparison, a country score is meaningless.*<sup>30</sup>

### **Box 1: Hofstede's six dimension of national culture<sup>31</sup>**

#### Power Distance Index (PDI)

This dimension expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The fundamental issue here is how a society handles inequalities among people. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of Power Distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low Power Distance, people strive to equalise the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.

#### Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

The high side of this dimension, called individualism, can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of only themselves and their immediate families. Its opposite, collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. A society's position on this dimension is reflected in whether people's self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "we."

#### Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

The Masculinity side of this dimension represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success. Society at large is more competitive. Its opposite, femininity, stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. Society at large is more consensus-oriented. In the business context Masculinity versus Femininity is sometimes also related to as "tough versus tender" cultures.

#### Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

The Uncertainty Avoidance dimension expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. The fundamental issue here is how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? Countries exhibiting strong UAI maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. Weak UAI societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.

#### Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)

Every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and the future. Societies prioritize these two existential goals differently.

Societies who score low on this dimension, for example, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.

#### Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

<sup>30</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>. Furthermore: "These relative scores have been proven to be quite stable over time. The forces that cause cultures to shift tend to be global or continent-wide. This means that they affect many countries at the same time, so if their cultures shift, they shift together and their relative positions remain the same. Exceptions to this rule are failed states and societies in which the levels of wealth and education increase very rapidly, comparatively speaking. Yet, in such cases, the relative positions will also only change very slowly." <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

Hofstede has underlined that the identified dimensions are theoretical constructions, meant to be used in practical applications, as guidelines for better understanding. National scores should never be interpreted as deterministic for individuals.<sup>32</sup> As practical tool the model has been widely applied to international management and negotiations, including training for intercultural communication<sup>33</sup>, and in education. It has *helped organisations to understand how they can collaborate more effectively across cultures – and if nothing else causing thought-provoking discussion and further developments in the field.*<sup>34</sup>

### 4.3 The Hofstede model in relation to governance styles and sustainable development

The "scores" of countries in the six dimensions can help to understand the "mental programming" and with that essential parts of the governance environment, in which all efforts to address the governance challenges of SD integration and to make governance better work for SD, take place. As empirical research on governance for SD suggests, countries have preferences for one of the basic governance styles (or a specific combination of) hierarchy, network and market<sup>35</sup>, as introduced in section 3. These preferences are rooted in this 'mental programming', which also shapes the institutions of a country. With this, countries also have a kind of natural "starting point" and develop along a pathway where they eventually add other governance styles and try other modes and approaches (see Figure 3).<sup>36</sup> The model helps to understand the starting points and the strengths and weaknesses of countries with respect to governance approaches for SD. "You need to know where you are to know where you go next", as a participant in the Geneva workshop put it.

**Figure 3: Starting points and directions of development in key SD governance dimensions**

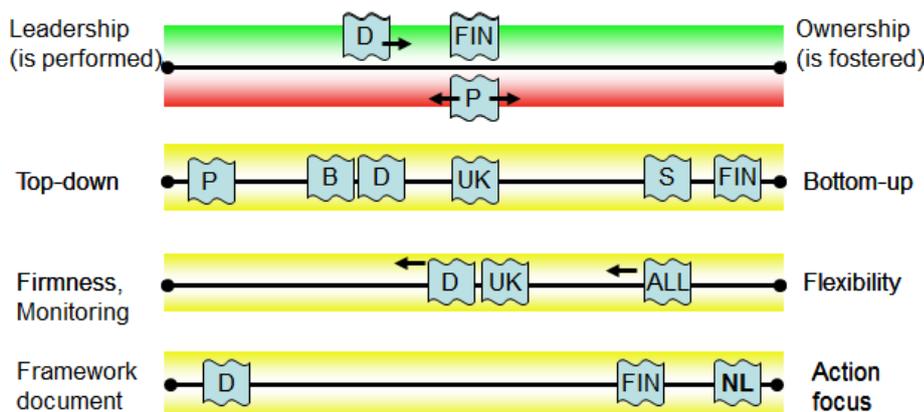


Table 5 displays the "scores" of the Hofstede six-dimensional model for a number of European countries (to illustrate key groupings<sup>37</sup>), for six of the seven the GEJP pilot countries (Bangladesh, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique; no data are available for Rwanda) and Bhutan, which was studied by the author in 2013 and beyond<sup>38</sup>. Some interpretation is offered below.

<sup>32</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hofstede%27s\\_cultural\\_dimensions\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hofstede%27s_cultural_dimensions_theory)

<sup>33</sup> There is now also a tool available where one may conduct a personal survey in comparison with a country visiting/working in etc. <http://geert-hofstede.com/cultural-survey.html>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/indulgence-vs-restraint-6th-dimension/>

<sup>35</sup> Meuleman (2014).

<sup>36</sup> Niestroy (2005).

<sup>37</sup> It can also be seen that there is - to some extent - a "cultural footprint" in the former colonies of European countries, - see examples below.

<sup>38</sup> Niestroy et al. (2013); Royal Government of Bhutan (forthcoming).

