

Report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

German Voluntary National Review to the HLPF 2021



The Federal Government



“ *All states are called upon to take swifter and more ambitious action to implement the Agenda. With the update to the German Sustainable Development Strategy [adopted in March 2021], the German Government therefore aims to pick up the pace on the path to greater sustainability, both at home and in international cooperation. [...] If we are to achieve the goals of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we must embark on a truly demanding transformation of key areas such as energy, the circular economy, housing, transport, food and agriculture. In Germany we plan to advance the transformation process by updating our German Sustainable Development Strategy and by harnessing education, research and innovation.* ”

(Federal Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel in her foreword to the updated German Sustainable Development Strategy)

1. Key messages

1.1 The twofold challenge: Pandemic response and the transition to sustainable development for a better and green recovery

With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda is a guiding principle of German Government policy. In September 2019, the heads of state and government attending the SDG Summit in New York determined that those goals shared by the international community could not be achieved by 2030 if the current trends continued.

The 2020-2030 Decade of Action declared by the United Nations must live up to its name and ensure greater sustainability, thereby also enhancing climate action and intergenerational as well as interregional justice.

Action to date falls far short of what is needed to start on a sustainable development route that truly does justice to the interests of future generations. In its latest order on climate legislation in Germany, the Federal Constitutional Court highlighted the importance of intergenerational equity. This is what lies at the heart of sustainable development: the necessity of maintaining scope for action and for decisions to pass on to younger and future generations, as raised by the Brundtland Commission back in 1987. Its report says that development is sustainable if it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and choose their own lifestyles. In the same order, the Court also underlined the global dimension of climate action and obliged the state to act with an international focus to protect the climate on a global scale.

With its European Green Deal, the European Union has set itself demanding objectives for sustainable economic activity and more climate action: the EU is to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared with 1990 levels by 2030 and become climate neutral by 2050. A socio-environmental transition to sustainable development requires corresponding efforts, not only with a view to protecting the climate, in the key areas of transition set out below.

The pressure to act on this has intensified around the world in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, however, this difficult time has brought the growing realisation that global challenges can be overcome only by global efforts and that unsustainable activity makes us strikingly vulnerable.

Worldwide, in Europe and in Germany, therefore, it has been and remains strategically important for recovery programmes during and after the pandemic to set the course for a more sustainable and thus more future-proof society – in other words, to pursue a better and green recovery. At the national, European and international levels, policies and programmes in response to the COVID-19 crisis must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, and guided at all times by the Agenda's principle of leaving no one behind.

Like the updated German Sustainable Development Strategy that the German Government adopted in March 2021, the present report includes federal action responding to the pandemic and simultaneously consolidating the necessary preconditions for a sustainable future in Germany, in Europe and around the world.

1.2 Main areas of transition, unhalted by the pandemic response, within the leitmotifs of the 2030 Agenda: People, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership

Progress in the following six areas of transition is pivotal to implementation of the 2030 Agenda in, with and by Germany.

- (1) The **human well-being and capabilities; social justice** transition area links SDGs 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10. The present and future well-being of all people is at the heart of sustainable development. More than any that have gone before, the current generation has the knowledge and the means to shape the future in a sustainable manner. The task is to secure each person's fundamental rights and basic needs, protect them from existential threats, foster their prosperity and enable them to live sustainably. It is a task to be tackled across a large number of policy areas.

To facilitate human well-being around the world, human rights must be upheld, work paid appropriately, social security generated, gender-specific inequalities tackled and social structures changed that prevent marginalised sections of society and minorities living a self-determined life. The objective is to ensure that global value chains respect these aspects from start to finish, a task for which states and businesses are equally responsible. Another key challenge is to reduce inequalities in order to open up prospects of economic and social development to all and to stabilise the effectiveness of democracies around the world.

The German Government is pursuing 25 national and international human rights priorities using the framework of its **2021-2022 Action Plan for Human Rights**. These correlate in large part with the 17 SDGs, which are covered in this report.

Not just the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates how crucial good health and well-being are to survival. Germany is actively committed to ensuring that the lessons of COVID-19 are taken into account in future efforts to reshape the global health architecture. Interdisciplinary perspectives that place human health in the broader context of animal and environmental health are becoming increasingly important. That is why the German Government promotes the One Health approach at the national, regional and international levels and champions protecting the health of farm and wild animals as well as biodiversity and natural habitats. An important element of healthcare is upholding and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive healthcare and rights, which the German Government campaigns for across the globe. In this context, education, science and research form the basis of a self-determined, responsible life while paving the way for the achievement of all sustainability targets.

- (2) The transition area focused on **climate action and energy transition** (SDGs 13 and 7) demands an integrated approach based on climate protection that transcends the boundaries of different policy areas and SDGs. On the basis of decisions from the EU and in consideration of the latest order issued by the Federal Constitutional Court, the German Government submitted the bill for a revised Federal Climate Change Act (*Bundes-Klimaschutzgesetz*) on 12 May 2021. The new version sets a stricter target for greenhouse gas emissions: a reduction of at least 65% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels, instead of the previous 55%. Emissions from different parts of the economy are to be kept below sector-specific thresholds that will be lowered year on year. Greenhouse gas emissions are to be cut by at least 88% by 2040, and greenhouse gas neutrality is to be achieved by 2045. In accordance with this trajectory, electricity supply will be overwhelmingly decarbonised in the 2030s. Furthermore, a crucial precondition of achieving the climate goals is to save energy and use it more efficiently. Research and innovation will play an important role in driving progress towards that objective. This may also open up new value-

creation potential for Germany as a venue for business and industry. The Federal Constitutional Court moreover emphasised the international dimension of the constitutional imperative to protect the climate. The German Government will continue to push consistently for significant progress on climate action and sustainability on the world stage. It will increase its efforts in the field of international climate and sustainable development policy.

