



Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Inspire Policy Making with Territorial Evidence

PRE-EVENT BRIEF

ESPON SDG Benchmarking Tool online workshop

Virtual (MS Teams)

8 December 2020, 10:00 - 12:00 EET (8:00 - 10:00 UTC)

Introduction



Measurable indicators play a crucial role in delivering sustainability (Forzieri et al, 2018). The SDGs are a holistic concept and are used as benchmarking instruments that have spread to many strategic arenas to promote development and growth. They encompass a total of 17 goals “to transform our world”, starting with no poverty and zero hunger, and ending with world peace and partnership – altogether, they contain 169 targets. A set of 100 indicators was developed to monitor the SDGs specifically in the context of European Union (EU) (Eurostat, 2019).

The urgent need for policies tackling the climate crisis and implementing the Paris Agreement has been closely and inseparably related to the SDGs. Climate change is already disrupting national economies and affecting local well-being. The concept of resilience – not just being able to adapt to changes, but being able to withstand and quickly recover from various unforeseen challenges – has become increasingly common and practised more often. It is vital to safeguard climate-vulnerable sectors such as water, agriculture, and public health, as well as to articulate specific actions to empower and support more vulnerable areas and groups.

By its nature, the climate crisis is highly territorial and requires place-based plans. Creating stronger links with the SDGs, as well as aligning them with development and sectoral plans, is needed for territorial strategy-making at both regional and local scales. However, the key indicators of SDG climate actions are not available at a regional scale, and monitoring is based on proxies or evaluated case-by-case. The potential benefits and challenges are varied for different types of towns, cities and regions, underlining the potential for territorial inequality through sustainability. The [ESPON SDG tool](#) enables the localisation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) on NUTS 2 level, to measure progress of the SDGs in various NUTS 2 regions and reflect differences across them.

Objective and expected outcome

Organised as part of the European Spatial Observatory Network (ESPON) programme, this online workshop will introduce the ESPON SDG tool web application to public sector policymakers and stakeholders dealing with sustainable development. This particular application has been developed to allow national and regional governments to assess their progress towards the SDGs and to benchmark how far they are from reaching their targets. It also enables them to compare their profiles with other regions and to find regions in Europe that can serve as suitable examples for achieving progress towards the SDGs. The ESPON SDG tool will be launched online in January 2021 and now is accessible for end-user testing.

The objective of the workshop is to provide interactive testing of the ESPON SDG tool involving the developers of the application, national, regional and local level policymakers, sustainable development experts and stakeholders from non-governmental institutions. We use the context of Lithuania and the case of Lithuanian National Climate Change Strategy in order to provide practical example to the tool.

The ultimate goal of the workshop is to introduce a useful tool for territorial estimation of SDG goals to policymakers and to provide an optimal spatial scope for the policy intervention capacity targeting SDGs.

Structure and Input

The workshop begins with two keynote presentations with regards to the integration of SDGs in Lithuanian national strategic documents and action programmes. The main principles of the Lithuanian National Development Strategy will be introduced by Jurgita Lukaševičienė (Government of Lithuania) and Lithuanian National Climate Change Strategy by Jurga Valainyte (Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Policy Group). The introductory presentations are then followed by the introduction to the SDG Localising Tool by Paresa Markianidou (Technopolis Group). Furthermore, two cases will be interactively tested in order to compare the progress towards the SDGs in the Lithuanian context:

- a. Lithuanian capital city region Vilnius and its surrounding municipalities

b. Lithuania with other EU countries

During the interactive session all participants are able to test the tool and will follow the practical exercise in line with guidance by ESPON SDG Tool developers. Thereafter, reflections by two Lithuanian national level policy practitioners will shortly address the tool practicality and provide recommendations when and where SDG localising tool can be useful. Finally, there will be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss experiences with all participants.

Agenda

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| 10:00 - 10:10 | Welcome Vassilen Iotzov, (ESPON EGTC) Dainius Čergelis (Director of Construction and Territorial Planning Policy Group, Lithuanian Ministry of Environment), Karolis Kinčius (Representative of ESPON Contact Point Lithuania, Lithuanian Ministry of Environment) |
| 10:10 - 10:30 | Two presentations with regards to the integration of SDG's in the Lithuanian national strategic documents and action programmes: 1. Lithuanian National Development Strategy by Jurgita Lukaševičienė (Government of Lithuania) 2. Lithuanian National Climate Change Strategy by Jurga Valainyte (Lithuanian Ministry of Environment, Climate Change Policy Group) Questions & Answers |
| 10:30 - 10:50 | Introduction to the SDG Localising Tool by Paresa Markianidou (Technopolis Group) |
| 10:50 - 11:30 | Interactive testing of the tool on sample cases: tips and tricks a. Comparing the capital Vilnius and its surrounding areas b. Benchmarking Lithuania with other EU countries |
| 11:30 - 11:50 | Two reflections when and where SDG localising tool can be useful combined with practical examples. Questions and answers engaging all participants |
| 11:50 - 12:00 | Conclusions Short summing up and final thoughts by Garri Raagmaa (University of Tartu) |

The Workshop is moderated by Ingmar Pastak (University of Tartu/ESPON Transnational Outreach Programme)

References

Eurostat (2019). Sustainable development in the European Union. Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context, 2019 edition. Page 372.

Forzieri et al. (2018). Escalating impacts of climate extremes on critical infrastructures in Europe. *Global Environmental Change*, 48. Pages 97–107.



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