**Table 5: Country scores in six cultural dimensions according to Hofstede**

Country	PDI: Acceptance of power distance	IDV: individualist (high scores) vs. collectivist	MAS: masculine (high scores) – feminine	UAI: uncertainty avoidance	LTO: * long-term vs. pragmatic	IDG: * indulgence vs. restraint
Sweden / Denmark	31 / <u>18</u>	<u>71</u> / 74	<u>5</u> / <u>16</u>	<u>29</u> / <u>23</u>	53 / 35	78 / 70
Finland	33	63	26	59	38	57
Netherlands	38	80	<u>14</u>	53	67	68
UK / USA	35 / 40	<u>89</u> / <u>91</u>	66 / 62	35 / 46	51 / 26	69 / 68
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	40
Hungary	46	80	<u>88</u>	82	58	31
Belgium / France	<u>65</u> / <u>68</u>	<u>75</u> / 71	54 / 43	<u>94</u> / <u>86</u>	82 / 63	57 / 48
Spain	57	51	42	86	48	44
Portugal	63	27	31	99	28	33
Colombia	67	<u>13</u>	64	80	13	83
Costa Rica	35	15	21	86	-	-
Ghana	80	15	40	65	4	72
Mozambique	85	15	38	44	11	80
Kenya	70	25	60	50	-	-
Indonesia	78	14	46	48	62	38
Bangladesh	<u>80</u>	20	55	60	-	-
Bhutan	<u>94</u>	52	32	28	-	-

Data in this table retrieved from <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>

[\* These more recent dimensions have not been interpreted]

Highlights: from dark (high) to medium to light (low); underlined: the highest and lowest score per dimension

The Scandinavian countries together with The Netherlands are a very consistent group with low scores in power distance, i.e. an egalitarian mindset and belief in decentralized power, very low scores in masculinity, i.e. dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life ("feminine societies") and low scores in uncertainty avoidance, i.e. there is not much felt need for predictability, and new things and differences are attractive. The Netherlands and Finland score clearly higher in this aspect, i.e. they have a slight preference for avoiding uncertainty, which is reflected in a stronger need for rules, maintenance of codes of behaviour, precision is the norm, innovation might be resisted, inner urge for working hard, security being an important element in individual motivation. All these effects are obviously stronger in countries with higher scores in this dimension. The effects of a low uncertainty avoidance become in particular apparent in the combination with high scores in individualism that also apply to these countries (e.g. innovative product design, creative industries). These countries are also branded as "consensus

democracies"; they clearly prefer network governance as approach, and are at the same time prone to the failures of it. Typical failures are lack of reliability, lack of structure, which might lead to never ending talks. The Anglo-saxon countries (UK, USA ...) also have a low uncertainty avoidance in combination with the highest scores in individualism (with the same effects as in the Scandinavian countries regarding innovation etc.) and a low acceptance of power distance, but high scores in masculinity. Competition, assertiveness and focus on material success are high values and there is a strong preference for market governance. The effects are a strong belief system and the well-known preference for a liberal economic system and a small state (see also Box 2). Failures include that the complete focus on efficiency often results in neglecting the objectives of a policy.<sup>39</sup>

Although Germany is in general similar (but with somewhat lower individualism), it in contrast scores high in uncertainty avoidance, which is reflected in the importance of rules<sup>40</sup> and a traditionally hierarchical system. Towards the "Latin European" direction, the scores for uncertainty avoidance increase even more, acceptance of power distance increases strongly, while masculinity and individualism scores decrease. In general, there is a strong correlation between high power distance and collectivism. In cultures where people depend on in-groups (e.g. high importance of the family), people are usually also dependent on power figures.<sup>41</sup> Where people are more independent from in-groups, they are usually also less dependent on powerful others (i.e. lower scores in acceptance of power distance). However, the "Latin European" countries, and in particular France and Belgium, are exceptions. The combination of medium power distance and still strong individualism is explained for France with the fact that the prevailing view of authority is still this of absolutism. As at the same time in a rather strong individualist culture dependence relationships are perceived as difficult to bear, the way of reconciling this contradiction is a bureaucratic system: impersonalized rules and centralization make it possible to reconcile an absolutist conception of authority and the elimination of most direct dependence relationships.<sup>42</sup> This displays the strong preference for hierarchical governance, which applies for all these countries. In combination with (very) high uncertainty avoidance this leads to phenomena and governance failures such as low trust in government and low enforcement of rules. The former also has an impact on bottom-up mobilization, as an example from Belgium illustrates.<sup>43</sup>

The enforcement of rules is, next to other reasons, rooted in the uncertainty avoidance dimensions: Countries with low scores tend to change or withdraw laws if they do not work. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance in contrast, laws "can fulfill a need for security even if they are not followed".<sup>44</sup> By using a World Bank investigation on the duration of administrative procedures in more than one hundred countries, a strong correlation between high uncertainty avoidance and low enforcement of rules was found. Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 190) conclude that high uncertainty avoidance countries are well provided with laws, but for citizens to make them work takes more time, possibly to the extent that they

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<sup>39</sup> See example of a most efficient hospital (without patients) in the TV-series "Yes, Minister".  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-5zEb1oS9A>

<sup>40</sup> Germany, for example, has laws for the event that other laws might become unenforceable (emergency laws), while the UK does not even have a written constitution (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 190). Also typical is the high percentage of lawyers in government and public administration.

<sup>41</sup> "Most extended families have patriarchal structures with the head of the family exercising strong moral authority." (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005: 83).

<sup>42</sup> Michael Crozier, in: Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 84).

<sup>43</sup> An example from Belgium illustrates: An American family living in Brussels initiated a petition to the government to demand measures for noise reduction from the airport close by. Belgian neighbours either denied the problem ("What noise?") or declined to sign the petition, saying that the authorities would not pay attention to it anyway (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 193).