- (3) The **circular economy** transition area (SDGs 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14) responds to the need to decouple growth from resource consumption. Consumption and production must remain within planetary boundaries. This means not only looking at consumption by the individual but also reworking the models of value creation that underlie production processes. Resource efficiency, the circular economy and sustainable supply chains are equally as essential as preventing waste where possible, and recycling or disposing of it responsibly where not. Germany is committed to its globally pioneering role in ambitiously developing the circular economy, reducing the use of resources and appreciably increasing resource efficiency as well as in harnessing the potential of digitalisation to the pursuit of sustainable economic activity. With regulatory steps like the Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains Act, incentive schemes, voluntary approaches and the promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships involving businesses, trade unions and civil society, Germany is actively contributing to globally more sustainable, resource-efficient value and supply chains. On 26 April 2021, an update to the Programme on Sustainable Consumption was agreed by the Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development.
- (4) Construction and buildings, as well as the transport sector, are addressed as part of the transition area on **sustainable building and the transformation of transport**. It is linked to SDGs 7, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13. Just like the other transition areas, there are synergies with other topics relating to sustainability. Given its upstream and downstream processes, the construction and buildings sector is closely interwoven with other areas of transition. Sustainable construction requirements cover energy efficiency and climate neutrality, biodiversity safeguards, resource conservation and the use of renewable raw materials, a reduction in land use, the sustainable procurement of products and services, including respect for human rights in supply chains, and measures to ensure the health and comfort of users.

All of these requirements demand an approach involving different ministries and sectors. Taking all aspects into account, buildings are responsible for around 40% of greenhouse gas emissions. The German Government will therefore put even more effort into promoting sustainable, climate-neutral construction and will draw up an interdepartmental action plan in the course of 2021. The action plan will focus, for example, on expanding the promotion of accredited certification for sustainable building and developing a simplified procedure for auditing a building's environmental credentials that can be used by the general public. Mobility is an essential element of life in society that must remain accessible and affordable to all people. At the same time, mobility must be more responsive to environmental and climate-related concerns to make the transport transition a success. To guide this process towards sustainability, in September 2018 the German Government launched the National Future of Mobility platform. Since the beginning of 2021, further powerful leverage has come from the introduction of carbon pricing in the transport sector (alongside the heating sector). There must be a particular effort to bring technological innovations and developments in alternative drive technologies and fuels etc. to market quickly, to do full justice to our evolving mobility needs and the role of the transport sector in climate action.

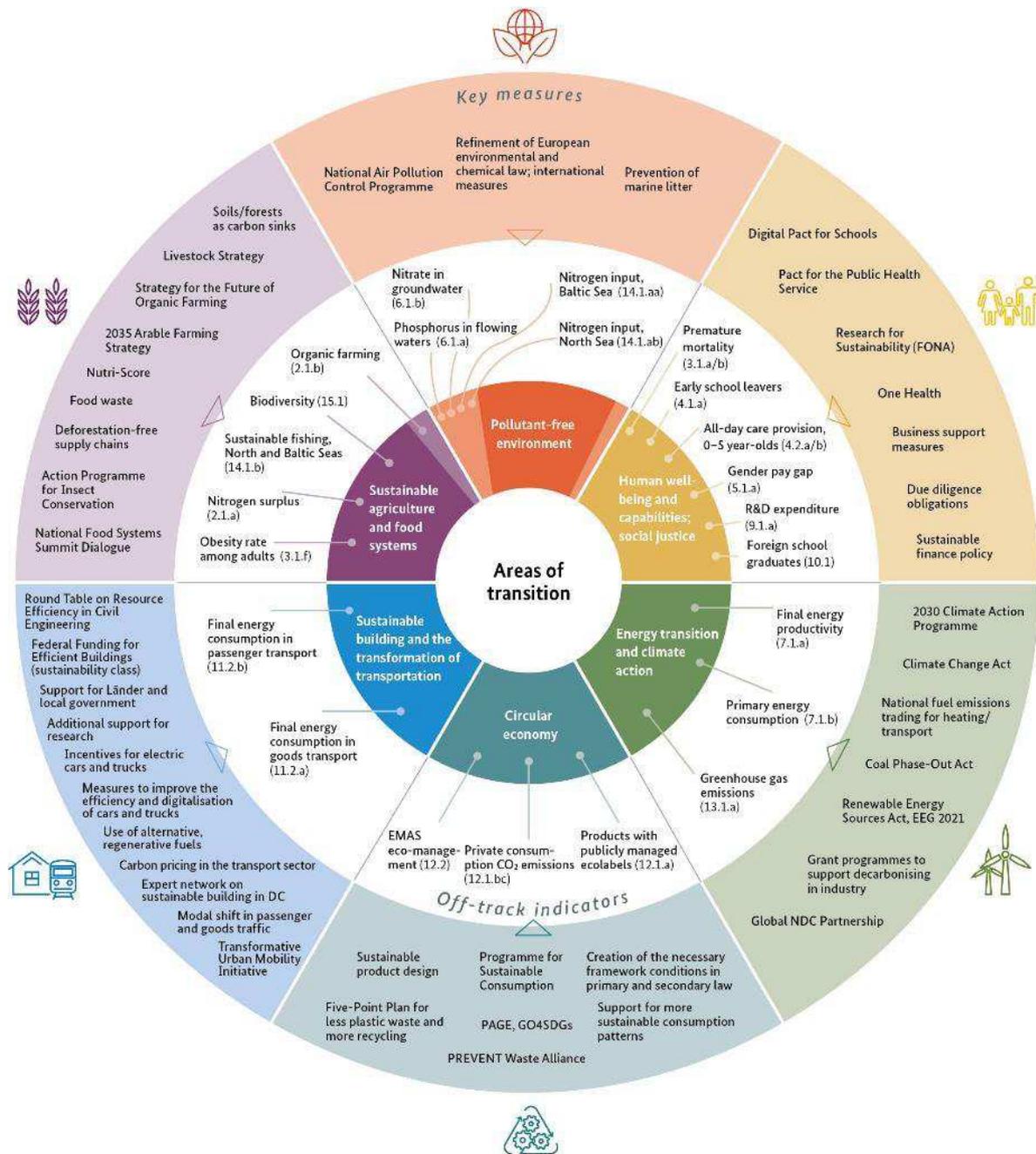
- (5) A holistic perspective is required to achieve progress in the **sustainable agricultural and food systems** transition area, which ties in with SDGs 2 and 3 with further links to SDGs 12 and 15. The term “food systems” describes the complex interrelationships and interdependencies between the ways in which agricultural commodities are produced, processed and transported and how foodstuffs are consumed and handled.

The German Government supports the integrated approach followed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and is working to enhance food systems in Germany and the EU to reflect the SDGs more closely. Organic farming will play an important role in this not only in Germany and Europe, where it is to make up 20% and 25% of the sector respectively by 2030, but around the world. Further measures include enhancing sustainability in mass catering and reducing food waste. In practice, this means jointly formulating national, European and international food, agricultural, forestry, fisheries, climate, environment and health policy, and designing strategies and measures in the same way. The aim here is to ensure a sufficient supply of a variety of safe, affordable foodstuffs, as well as a healthy diet for everyone around the world. At the same time, environmental and climate protections must be guaranteed, conditions and healthcare for farm animals improved, producers’ rights respected and their working and living conditions upgraded, and rural areas made more attractive as places to live and work.

