

Policy Recommendations: EU Sustainability Performance Tier Classification

Tier Profiles

Tier 2 – Sustainability Leaders

- R&D investment > 3% of GDP
- Governance quality index > 80
- Renewable energy share > 40%
- High digital infrastructure and education access
- Strong performance across SDG 9, 13, and 16

Tier 1 – Good Performers

- Moderate R&D (1.5–3%)
- Governance index between 60–80
- Renewable energy share ~25–40%
- Progressing in innovation and education, but uneven across regions

Tier 0 – Needs Improvement

- R&D investment < 1.5%
- Governance index < 60
- Renewable energy share < 25%
- Gaps in digital access, education, and environmental resilience

Advancement Roadmap

To move from Tier 0 → Tier 1:

- Invest in digital infrastructure and inclusive education
- Strengthen governance transparency and accountability
- Increase renewable energy adoption through incentives
- Target SDG 4, 9, and 13 with focused national programs

To move from Tier 1 → Tier 2:

- Scale innovation funding and R&D programs
- Foster cross-border collaboration on sustainability
- Improve urban sustainability and smart city initiatives
- Align national strategies with EU Green Deal priorities

Country-Specific Insights (Examples)

- **Bulgaria & Romania:** Low R&D and governance scores; potential in education reform

- **Serbia:** Strong social indicators but weak environmental performance
- **Greece:** Governance improving, but innovation spending remains low
- **Portugal:** Close to Tier 2; needs targeted investment in digital infrastructure

Strategic Recommendations for EU Decision-Makers

- Create a **tier-based support framework** to allocate funding and technical assistance
- Encourage **regional partnerships** to share best practices and resources
- Use AI-driven dashboards for **real-time monitoring** of SDG progress
- Prioritize **data transparency** and open access to sustainability metrics
- Integrate tier classification into **policy planning and evaluation cycles**