<sup>44</sup> Hofstede & Hofstede (2005: 190) compare this with the function of religious commandments. [Hofstede & Hofstede. NB: There will be different roots to circumventing religious laws in e.g. Buddhism (such as not eating meat) compared to Christianity.]

may even not try. With respect to governance approaches for SD integration and SDG implementation, such as overarching strategies (SDSs and NDP mainstreaming), there seems in these cases a stronger tendency than elsewhere that a country would embark to a complex strategy process, but nothing will be done with it (see also the poles "action focus" and "framework document" in Figure 3).<sup>45</sup> Pathways to overcome such governance failures would entail a better structured process that requires timely deliveries of actions, e.g. combined with an established procedure such as Impact Assessment or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA, see section 4.4), as well as bottom-up action on the stakeholder side.<sup>46</sup>

Where rather high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance come together, such as in Latin American countries (and starting in "Latin European countries") where they are also typically combined with high collectivism (and mostly high masculinity), two phenomena occur in the relation of citizens and the state: In high power distance countries authorities have more unchecked power and status, and in high uncertainty avoidance countries authorities are supposed to have more expertise than in low uncertainty avoidance countries. As an effect, citizens in countries with high uncertainty avoidance are less optimistic about their possibilities to influence decisions made by authorities, and they are less prepared to protest against decisions, and if so, with more modest means. At the same time, the competence attributed to ordinary citizens is higher in low uncertainty avoidance countries. The impact of this cultural background on the governance principles participation and knowledge sharing/reflexivity is obviously strong. It also explains why (among other things) there is often a low degree of organized civil society. Pathways to improve this would work from both sides: governments proactively acknowledging and using citizens' knowledge, encouraging and enhancing existing nests of collaboration between different parties (more likely starting at the local level), and doing the same way bottom-up: self-organizing collaborations, e.g. starting with working on solutions rather than (confrontational) protest, also with the private sector. Obviously all these things are taking place already and are fostered by capacity building programs. The cultural background just shows how large the needs for such activities are, - and that much more continuity needs to be achieved, as well as much better coordination of various externally born initiatives and programs for capacity building etc. It could be expected that in those African and Asian countries with rather feminine societies (like Mozambique<sup>47</sup>, Ghana, Indonesia and Bhutan) improving participation, achieving compromise, engagement and citizen empowerment has smaller hurdles to overcome, as equality and solidarity are valued higher. At the same time, this might be prevented by defects in more fundamental governance requirements such as peace, rule of law and low corruption, as now covered in SDG 16, which of course requires further efforts (that are not covered in this paper).<sup>48</sup> In more masculine countries of these regions the values are more on competition, people striving for the best they can be and being proud of successes.

African and Asian countries<sup>49</sup> tend to score higher in power distance, i.e. a hierarchical order is more accepted and centralization is popular. They also tend to have lower uncertainty avoidance than Latin American countries, i.e. they are more pragmatic, plans can be altered, improvisations are made, people

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<sup>45</sup> As for example flagged by the Director of the Catalonian Council for Sustainable Development (CADS) at the ESDN conference, October 2015.

<sup>46</sup> The situation obviously also touches upon internal and systemic problems of bureaucracies, whose analysis goes beyond the scope of this paper. Attempts for change have in the past – correlating with an overall trend for market solutions stemming from the prevailing neoliberal economic paradigm, have been approaches such as New Public Management. They have often failed and/or led to lose-lose situations, such as no control by the state and no better service for the public, - a phenomenon that adds to the overall conclusion that no individual governance style of instrument can be "the" solution, as it used to be promoted in the past for market solutions.

<sup>47</sup> The higher scores of Mozambique (and Angola) in femininity might be an example of a colonial footprint: Also Portugal scores clearly higher in femininity than the other "Latin European" countries.

<sup>48</sup> Further research would need to be conducted on the correlation of fundamental governance failures and the masculinity and femininity scores.

<sup>49</sup> of this sample, and scores for some other countries retrieved.

## Box 2: Taking the perspective from one of the dimensions: masculinity vs. femininity

As introduced above, the dimension masculinity vs. femininity is of relevance for SD (as the others), and for gender issues in particular. In masculine societies rewarding the strong wins over solidarity with the weak, and economic growth is more important than protection of the environment. The masculine/feminine divide is congruent with the split between performance society and welfare society. In masculine countries the percentage of people living in poverty tends to be higher than in feminine countries.

It could therefore be argued that countries with a relatively 'feminine' society may find it easier to bring and keep sustainable development high on the political agenda and integrate it in national politics, institutions and policy tool selection. Indeed, it has been argued that in masculine societies, sustainable development is considered as "a threat to masculinity, just as the empowerment of women and other groups" (Franz-Balsen 2014: 1981). If we follow this argument, - and there is a lot of evidence supporting it, the challenges and obstacles of implementing the SDGs will be very different in different countries. According to the Hofstede database, most African countries are masculine, with few exceptions (e.g. Cabo Verde, Angola, Mozambique). In Asia, countries like Japan, China and Hong Kong are very masculine, whereas Thailand, South Korea and Vietnam are relatively feminine. Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark have the highest scores globally in femininity. Most European countries, however, have a clear masculine culture (with Slovakia the highest, followed by Hungary, Austria, Italy, Ireland, UK and Germany). All Anglo-Saxon countries are characterized by masculine traits, with the USA in the higher, and Canada and New Zealand in the lower range. South American countries show a divide, from quite feminine (Costa Rica, Chile, Surinam and Guatemala) to masculine (Venezuela, Mexico, Jamaica and Colombia).