- (6) A pollutant-free environment provides the basis for **health and well-being**, including both physical and mental health. In addition to all of the environment-related SDGs (6, 13, 14, and 15), this area of transition also affects some of the social goals (SDGs 3 and 11), and impacts indirectly on the economic ones, especially SDG 8.

The German Government regards the Assessment System for Sustainable Building as well as environmental law, with its interplay of requirements under chemicals law, water and emissions safeguards and legislation on waste, as the main jumping-off points from which to achieve a pollutant-free environment. Consumer awareness about the implications of purchasing decisions should also be raised by a targeted information campaign.

The German Government has identified the primary transformative measures for these six areas that will be used to achieve measurable progress in each case. They are set out in Chapter 4 below. The policies and measures are implemented at three levels: focusing on implementation and effect in Germany, focusing on international impact and focusing on supporting partner countries. The figure below shows how the areas of transition relate to the off-track indicators, i.e. those targets and measures within the German Sustainable Development Strategy where action is particularly required, as well as the key measures the German Government is undertaking in those areas.



1.3 Joint action; global responsibility; peace and security

The assumption of global responsibility is one of the principles of the German Sustainable Development Strategy and part of a comprehensive vision for a sustainable future in Germany.

The German Government aligns its international activities with the principle of sustainability. European cooperation is indispensable for Germany. By consistently implementing the 2030 Agenda, Germany can make an important contribution within and through the EU to the successful long-term management of global challenges.

The guiding principle of Germany's foreign and development policy is an awareness that peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development are interdependent. Over the last seven decades, Germany has benefited from a relatively stable, rules-based international order. One of the most important tasks of German policy is to help maintain that order, develop it further in collaboration with like-minded partners and promote multilateral cooperation through, for example, the Alliance for Multilateralism which the German Government has

launched together with France and other partners. At the heart of these endeavours is the need to strengthen the United Nations and the institutions of the rules-based international order. International organisations and multilateralism as an overall approach, as well as close exchange with partners in a community of shared values and interests, play an important part in global progress towards sustainability. Germany is therefore committed to multilateral action and to multilateral approaches to implement the 2030 Agenda in its entirety alongside international partners. This covers the different areas of the 2030 Agenda, binding agreements under international law, and other forms of international cooperation, in addition to efforts to strengthen international organisations, strategic alliances, and topic-based partnerships. Implementing the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, for example, is a political priority for the German Government and a core element of SDG 16. In its third national WPS Action Plan, adopted in February 2021, the German Government has put forward an ambitious strategy for the coming four years to consolidate the full inclusion of women in crisis prevention, peace processes and post-conflict peacebuilding and enhance protection against sexual violence.

The 2030 Agenda with its SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement are central points of reference for the German Government's international activities and development cooperation. As the world's second-largest provider of official development assistance (ODA), Germany plays a pivotal role in their implementation and the pursuit of their goals in partner countries.

Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the German Sustainable Development Strategy is feasible only if it is broadly supported and actively furthered by society as a whole.

The principle of leaving no one behind, which is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda, is central here. It describes the obligation that we have as a society to bring all people along on the path towards sustainable development. Putting this principle into practice and reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged first is one of the primary tasks that governments and international cooperation must fulfil. In July 2019, in response to the findings of the Commission on Equivalent Living Conditions, the German Government adopted the goal of reducing existing disparities and preventing them from becoming entrenched.

The German Government has included civil society, business and the academic community in the procedure of updating the German Sustainable Development Strategy as well as in the dialogue process involved in producing the present report. The transition to a sustainable Germany can only succeed if understood as a joint endeavour – that is, as a road which the federal, Land and local authorities and the various groups within society will travel together. The Community Sustainability Project (*Gemeinschaftswerk Nachhaltigkeit*), starting in spring 2022, is intended to raise the visibility of existing efforts for sustainable development, promote more such endeavours, get new stakeholders involved and motivate various players to engage in new collaborations. The project can thus be expected to generate fresh momentum within society for the pursuit of sustainable development.

The State Secretaries' Committee is of primary importance when it comes to enhancing the consistency of policy measures. The decisions made at its meetings provide a yardstick and touchstone for those shaping policy at the ministerial level.

- Every bill or draft ordinance requires the ministries to conduct an ex ante sustainability impact assessment, i.e. one carried out before it is put to the vote. The targets and indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, the Principles for Sustainable Development, and other references to the individual SDGs provide the frame of reference for this assessment. A computer-assisted tool called eNAP was developed to improve the quality of regulatory impact assessments while also making them easier to perform. Overseeing the conduct of sustainability impact assessments falls within the remit of the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development.
- In 2018, at the behest of the German Government, the Council for Sustainable Development organised a peer review of Germany's strategy and policy for sustainable development. The German Government's objective is to use the peer review, which is already on its third iteration, to gain a neutral view of the strengths and weaknesses of its own activities. The report containing the international experts' findings provided important impulses for further developing the German Sustainable Development Strategy.

In Germany's federal structure, powers to enact and enforce legislation on important areas of sustainable development lie with the Länder or local authorities. In 2019, as part of official federal-Länder cooperation, the Federal Chancellor and the heads of government of the 16 Länder adopted the resolution Working Together to Promote Sustainable Development while Assuming Responsibility for a Bright Future in Germany, Europe and around the World, which describes sustainable development as a task that the Federal Government and Länder share. Eleven Länder have adopted or are working on sustainable development strategies of their own. The Federal-Länder Exchange on Sustainable Development provides a forum for the federal and Land levels to discuss their activities in this field on a regular basis.

Other key players in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – according to the principle of thinking globally and acting locally – are cities and local communities. The Association of German Cities, the German Association of Towns and Municipalities and the Association of German Counties have all declared their commitment to both the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change. The systematic localisation of the SDGs is driven forward in many different ways by local authorities' integrated sustainable development strategies. In addition, an increasing number of cities have been producing their own voluntary local reviews (VLRs) on their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. The German Government supports these activities via the Service Agency Communities in One World run by Engagement Global. To enhance practical experience-sharing, a new format for dialogue on sustainable cities has been set up for city mayors – the *OB-Dialog* initiated by the German Council for Sustainable Development. The format has served to draw up a set of strategic cornerstones for sustainable development in municipalities. More than 30 cities and local authorities are currently taking part in the mayors' dialogue. German cities' and communities' commitment to sustainable development also comes to the fore in Germany's first progress report on implementation of the New Urban Agenda (May 2021), which looks at the urban dimension of work towards the SDGs.

