

English-language abstracts

Mainstreaming SDGs in the EU's strategy

A. Renda

The European Commission has announced since 2016 its intention to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals in its policy process, as part of its approach to implement the 2030 Agenda. This explicitly involves the EU better regulation agenda, but the current tools and methods used in both ex ante impact assessment and ex post policy evaluation would need to be adapted to link better regulation with SDGs more effectively. More generally, this would also mean that the better regulation agenda becomes an instrument for policy coherence in EU public policy, and not only an instrument for efficiency. This paper reflects on the changes that would be needed in governance and better regulation methods, as well as in the European Semester and Cohesion policy. A transition towards a policy process fully geared towards sustainable development is proposed.

Keywords: Agenda 2030, better regulation, impact assessment

Embedding evaluation in national plans and policies to foster transformative development

Thomas Schwandt, Stefano D'Errico, Zenda Ofir, Dorothy Lucks and Kassem El-Saddick, IIED Briefing, May 2018

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are an important tool, rolled out globally, for demonstrating how far countries are progressing toward realising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); but VNRs represent just one approach to evaluation in the 2030 Agenda. Countries can look beyond evaluation in the context of global reporting through VNRs, to embedding evaluation at the national and local level. In this way, evaluation can be a strong entry point for countries to achieve truly transformative development, reflecting the Agenda's ambition. This briefing examines the idea of 'transformation' as promoted in the 2030 Agenda and looks at how it can be applied to evaluation. We argue that when embedded in national planning, evaluation assumes additional roles and functions that go far beyond technical target measurement and can even assess political processes and activities.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

The time for rapid redevelopment of coal regions is now

Christian Egenhofer, Jorge Núñez Ferrer, Irina Kustova and Julian Popov, CEPS Policy Insights, May 2020

The economic slow-down caused by the pandemic will aggravate the existing stress in some regions, especially those relying on lignite, coal and peat as their main economic activity. But efficient and effective use of Covid-19 recovery funds can give real meaning to the 'just transition'

concept if they focus on tangible progress to the benefit of the regional, national and EU economy while improving the environment and implementing the European Green Deal.

- For coal regions, the European Commission needs a regional place-based approach that builds on the ‘targeted approach’ of the European Green Deal while identifying urgent actions.
- Member states must reinforce regional strategies for coal regions in light of the recovery measures and the European Green Deal for the next multiannual financial framework 2021-17, taking account of the transition towards a more sustainable and lower carbon economic structure.
- Appropriate EU instruments should be combined in a complementary way to restructure the economies of the regions by developing low-carbon power and other carbon-saving solutions, using the know-how and infrastructures in place.
- Solid strategies to address the transition costs that creating an investment-friendly economic environment should be devised to build up self-sustainable activities and avoid subsidy dependency. The opportunities offered by InvestEU should be used as funding leverage to attract large-scale new industry investment.

The short-term economic and social costs should soon be recovered. By contrast, supporting declining activities will most likely lead to significant long-term losses. Many good examples of conversions exist to inform those addressing inter- and intra-generational redistribution issues.

Keywords: European cohesion policy, European Green Deal