Maybe it is no coincidence that four of the five finalist countries of the Bertelsmann "Winning strategies for a sustainable future" project on the most successful sustainable development strategies can be characterized as feminine (Bhutan, Costa Rica, Finland and Ghana), with the Australian province of Tasmania (masculine) as the exception. Other factors do play an important role. In Europe, the masculine countries Germany and Austria belong with the North-Western group of feminine countries to the frontrunners on SD integration.

are not averse to taking risks and there is a larger acceptance for new ideas and willingness to try something new or different. It could be expected that experimenting with different governance approaches, tools and styles would fall on fertile ground.<sup>50</sup>

Among the Latin American countries, Costa Rica is an exception with its fairly low scores in power distance (combined with equally strong collectivism), and strong feminine character. It is "widely recognized as an exception to the Latin American rule of dependence on powerful leaders"<sup>51</sup>, which might have been a cause or effect of the early abolishment of the army<sup>52</sup>. With being a frontrunner for a market instrument (Payment for Ecosystem Services, PES) one would have guessed also a lower uncertainty avoidance score, but this example also shows the limits of such a model, and that it cannot be used for predictions.

Also Bhutan is rather an exception among the Asian countries with a power distance score almost at the end of the spectrum, but with clearly low uncertainty avoidance, a quite high feminine score, and a medium individual/collectivist score, i.e. there is no clear preference for one of the two. The former reflects a strongly hierarchical society, which also here is rooted in the specific history of having been a monarchy until the very recent change to a democracy. The feminine character resonates with the phenomenon that there is a lot of care for the local level, there is strong participation and bottom-up planning (e.g. NDP), and last but not least in Gross National Happiness as guiding light, including the efforts to measure well-being

<sup>50</sup> In general, the interpretation of the scores for countries in Asia and particularly Africa still has to be deepened. Hofstede & Hofstede (2005) did not yet have data for individual countries in Africa, and a lower number of Asian countries. Interpretations focus more on industrialized countries, as the model is most widely used in business relations.

<sup>51</sup> also called "personalismo" (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005: 84).

<sup>52</sup> Again, the correlation with the rather strong femininity score would be interesting to investigate.

with surveys that cover a comparably large portion of the population. It seems to be a combination of hierarchy and network governance. Low uncertainty avoidance is reflected in pragmatic and adaptive planning as well as openness to new ideas and approaches.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, one would expect that citizens take more risks also in business development, but entrepreneurship is one of the missing features, Bhutan is mostly struggling with.

More insights with relevance for sustainable development will derive from analyzing the dimensions long-term orientation and indulgence (e.g. high scores in the latter dimension indicate "heavy consumerism", for example in Denmark), - a pending piece of work.

Table 6 shows some schematic relations between Hofstede's dimensions and the preferred governance styles (see section 3).

**Table 6: Cultural dimensions in relation to preferred governance styles**

Hofstede cultural dimensions	Hierarchical governance	Network governance	Market governance
<b>Accepted power Distance (PDI)</b>	<b>High</b> (Power is good, privileges, dependence)	<b>Low</b> (Equal rights, pluralism, interdependence)	Rather <b>high</b> (survival of the fittest is accepted)
<b>Individualist/Collectivist (IDV)</b>	Rather <b>collectivist</b> (trust at in-group/family level)	<b>Individualist</b> (if combined with feminine) or <b>Collectivist</b> (Equality, relationship-oriented, interdependence)	<b>Individualist</b> (freedom, autonomy, task-oriented, independent)
<b>'Masculine/Feminine' (MAS)</b>	Rather <b>'masculine'</b>	<b>'Feminine'</b> (Consensus, equality, relationships)	<b>'Masculine'</b> (Performance, competition, equity, recognition)
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)</b>	<b>High</b> (low trust, risk averse; bureaucracy)	<b>Low</b> (high trust, which allows to accept risks)	<b>Low</b> (entrepreneurship is risk-taking)
<b>Long time/short time orientation</b>	can be both	<b>Long</b> (Learning, life-long personal networks)	<b>Short</b> (Achievement, meritocracy, freedom)

(after Meuleman, 2010)

#### 4.4 SD integration tools in relation to the governance environment

SDI tools can be defined for use at all policy levels. They include laws and regulations, procedures, formal and informal organizations, negotiation methods, training and capacity building approaches, marketing, communication and behavior change approaches, etc.

The governance principles and common SDI tools presented in section 3 are rather generic, i.e. they all can and should be introduced in all countries, but as the governance context is different in each country, the challenges is the "how to do it": how to embed the principles and tools well in the cultural background and governance environment, and where to start?

<sup>53</sup> It is quite typical that Bhutanese are searching everywhere for the best ideas suitable for them.

We have seen (section 4.1-3) that cultural differences have an influence on which governance styles work where. Therefore, cultural diversity is one of the strongest arguments against one-size-fits-all approaches to SDI and SD governance as a whole. A successful transfer of good practices from one to another country does not happen frequently, as a range of studies has illustrated.<sup>54</sup>

What does this imply for SD integration and the choice of tools to put together in a governance framework? In the limited context of this paper, four examples can be given as illustration.

Firstly, the complexity of many SD challenges requires having more than one toolbox available. It makes sense to group policy integration tools according to the three logics of basic governance styles from which governance frameworks are built (introduced in Section 3): hierarchical ('top-down', formal), network (informal, collaborative, interactive) and market (competitive, self-regulatory) governance. These three styles have different but internally consistent logics and sets of values, and, importantly, national cultures and traditions often show a clear preference for one of these styles as the dominating one, or embrace two but at the same time exclude the third. Hierarchical governance (popular in 'Rechtsstaat' countries like Germany, France and centralist states) follows the logic of lawyers, network governance (popular in consensus democracies like the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries) the logic of diplomats and market governance (popular in countries with a strong Anglo-Saxon influence) the logic of sales people. The three styles and therefore also the three compatible toolboxes tend to be used in combinations, with often one style/toolbox as dominating.