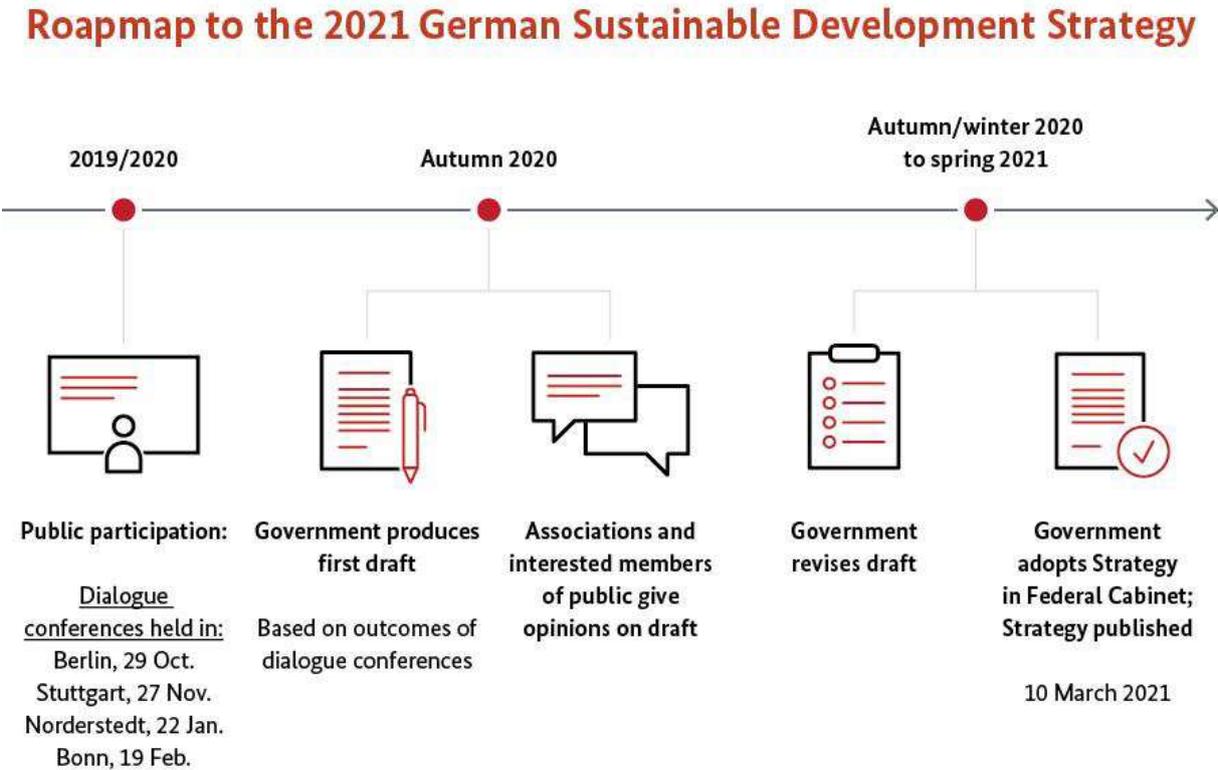
The brief report by the Association of German Cities (see Annex) demonstrates the special dedication and the important role of the local level in implementing the 2030 Agenda in Germany as well as in our international activities. The overview of the approach and creation of voluntary local reviews (VLRs) of implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the municipal level gives examples of the key challenges and implementation ideas being tackled by cities and

communities in Germany. Most particularly, cities like Bonn, Mannheim and Stuttgart have led the way in terms of drawing up VLRs.

When implementing or intending to plan measures, particularly legislative changes, the German Government seeks dialogue with those involved or affected. This provides an opportunity to explain the measures that are in the pipeline and allows stakeholders to articulate their ideas, criticisms and suggestions for improvement. The process often results in a higher quality of government action and increased levels of public approval of the decisions taken.

When it comes to updating the German Sustainable Development Strategy, the public have been and continue to be included via the internet and consultations with the various interest groups.

Between 2019 and 2021, the German Sustainable Development Strategy was revised by means of a participatory process and ultimately adopted by the Federal Cabinet on 10 March 2021. The graphic below outlines the schedule.

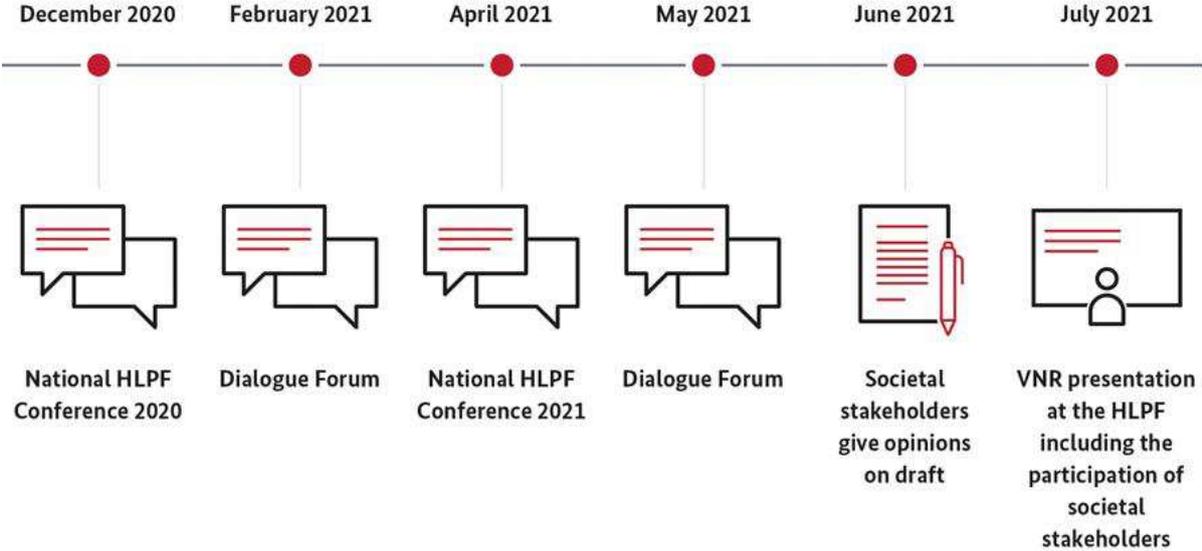


Gratifyingly, that process saw around 360 written statements submitted by key community stakeholders, ranging from umbrella organisations and individual associations representing civil society, business and trade unions, to members of the academic community as well as interested individuals. Four regional conferences were also held, bringing together 1,400 representative participants.

