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IEEP and UN SDSN join forces to advance the EU monitoring of SDGs

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Today, Friday 21 June, IEEP and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) are launching a process to develop a European report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the fall of 2019. The launch will take place at a dedicated workshop hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels.

The project could not be timelier. Last week, the European Court of Auditors published a [case review](#) on EU Institutions and Agencies' reporting on sustainability. The review found that despite the EU's commitments to sustainability and the SDGs, sustainability reporting is lacking. This is due in particular to the fact that sustainability is not integrated into the EU Commission's performance framework, as well as to the absence of a long term SDG strategy at EU level.

This significant gap in EU sustainability policies was also highlighted in a [recent study](#) by the SDSN on EU policy gaps in addressing the SDGs. In addition to the lack of an overarching EU SDG strategy, the report discussed the underlying issues of the existing EU framework for SDG monitoring – namely the [Eurostat annual report](#) on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context.

While the EU SDG dataset covers a 'fairly comprehensive indicator list'[\[1\]](#), gaps remain, notably in covering spillover effects; and the report's focus on trends rather than absolute levels of SDG achievements is a significant issue.

Importantly, the report estimated the greatest limitation of EU SDG monitoring to be the lack of pre-defined 2030 targets, against which progress could be assessed; out of the current 100 indicators, only 17 have time-bound quantitative EU targets. Other identified issues included timing and transparency of the consultation process, lack of gap analysis in the monitoring process, and absence of disaggregated results at Member States and subnational levels.

In a recent Think 2030 paper, IEEP also [highlighted the lack of EU reporting](#) on SDG delivery in the global context, even though this is a crucial dimension to assess for the EU to be considered a frontrunner in achieving the Agenda 2030.

The Commission's [reflection paper](#) 'Towards a sustainable Europe for 2030', published last January, presented the adoption of an overarching EU SDG strategy as one possible scenario for the future, out of three.

As highlighted in [IEEP's analysis of the paper](#), endorsing this ambitious scenario is essential for the EU to succeed in achieving the 2030 Agenda. This strategy would include putting in place time-bound targets guiding all EU and Member states policies, as well as improving EU monitoring of SDG process, both internally and externally.

In a context where climate change and biodiversity loss crown the global agenda, the EU has much to gain in stepping up its contribution to the 2030 Agenda, both at home and in the rest of the world.

The [SDG Summit](#) in September, where Heads of State and Government will gather to review progress in the implementation of the Agenda, could prove a key opportunity for the EU to reaffirm its stance as the frontrunner on achieving the SDGs.

However, decisions on an EU SDG strategy are likely to be made by the next Commission, which will not take office until November. Nevertheless, steps can already be taken to improve the EU monitoring

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