Secondly, the complexity of sustainable development is an argument in favor of including network governance tools in any SDI governance framework. Network tools are, compared to hierarchical or market governance tools, generally better equipped to deal with complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity. The masculine/feminine dimension of the Hofstede model suggests in which countries the application of such network tools may be more difficult or easier. High masculinity can be associated with hierarchical or market governance values, and high femininity with a strong affinity with the values of network governance. More feminine countries may be more open to such tools, but may on the other hand tend to neglect legal and/or market based tools; in masculine nations, network governance tools may be seen as threatening the existing power structures, and may need to be introduced in non-threatening ways. This is what the UNDP/UNEP Poverty and Environment Programme tries to do by helping capacity building for sustainable development at local level, for example in Tajikistan.<sup>55</sup>

Thirdly, tools within governance frameworks can undermine each other's impact. For example, too strong focus on coordination structures and rules may 'suffocate' innovative action. A priority on accountability may lead to lengthy and detailed procedures for funding applications, in which 'bureaucratic marsh' in particular the most innovative thinkers may not feel very well at home. Therefore a specific set of tools for a certain end (goals, target) needs to take this possibility into account. Typical trade-offs include the one between the competing principles of flexibility and reliability. It depends on the concrete context, the governance environment, whether the solution would be 'as flexible as possible and as reliable as needed', or the other way around, 'as reliable as possible and as flexible as needed'.

Finally, the dominant style in the governance environment influences how problems with the functioning of a common policy instrument are dealt with. Hierarchical, network and market governance trigger different 'reflexes' to such challenges. Table 7 illustrates this for the tool Impact Assessment.

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<sup>54</sup> Meuleman (2010).

<sup>55</sup> Challe et al., in preparation.

**Table 7: Heuristic model of SEA problems viewed by governance styles<sup>56</sup>**

SEA problem	Governance topics	Hierarchical gov. reflex	Network gov. reflex	Market gov. reflex
<b>Insufficient scoping</b>	Dealing with uncertainty	Scoping is the responsibility of government	Include stakeholders in scoping phase	Scoping is the responsibility of the planning agency
<b>No cumulative and synergistic effects</b>	Complexity, Dealing with uncertainty	Keep it manageable and facts-based	Create consent on difficult topics like cumulation and synergy	Keep it simple, focus on direct impacts
<b>Insufficient consideration of alternatives and scenarios</b>	Reflexivity Compliance	Minimalist approach: confined to legal obligations re alternatives	Maximalist approach: open to alternatives proposed by stakeholders	Minimalist approach: ruled by cost of assessing alternatives
<b>Insufficient quality of the IA report</b>	Reporting, Review	Focus on statistics	Focus on consensus on data	Focus on monetization
<b>Insufficient explanation of uncertainties and other difficulties</b>	Complexity, Dealing with uncertainty	Rule out uncertainty by defining a narrow scope of the plan	Joint fact finding and participative scenario process	Select no regret options
<b>Unclear impact of public participation</b>	Participation	Public will be informed in due time	Public should be informed during the whole process	Public should be informed on a need to know basis
<b>Insufficient consideration given to monitoring</b>	Monitoring	Monitor impacts of measures	Monitor change	Monitor costs and benefits
<b>Insufficient capacity of authorities</b>	Capacity building	Establish a quality control authority	Establish a learning community	Establish a competitive training center

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## 5. Some lessons learned

### 5.1 Need for a stock-taking

As already concluded in earlier sections, it is a question of "how to" introduce, use and adapt governance approaches for SD integration (for addressing the governance principles/challenges), - on the basis of a country-specific analysis of the governance environment. Identifying good practice across all countries with relevant experience (positive and negative) such approaches would require a stock-taking that would need to comprise an analysis of what is or was in place (similar to the "gap analysis" for policies in relation to the SDGs, see section 2), an implementation analysis ("is it applied and how does it work?"), possibly including an assessment of what it has changed, maybe even in the governance environment.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Meuleman (in print).

<sup>57</sup> This typically requires observations over a longer period of time. The question of the effects of governance arrangements on outcome (i.e. for example towards achieving a policy target such as in the (sectoral) SDGs) is methodologically difficult, and – if at all – only possible in a qualitative way.

The following country studies and other country level information would be a starting point for such an analysis:

- National reports for Rio+20;
- UN DESA workshops October 2013 (Mainstreaming Sustainable Development into National Development Strategies), and May 2015 (Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Development Planning and Implementation), with numerous country presentations and the latter including a structured report;
- GEJP Report Inter-Regional Technical Workshop on Tools and Measures to Inform Inclusive Green Economy Policies (July 2013), and experience so far with UNEP's Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE);
- UN Development Group (2015) Interim Reference Guide (Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), with a similar structure as used for the governance approaches discussed in this paper (see section 1) and a compilation of good practice identified from various sources;
- Policy-Environment Initiative (PEI): Country level experience with governance approaches;
- SDplanNet (SDplanNet (ST. Lucia, Costa Rica, Brazil, Mexico / all from 2008): <http://nebula.wsimg.com/6217e65c0df3717a0b8c16d1da086047?AccessKeyId=E5B99C2DD329FF1D9152&disposition=0&alloworigin=1>
- Regional mappings for the SDGs (e.g. by CEPEI for Latin America, <http://cepei.org/portfolio/getting-ready-for-sdg-implementation-in-latin-america/> )
- Bertelsmann RMP Prize (2013): identification of 35 cases worldwide (national, sub-national and sub-regional level) with SD or other overarching strategies and/or good practice in a number of approaches, selection of 12 cases for further study on the basis of 20 assessment criteria, many of which were governance related, such as strategy quality (holistic mission, smart and ambitious goals, bindingness and coherence), implementation potential (political responsibility, administrative institutionalization, system integration, learning and adaptation), forms of participation; and five finalists (one per region) were selected for in-depth study including on-site;
- Bertelsmann Study (2014) with sub-national and thematic focus (green economy, green finance, participation, education, youth) for German states and international cases;
- Bertelsmann Study (2015) on the readiness of rich countries to implement the SDGs;
- EU countries: Niestroy (2005 / 2007 / 2013); ESDN network country sheets (regular updates), Quarterly report June 2013; Background paper ESDN conference October 2015.