For many years, moreover, the German Government has used a regular 2030 Agenda dialogue forum involving NGOs, business associations, trade unions, Länder, local authorities and the academic community to discuss the international sustainability agenda. What is more, Youth Delegates for sustainable development enrich the national discourse with the perspective of future generations. They are part of the German delegation to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), where business, trade unions, and environmental and development associations are also regularly represented.

Parallel to the final drafting process for the German Sustainable Development Strategy, the German Government began in autumn 2020 to engage in dialogue with civil society, business, trade unions and the research community, as well as the Länder and local authorities, on the drafting and presentation of this VNR and requested input to it.

Timeline of the VNR participation process



Particularly useful in this regard were the established formats of Germany’s high-level **preparatory conferences to the HLPF** and the **2030 Agenda dialogue forums**, which, in light of the pandemic, have been held in virtual formats since spring 2020. Inspired by recommendations from the German Council for Sustainable Development, national HLPF conferences have been held in Germany since 2019. The second and third such conferences, held in December 2020 and April 2021, focused on the 2020-2030 Decade of Action for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on sustainability in the post-pandemic recovery.

The above-mentioned stakeholders from across society had the chance to comment on the interministerial draft of the VNR and to put forward and discuss their positions and proposals in a meeting of the dialogue forum. Additionally, the German associations continuously involved in the HLPF drew up their own assessments of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in and by Germany, which are provided alongside this review (see Annex).

3. Important changes

During the period covered by this review, the German Government launched a series of important measures intended to help achieve the SDGs in Germany, at the global level and in concert with international partners. They are described in Chapter 4 below.

A major element in the process of reworking the German Sustainable Development Strategy for 2021 was **updating the indicators** (see the individual sections on each SDG below). The Strategy now contains 75 indicators which are published by Germany's Federal Statistical Office and form the backbone of this VNR. The German Government is particularly focused on those indicators where attainment of the targets is not yet assured.

The following indicators are new to the Strategy in 2021:

- Germany's contribution to global pandemic prevention and response (indicator 3.3)
- Women in management positions in the federal civil service (indicator 5.1.c)
- Proportion of fathers receiving parental allowance (indicator 5.1.d)
- Rollout of broadband (indicator 9.1.b)
- Cultural heritage/Improving access to cultural heritage (indicator 11.4)
- Soil protection worldwide (indicator 15.3.b)

Compared with 2018, there has been a series of changes in the off-track indicators, i.e. those indicators where developments are or have been less than positive and where targets seem unlikely to be reached.

Clear improvements can be observed in the following indicator values:

- Emissions of air pollutants (indicator 3.2.1)
- Share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption (indicator 7.2.a)
- Debt (indicator 8.2.c)
- Density of settlements (indicator 11.1.c)

In contrast, the off-track trajectory of the following indicator values was exacerbated:

- Final energy consumption in goods transport (indicator 11.2.a)
- Global environmental damage caused by private household consumption (indicators 12.1.b and 12.1.c)

A monitoring system has been set up for the off-track indicators. Following publication of the Indicator Report by Germany's Federal Statistical Office, the federal ministries will in future compile a joint report about the status of target achievement and planned measures for the benefit of off-track indicators. Once the State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development has given its input, that report will be published.

By strengthening the global dimension of the indicators, the German Government has responded to input received during the dialogue process on updating the German Sustainable Development Strategy for 2021. **Fourteen** of the **75 indicators** now have a global connection. Moreover, the Federal Statistical Office actively involves itself in the work of the UN's Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG). Additional IAEG indicators with relevance to Germany can be found on the **sustainable development indicators** page of the **Federal Statistical Office website**.¹

¹https://www.destatis.de/EN/Themes/Society-Environment/Sustainable-Development-Indicators/_node.html

The data on the indicators of the German Sustainable Development Strategy have also been available on an online platform since February 2020 (www.dns-indikatoren.de). This platform supplements the Indicator Report and facilitates a timely update of the indicators. It offers further added value through interactive functions such as individual feature selection, download of figures and data and a map-based illustration of the indicators. In a linked domain of the online platform (www.sdg-indikatoren.de) the data for Germany concerning the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda are provided.

It remains a challenge to comprehensively depict the adverse **spill-over effects** – economic, social, environmental and security-related – that **industrialised countries** like Germany cause for **other countries, especially those in the Global South**. Taking account of such effects and their development over time is important and constitutes part of the work of implementing the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs in the coming years. That is why the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) recently presented a joint report on the **cross-border effects** connected to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Given the increasing **relevance** of this topic not only for civil society and business in Germany but also for the Global South, the German Government is already working to develop ways of measuring effects of this kind. For example, the **indicator for global environmental damage caused by private household consumption**, duly expanded, was included in the updated German Sustainable Development Strategy (indicator 12.1.b). Germany furthermore supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) in efforts to close **data gaps** in respect of spill-over effects at the international level.

UNEDITED ADVANCED PROOF

4. Pursuit of the 17 SDGs in, by and in partnership with Germany

The German Sustainable Development Strategy forms an essential framework for the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The scope of that implementation, however, extends beyond the activities reported in the Strategy. Further government measures not included in the German Sustainable Development Strategy also serve to implement the 2030 Agenda. A selection of completed or planned activities across the whole spectrum for the achievement of the 17 SDGs is presented below. All the measures mentioned are contingent on the availability of sufficient funding.

Basic content, political priorities and selected existing and planned implementation measures are detailed for each SDG. This description is not conclusive, instead providing an initial insight into aspects that the German Government considers important. Each of the sub-chapters covering one SDG begins with an overview of the indicators from the German Sustainable Development Strategy and the state of progress they have reached. For each of the SDGs, one of those indicators is looked at in more detail.

As an independent body with a high level of competence and neutrality, every two years the Federal Statistical Office reports extensively on the trend in national sustainability indicators in its Indicator Report. This remit derives from the German Sustainable Development Strategy. The degree to which targets are likely to be achieved is scored using weather symbols.

Status of the indicators

| | |
|---|--|
|  | On target or almost on target |
|  | Trajectory heading in right direction, but target will be missed by between 5% and 20% |
|  | Trajectory heading in right direction, but gap of more than 20% remains |
|  | Trajectory heading in wrong direction |

The website of the Federal Statistical Office offers a good overview of the links of the German Sustainable Development Strategy with the reporting systems at the European and global levels. This overview also shows clearly that different indicators are needed at many points for the various reporting levels, be this due to the spatial resolution of data or other weightings of the importance of topics from an international perspective. The availability of disaggregated and informative data remains an underlying challenge both with a view to measuring the progress of implementation of the SDGs and for the evidence-based shaping of sustainable policies.

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere



Material deprivation



Severe material deprivation

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

By adopting the 2030 Agenda, the international community of states has set itself the ambitious aim of ending extreme poverty by 2030. The **eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is one of the greatest global challenges of the present time and an indispensable condition for sustainable development.** Progress on reducing poverty offers the opportunity for sea changes in other areas too. If SDG 1 is to be achieved, however, **successes in all of the other goals will be crucial.** Achievement of SDG 1 depends on **leaving no one behind.** In other words, even greater efforts will be required to end discrimination and exclusion and to reduce inequality between people.

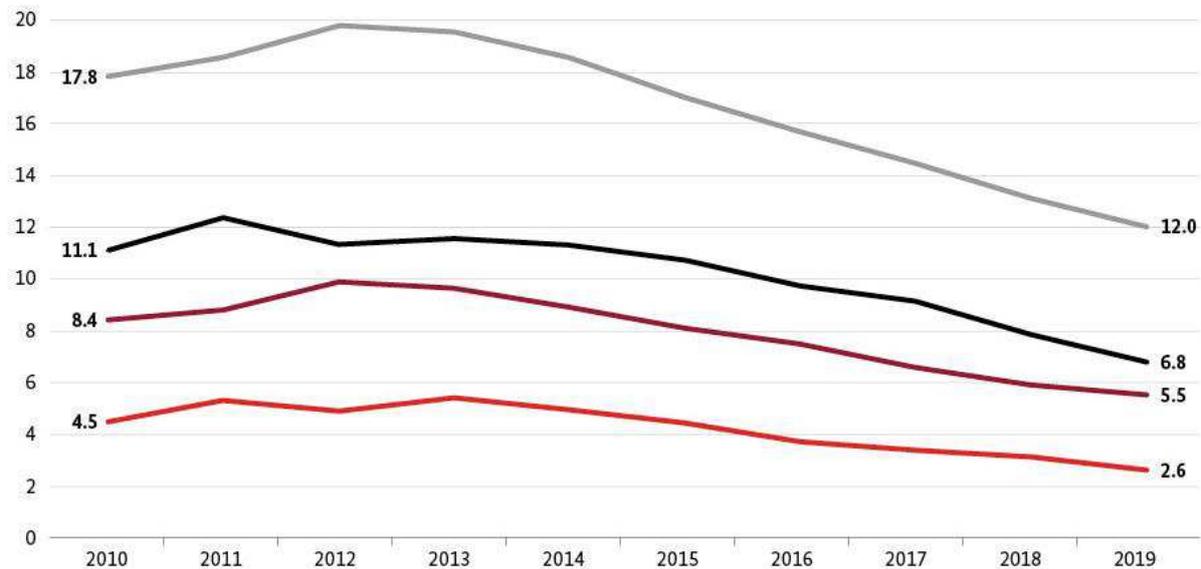
Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

Materially deprived and severely materially deprived persons

Shares, in %

● Materially deprived persons, EU-28
● Materially deprived persons, Germany

● Severely materially deprived persons, EU-28
● Severely materially deprived persons, Germany



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Eurostat

© Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 1 is covered by two indicators: **material deprivation**, which measures perceived material hardship, and **severe material**

deprivation, which describes the lack of specific consumer goods and the involuntary foregoing of discretionary consumption for financial reasons.²

The **target** of the German Government is to **ensure that the proportion of people affected by poverty is being kept significantly below the EU-27 level** by 2030. On the basis of the latest available time series, both elements of the target are already being met. Whereas only 6.8% of people in Germany are materially deprived, the EU level stands at 13.1%. Similarly, in terms of severe material deprivation, the rate of 2.6% in Germany is a good bit below the EU average of 5.5%. In the course of time, moreover, a gradual decline in the proportion of people affected by poverty has been observable both in Germany and in the EU as a whole. In the effort to end material and severe material deprivation, the trend is therefore moving in the right direction.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Germany regards effective efforts to combat poverty as one of the keys to global sustainable development. In 2017, according to World Bank estimates, **689 million people** in the world were living in extreme poverty, that is to say on less than USD 1.90 a day. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, **up to 124 million more people fell into extreme poverty** in 2020 alone. The World Bank estimates that this figure might increase to as many as 163 million in 2021.

In Germany, the principle of the welfare state is enshrined in the constitution. Besides the **constitutionally guaranteed provision for necessary living expenses plus a reasonable minimum level of expenditure on participation in social and cultural life** to ensure decent living conditions for everyone, the main focus of German Government policy is on bolstering the financial situation of individuals and households on relatively low incomes. Next to transfer payments, this requires efforts in other areas such as economic, education, employment, environment, equal opportunities, family, fiscal, health, housing and infrastructure policy. In Germany, people with lower incomes on average are primarily lone parents, families with three or more children, the unemployed, part-time workers with relatively few working hours and/or in low pay groups, people with little education and those from migrant backgrounds.

In the context of Germany's international development cooperation, the establishment and development of social security systems in partner countries of the Global South is regarded as a key contribution to the worldwide struggle against poverty. Such support is primarily intended to enable people – particularly the poor and disadvantaged – to meet their basic needs and protect themselves against risks. At the same time, it creates the conditions for enhanced economic and social inclusion of these people.

In Germany:

- The German Government pursues a **preventive approach** to combating poverty. Its aim is to achieve a high employment rate with adequate pay levels. For example, by means of the Skills Development Opportunities Act (*Qualifizierungschancengesetz*), the German Government has improved the **reskilling of employed persons** affected by the general process of structural change. In this way employees' skills can be developed to match the needs of companies before any redundancies occur.
- **Poverty avoidance through adequate wages:** Following the introduction of a nationwide minimum wage in 2015 and its continuous adjustment, the income situation of low-paid

² This indicator is intended to illustrate personal circumstances in which a risk of poverty exists. It is part of a set of indicators used by the German Government for comprehensive reporting on poverty and wealth. The set comprises 11 indicators from various areas, such as unemployment, in-work poverty or poverty risk, income distribution, health, receipt of income support benefits, social participation, overindebtedness and housing (see also the report on poverty and wealth (in German) at www.armuts- und reichumsbericht.de).

workers not self-employed has been distinctly improved. The introduction of the minimum wage has benefited about four million people, including disproportionately large numbers of female employees.