## **5.2 Some general and country-level lessons for applying governance approaches including metagovernance and finetuning**

As is argued and illustrated in this article, successful practices of SDI tool application are rarely immediately applicable in other countries. With this caveat, the following examples of lessons learned may have a wider relevance. They add to the other examples already addressed earlier in the text.

### ***Embedding governance design in a reflexive, metagovernance approach***

Besides analyzing the governance environment, identifying the starting point and most appropriate approaches, more is needed to design and run the process. In the light of the governance principle of reflexivity, it may be necessary to change the default governance style or adding elements from other styles to induce change. This requires an approach 'above and beyond' standard governance thinking. Such an approach was found to be practiced by successful public managers in Ministries in different countries<sup>58</sup>, is

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<sup>58</sup> Meuleman (2014)

used meanwhile by political analysts in countries across the world, and was coined in 1997 as ‘metagovernance’<sup>59</sup>: the governance of governance. In line with the broad definition in this paper of governance that covers all governance styles, metagovernance for SDI is about how to switch between, or combine, hierarchical, network and market governance. Metagovernance is proposed as concept for developing governance frameworks for implementation of SD(Gs), because this approach for designing and managing governance frameworks explicitly takes into account different challenges, realities and capacities.<sup>60</sup> It is an approach that is not pro-state—just as it is not anti-state either.

Several of the examples given below are examples of metagovernance: the German examples of the SD Council (under ‘commitment at higher political level’) and the ‘Energiewende’ (under ‘learning and adaptation’), and the Finnish case of the societal contract (also under ‘learning and adaptation’).

### ***Creating an enabling legal framework***

For example, by including principles of SD in a national constitution or a specific law:

- SD is strongly embedded in Bhutan’s Constitution with the concept of ‘Gross National Happiness’. This has been advantageous for mainstreaming SD in all policies and legislation and having all the governance approaches in place (and functioning quite well).
- Other known countries with an SD law are Belgium, Luxemburg and Malta.

### ***Creating ownership and commitment at higher political level***

- In the (few) countries where the overall coordination of SD is at the Prime Minister level, this has shown to be quite beneficial. Examples include Finland, Germany and Bhutan.
- Since 2014, the European Commission allocated the responsibility for SD coordination with the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, i.e. next to the highest level.

Such high-level political leadership supports the position of governmental coordination bodies. Lessons learned from such bodies include:

- Make the rule that participation in meetings (e.g. of junior ministers) must not be delegated to a lower level. Such a rule is more likely to work in hierarchical tradition than, for example, in a network tradition.
- Allow for and ask for the members of the bodies (politicians) to set their own agenda items.
- Encourage links with the constituencies of members of coordination bodies, but be careful for shopping baskets: Try to steer that the members balance their role as representative of a constituency with their role of providing common interests with specific expertise.
- Another lesson from countries with a dominant hierarchical style of governance is that experimenting with other modes of governance, with other forms of participation, communication and engagement, should be well linked to the government hierarchy. This is one element of success of for example the German Council for Sustainable Development: its mission is strongly linked to the PM Office, and it the Council has proactively worked on – and achieved - repeated confirmation and back-up from high political level. With that the hierarchical system can modernize without having the feeling to losing control. This again seems to be a smarter approach (metagovernance) than the one of those promoting deliberate democracies that would ultimately minimize hierarchy and the state: not for letting the market work alone (the purpose of most attempts to minimize government), but for letting networks work alone.

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<sup>59</sup> Jessop (1997)

<sup>60</sup> Meuleman & Niestroy (2015)

**Provide for a more deliberative setting (e.g. in stakeholder bodies such as SD councils):<sup>61</sup>**

- Appointing members in strictly personal capacity has the advantage that the style is deliberative instead of negotiating: Thinking out of the box is more likely to happen and can be triggered more easily. Such bodies are meant to improve inter-disciplinary thinking. The disadvantage possibly is that the work and outcomes of such an expert-type of body might be less connected to the (current) political agenda. At the same time, such bodies often have a foresight and warning function, as they take care of the long-term (see section 3), - and outcomes might be only realized as important some 10 years later<sup>62</sup>. Their communicative power depends on the reputation of their members and the body as a whole. They need to take care that they do connect to the political agenda in order to contribute to improving the science-policy interface<sup>63</sup> and to not being considered as too distant (“ivory tower”). Such bodies usually do not have the task to bringing different societal groups together, i.e. this function is missing if this model is chosen. On the other hand, the model might be useful in countries where the government is not so open for stakeholder involvement and/or where there is not much organized civil society. It would be recommendable to provide for a mixed composition of experts from different walks of life (i.e. not solely academics). This would be a step towards trans-disciplinarity and co-creation of knowledge, and could be further developed along the time of existence. The recent development in Finland seems to clearly make the case for the usefulness of such bodies: With the longest-standing SD council (Finnish National Commission for Sustainable Development, FNCSD) of the representative style (see below), it decided recently to add a scientific panel with an expert composition, for the functions as described herewith.
- Also positive for deliberative settings is the way of "soft representation": Here members are also appointed in personal capacity, but with the organization(s) they are affiliated with as criterion. The “home” organization agrees that the council member may deliberate freely. As the (standpoint of the) home organization is in the back of the mind, it is a "soft representation". In such cases it is recommendable that support staff of the sending organization does not participate in meetings (as it then tends to fall back in the representative style). These councils also serve the function of improving the knowledge basis in decision-making, here deriving from a broader spectrum of knowledge, and taking all aspects of SD into account in an integrated way. It also needs to take care of linking to the political agenda (with less danger that it does not do). Because of this somewhat sensitive balancing need, this model is likely to work only in governance environments where roles of various actors outside the government have reached a certain level of maturity, and stakeholders act with a certain self-confidence. In Europe the councils in Germany and the Netherlands follow this model (and the Portuguese council has over time moved into this direction, originally being a representative type).