- **Relief for low-income families:** The supplementary child allowance scheme was recast in 2019 and 2020 by the Strong Families Act (*Starke-Familien-Gesetz*).³
- **Improvements to the education package:** The education package scheme was improved in recognition of the increased demand for personal school supplies and for participation in the social and cultural life of the community; the parental contribution to the cost of school transport and of communal lunches in schools, daycare centres and childminding services was abolished, and it was clearly established that learning support can be given to a child regardless of whether he or she is at risk of having to repeat a year of schooling.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **Vision Zero Fund:** Under Germany's G7 Presidency in 2015, this International Labour Organization (ILO) fund for the improvement of occupational health and safety was established by the G7 with the aim of bolstering the application of labour and social standards in global supply chains.
- **Action to support and establish social security systems in partner countries:** In the context of bilateral development cooperation, this action covers both more comprehensive protection schemes, such as income support, health insurance, occupational accident insurance and pensions insurance, and specific measures for poor sections of the population, such as cash transfers, public employment measures and vouchers for healthcare services for infants and toddlers.
India as a case study: Germany provided India with advice on the introduction of a state-funded scheme of free health insurance. Since 2018, some 500 million people have received coverage through the scheme.
Malawi as a case study: Germany assisted Malawi in introducing directly receivable transfer benefits. Since the introduction of these benefits, known as Social Cash Transfers, about 600,000 people have benefited from them.
- **Promotion of fair working conditions and living wages:** Firstly, this is done as part of Germany's bilateral development cooperation, for example through the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation and the Employment and Skills for Development in Africa (E4D) project. Secondly, it is achieved through the initiation and promotion of multi-stakeholder partnerships like the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles and the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa, in which living wages are a key objective (see also SDGs 8 and 12).

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

On several requirements for the accelerated pursuit of targets, there is now greater urgency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- to provide **access routes to employment for all parts of the population**, especially women and young people, on whom the impact has been greatest
- to combat **poverty among those in low income brackets** by means of additional **targeted measures** as well as to **increase the incentives to take up employment**

³ An overview of German family benefits is available in English here:
<https://familienportal.de/familienportal/meta/languages/family-benefits>

- to enforce **the statutory obligation to pay the minimum wage**, which should primarily be achieved through more stringent checks, as there are hundreds of thousands of cases in which employers illegally pay less than the minimum wage
- to combine **economic recovery** in partner countries with the **fight against poverty** and the **creation of decent work** for everyone
- to strengthen **social security systems**, especially **health insurance schemes**, and to develop **risk financing** to cover poor and vulnerable sections of the population against **disasters and climate shocks**
- to step up the development of **multi-stakeholder partnerships** (see also SDGs 8 and 12)

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture



Nitrogen surplus in agriculture



Organic farming



Support for good governance in achieving appropriate food supplies worldwide

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

By adopting the 2030 Agenda, the international community of states has set itself the ambitious aim of **ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition**. Besides increased productivity and the assurance of enshrined equal rights of access to land and other productive resources, the sustainability of food systems is to be ensured, and **sustainable and resilient farming methods** are to be used which preserve ecosystems, withstand climate changes, improve soil quality and maintain genetic diversity. Progress towards **SDG 2** contributes significantly to **guaranteeing and realising the human right to adequate nutrition**. In addition there are close links with other goals, such as SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 6 (drinking water and sanitation) and SDG 15 (life on land). In the quest for SDG 2, the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors as well as national and global makers and executors of food and agriculture policy are confronted throughout the world with formidable challenges.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 2 is covered by three indicators in two categories:

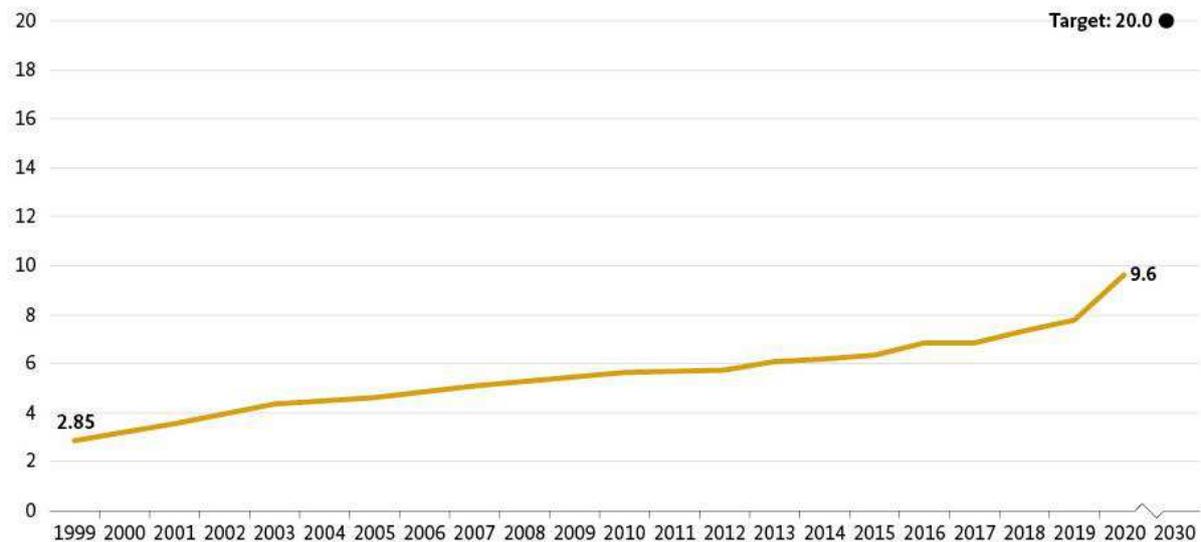
- Farming: Nitrogen surplus in agriculture and organic farming
- Food security: Supporting good governance in the achievement of adequate nutrition worldwide

The indicator **organic farming**, which is examined below, shows the area of land that is devoted to organic farming on farms subject to verification procedures under the organic farming legislation of the EU, expressed as a **percentage of the total area of land used for**

agriculture.⁴ Organic farming is a **resource-saving form of farming** that has wide-ranging beneficial effects on the climate, the environment and nature.