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<sup>61</sup> Niestroy (2011).

<sup>62</sup> As it happened several times in the case of the Royal Commission for Environmental Pollution (RCEP), one of the longest-standing expert environmental advisory councils in Europe, which was abolished after 41 years of existence (<http://www.rcep.org.uk/>), and similar in the case of the German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU, <http://www.umweltrat.de/EN>), which is still in place.

<sup>63</sup> After many years of coordinating councils of different types (see [www.eeac.eu](http://www.eeac.eu)), and various other experience with high-level advisory groups, research projects aiming at reaching out to policy-makers (but never really succeed) etc., my current state of thinking is, that such a permanent science/expert advisory body is the best way to move at least the science side out of their own logic (aiming at a high number of publications, and at finding more research (money)). Smart(er) political communication seems the only way to attract the political side, i.e. pull it (a bit) out of their logic of day-to-day realpolitik. How to go beyond this and bring the longer term perspective more into policy-making is a problem that seems to be rooted not only in the effect of the democratic system, but also in cultural anthropology and psychology (as everybody has experienced e.g. with own new year’s resolutions, changing a habit etc.). The problem of short-termism is better and worse in different democracy sub-types, and is partly caused by details such as rules for party financing. These and choices for a system again reflect values that are rooted in culture, as addressed in section 4 of this paper (e.g. feminine – network – consensus democracy, masculine – market – (more competitive) majority system).

With the general situation of rather weak degree of organized civil society in developing countries, it is unlikely to come up there, - but the former model might develop in this direction (and might even foster the organization of civil society).

- In certain countries the political system and tradition leads to the establishment of representative bodies (e.g. the European Economic and Social Commission (EESC), and (SD) councils in Belgium, France, Ireland and Spain). Members are appointed as representatives of a spectrum of organizations, in the case of SD councils typically from business associations and trade unions ('social partners'), environmental and other NGOs. The councils are often large, which is one impediment for fruitful deliberations (which typically take place in respective working groups). The other is, that members have the mandate to represent their organization, i.e. have a (strict or not) bounded mandate, which leads to a more negotiating style of communication in the council. In some cases (e.g. Belgium), members from the science community typically chair working groups of the council or other roles as kind of 'neutral agent' to mediate in cases of polarized views among individuals or groups in the council. Members are also meant to take opinions agreed in the council to their "home organization", stimulate debate and by that disseminate the opinions. This effect occurs to a lesser extent in the "soft representative" model. Both types of councils clearly have the task to reach out, to engage with the wider public, and to stimulate informed debate.

For the more negotiating tradition, but in the other cases as well, it is stimulating and beneficial for achieving better results to use dedicated tools such as the Mutual Gains Approach, including role play simulations.<sup>64</sup>

For all chosen compositions and types of (SD) councils / advisory bodies it should be kept in mind: While it is in general useful to develop the respective model further over time (as it has happened in some cases mentioned above), - one should be careful with repeated debate about the mandate and other issues of internal governance, which can easily deviate from the original task.

#### ***Allow redundancy: better "and ... and" than "either...or"***

According sociologists<sup>65</sup>, in our complex societies it is often better to allow or even stimulate the co-existence of seemingly contradictory governance tools. Social media co-exist next to classical media, Western democracies are mixtures of representative and deliberative approaches, and traditional, disciplinary sciences co-exist with inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches to knowledge creation. "Globalization" and its counter trend "localization" now co-exist in the term "localization". Typical examples from SD governance include that top-down and bottom-up initiatives are not contradictory but mutually enforcing, and that both (strong) leadership and (decentralized) ownership are needed (see section 4.3 / Figure 3).

Applied to policy tools this insight could imply that a new policy does not always need to result in doing away with the old one (completely). Introducing voluntary agreements between governments and business groups and/or civil society groups, such as the around 150 sustainable 'Green Deals' in the Netherlands<sup>66</sup>, has resulted in flexible approaches regarding existing legal requirements, without changing laws. This may not be so easy in other countries: The Netherlands has a long tradition of formal agreement to tolerate illegal practices without seeing the need to adjust the legal framework (Dutch "gedogen"; see section 4.3: low power distance).

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<sup>64</sup> The MGA approach lays out four steps for negotiating better outcomes while protecting relationships and reputation. This approach was developed by scholars and practitioners at the Consensus Building Institute, a Cambridge, Massachusetts. See <http://www.cbuilding.org/about/cbi-difference>.

<sup>65</sup> Notably Ulrich Beck (Beck, U. Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity; Sage: London, UK, 1992).

<sup>66</sup> <https://www.government.nl/topics/energy-policy/contents/green-deal>

### ***Allow for learning and adaptation***

It is normal that there is first a preference for a certain approach and use of tools. Here are examples from some European countries:

- In the hierarchical tradition of Germany, where the first policy reflex to any societal problem is making a law, the acceptance of the complexity of SD challenges has triggered additional use of network tools (and much less market tools). For example, the government commission which concluded that a fundamental energy transition (the 'Energiewende') was needed, included a wide range of societal stakeholders and worked in a transparent, all-inclusive way, using for example the tool of live televised expert hearings.
- In France, the hierarchical style is more centralist than in Germany. It also has a corporatist tradition in (like Belgium) where participation is representative ('social partnerships'), and civil society in general is rather pillarized. In this tradition the participation style is characterized by negotiations and agreements, and a move towards a more deliberative style is taking quite some time (see also above: representative type of council).
- The United Kingdom has strong preference for market governance and with that a long tradition of using economic assessments like cost-benefit analysis. To some extent the limits of this economic focus and kind of tools have been realized, allowing for more comprehensive and also qualitative type of assessments.
- The preference in the Netherlands for network solutions has resulted, in the area of sustainable development, in not seeing the wood for the trees anymore. While mainstream thinking in government has not reached this conclusion yet, others have called for a new national strategy to guide and structure what is blossoming from bottom up. Such a strategic document is missing since the abandonment of the tradition of National Environment Plans (NEPs).
- Finland is characterized by a strong underlying consensus style of governance, where participation and bottom-up approaches are considered as very important. It might be the strongest example of reflexive social learning, with stamina: Its 'ready to learn' culture has resulted in adaptations of governance styles. It first was not fond of targets, but realized some years after the first SD strategy that indicators are needed to measure progress. In a typical collaborative approach, a set of indicators was agreed in a multi-stakeholder group. It struggled with mushrooming strategies and bottom-up activities not well connected, with the effect that things were losing steam. A reinforcement of the course was needed, for which the approach of a "societal contract" was chosen: actually a market tool, but applied in a network style, with the aim to foster more binding (hierarchical style) commitments of stakeholder groups. This is a good example of conscious metagovernance: recombine the elements in an existing governance framework using concepts from another governance style.

Examples from developing countries show a similar picture: there is a 'default' approach with cultural and historical roots, and if that approach does not deliver results, change is slow and not without problems. In Bhutan, almost the whole range of governance approaches for SD was put in place, and even self-organization of civil society takes place to a considerable extent. At the same time it will require quite some further efforts to stimulate the market side and in particular entrepreneurship. Costa Rica has successfully put a market governance instrument in place (Payment for Ecosystem Services, PES), which led to an almost threefold increase in the forest cover. While rule of law and stability is part of the success story, the country struggles with long legal cases (similar to other countries of this type of hierarchical governance with high uncertainty avoidance). This also points to low capacity in consensus finding and coordination, - both areas where future efforts would be smartly invested.

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## 6. Conclusions

### 1. Governance approaches for SDI must be applied in context

It is imperative that the governance approaches and tools for Sustainable Development Integration (SDI) are seen in the different contexts of different countries. Context matters a lot, and not putting tools in that perspective is prone to governance failures.

### 2. Insights in the national cultures are useful for understanding the governance environment

The Hofstede model of cultural dimensions (and possibly other models of that kind) can help to understand the "mental programming" and with that essential parts of the governance environment, in which all efforts to address the governance challenges of SD integration and to make governance better work for SD, take place. There are in general no 'best' combinations of aspects in these cultural dimensions: each of them may be an advantage or disadvantage, and there are more factors that a model does not cover. Some surprises might also occur when taking into account the two dimensions not yet analyzed with SD lenses (long-term and indulgence), e.g. regarding consumption patterns.

### 3. Understanding the governance environment as "starting point" is a prerequisite for applying governance approaches and SDI tools

*"You need to know where you are to know where you go next"*: Analyzing the governance environment including which governance approaches have so far worked better and less, is an important step when departing on SDG implementation, taking into account the five principles: horizontal coordination of sectorial policies and plans, vertical coordination of different levels, participation of stakeholder groups, reflexivity and integration of different knowledge arenas, the long-term dimension. The government environment is at this starting point given, and approaches should adapt and find the most promising next step as well as a good process design. While there is the observation that countries that undertake efforts in governance approaches for SD in a way move towards a kind of balance of the different governance styles, this will unlikely result in a uniformity, as the individual country characteristics remain beautifully divers.

### 4. Making SDI context-sensitive and fit-for-purpose can benefit from using a metagovernance approach

Metagovernance of SDI implies acknowledgement of the normative dimension of governance and the link to cultural diversity, and helps - with this understanding as a basis - creating (national) governance frameworks that situationally combine elements of different governance styles. Such an approach can be useful to analyze governance and tools failure, to design a new framework and to choose the most appropriate (i.e. performing) selection of tools from the SDI Toolbox in a given country.

### 5. Stock-taking of governance environment & tradition in countries is urgent

The principle of common but differentiated governance for implementing the SDGs and SDI in general requires at the level of differentiation (e.g. countries) a good overview of the existing governance environment, current traditions and history, and the relevant geographical conditions per country.<sup>67</sup> Currently, such information is only ad hoc, dispersed, incomplete and where available, not comparable across countries. Stock-taking of this with a common methodology would not only benefit individual countries but also enable peer review among countries. Last but not least, it would help inter- and supranational organizations to better focus their capacity building support and funding.

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<sup>67</sup> A similar plea is made in the context of the specific governance approach/tool Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in developing countries (Adelle et al. 2014). It starts off with the analysis by Ladegaard (2005) that sounds quite familiar: "... the debate on how to apply RIA in developing countries has so far consisted of recycling well-known broad conceptual frameworks, spiced up with appropriate anecdotes from OECD countries and occasional warning that countries' different traditions and implementation capacities need to be taken into account" and concludes that "a much more deliberate and concentrated research focus on the practice of RIA in developing countries is needed. This will go some way to tease out the vast array of social, economic and political contexts in which RIA is implemented and begin to link these with appropriate solutions to common challenges."

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