Organically farmed agricultural land

Share of total utilised agricultural land, in %



Source: Federal Statistical Office

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Over the past few years, although the **organically farmed area** in Germany has **steadily increased**, the rate of increase has not been fast enough. If this trend were to continue, the target of organic farming on 20% of Germany's agricultural land by 2030 would not be achieved.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

In 2019, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates, more than **two billion people** worldwide suffered from a lack of essential vitamins and minerals (malnutrition). Some 690 million people were affected by chronic undernourishment, i.e. by hunger. Some 98% of the people suffering from hunger live in developing countries. According to FAO estimates made in 2020, an **additional 80 to 130 million people may be suffering from chronic hunger** as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The German Government supports the **human rights-based approach** to realisation of the **right to adequate food**. The key to global food security is **sustainable** and resilient **agriculture**.

The political focus in Germany is not only on **promoting sustainable agriculture** but also, and primarily, on **environmentally, economically and socially sustainable as well as nutritionally balanced and healthy diets**. The main foundations of the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors are natural resources such as soil, water, air and biodiversity. Sustainable, responsible management of these resources and the preservation of agricultural land are essential if continuing high-quality food production and food security are to be guaranteed in Germany. An important instrument in the pursuit of these objectives is the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union. In the negotiations and development process for the new funding period starting in 2023, the German Government is

⁴The numerator includes land that has been fully converted to organic management as well as areas still undergoing conversion.

campaigning for a higher level of green ambition within the CAP. For example, the previous requirements for the maintenance of direct payments (conditionality) are being amended with a view to better protecting the environment and the climate. Another key element are the eco-schemes, which will in future serve to support additional environmental and climate efforts on the part of the agricultural sector. In this context, transferable learning and practical experience of organic farming will play an important role in future throughout the food, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors. In addition, digital technology will gain increasing significance in agriculture by contributing to more efficient use of resources and simplifying work processes.

Within the framework of international development cooperation, Germany is supporting the establishment and development of sustainable agriculture in partner countries of the Global South.

In Germany:

- **Adoption of the National Bioeconomy Strategy** in 2020: The overarching aim of the strategy is to use biological resources sustainably and to establish green and resource-efficient production processes in all sectors of the economy. An important objective in the food and agriculture sector is the sustainable production of food and feed and of renewable resources for material use.
- **The digital transition in agriculture:** Through the establishment of digital experimentation sites, diverse potential uses of digital technology in agriculture are tried out and tested in realistic scenarios.
- **Climate action and climate adaptation in agriculture and forestry:** Under the German Government's Climate Action Programme 2030, ten climate action measures have been developed in the realms of agriculture and of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF). Their purpose is to ensure that the climate goals in those areas are achieved.
- **Flagship Initiative on Sustainable Consumption for Biological Diversity in Agriculture and Food:** The main aim here is to promote the cultivation and marketing of old regional fruit and vegetable varieties and endangered livestock breeds in Germany.
- **The quality standards of the German Nutrition Society (DGE) for communal catering** have been revised with a clear focus on more sustainable menus.
- **A voluntary enhanced system of nutritional value labelling**, known as the *Nutri-Score*, has been introduced as a source of information for consumers. The Nutri-Score is a grading system comprising five letters, A to E, each with its own colour code, enabling consumers to compare the nutritional quality of foodstuffs in a particular product category at a glance. This makes it immediately visible which food products are better placed to contribute to a balanced diet.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **Close cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):** In cooperation with these United Nations food and agriculture entities, Germany supports the realisation of the *right to adequate nutrition*.
- **Support for international networks:** In this area, Germany primarily supports the establishment and development of international gene banks and information systems for the **preservation of biodiversity** and the **sustainable use of genetic resources**, subject to fair conditions of access.
- **International research cooperation in the field of global nutrition:** Germany supports international agricultural research where its findings are freely accessible as a public asset. Such cooperative ventures are a central source of turnkey innovations designed to

increase productivity, sustainably transform food systems, promote agroecology and adapt to the consequences of climate change.

- **The special One World – No Hunger initiative:** Since 2014, in the framework of this special initiative, Germany has made food security, agriculture and rural development priorities of its development policy. Providing more than EUR 2 billion a year, it is the second-largest bilateral donor to this initiative after the United States.
- **Reinforcing political, institutional and legal governance** in the realm of food security: In 2018, a total of EUR 223 million, representing 18.3% of Germany's ODA expenditure on food security, was devoted to governance, compared with 16.7% in 2016.
- **Establishment of Green Innovation Centres and Centres of Excellence:** Germany has established Green Innovation Centres in 15 African partner countries. The purpose of these centres is to improve regional food supplies, increase the income of smallholdings and create jobs. In addition, Centres of Excellence on climate change and sustainable land management have been established in Southern and West Africa.
- **Establishment and support of the Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chain Initiative:** This multi-stakeholder partnership, which the German Government initiated in 2018, comprises more than 70 stakeholders from the private sector, civil society and politics. It has set itself the aim of achieving **more sustainability in global agricultural supply chains** and improving the living conditions of smallholders. It focuses especially on living incomes and resource-efficient, deforestation-free supply chains.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- The **Arable Farming Strategy** adopted by the German Government is intended to set out options and pathways for making arable farming sustainable – that is, environmentally sound, economically viable and socially accepted. Relevant areas include improving soil conservation and fertility, increasing crop diversity and extending crop rotation, using fertiliser more efficiently and reducing nutrient surpluses, using and developing resistant and site-adapted varieties and species, preserving and fostering farmland biodiversity, and developing climate-adapted cultivation strategies.
- Intensified **efforts** to make the transition to **organic farming**: Not only will this help Germany to achieve its target of having 20% of its agricultural land organically farmed by 2030. It will also support the Farm to Fork Strategy of the European Commission and so help achieve the aim of sustainable farming.

On several requirements for the accelerated pursuit of targets, there is now greater urgency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- to combine **economic recovery measures in partner countries** with action to ensure food security and the establishment of sustainable food and agriculture systems – for which reason Germany made some EUR 2.3 billion available in 2020 alone for food security, rural development and agriculture to alleviate the impact of the pandemic and will continue this commitment in 2021 and subsequent years
- to foster the development of **multi-stakeholder partnerships** (see also SDGs 8 and 12)
- to promote **organic farming** worldwide so as to increase the resilience of agricultural systems, especially in countries of the Global South⁵

⁵ For more on this, see the relevant FAO Report and the brochure on Organic Agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals – Part of the Solution available here <http://www.db.zs-intern.de/uploads/1570196865-2019EostaOrganicSDGs.pdf>

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Premature mortality (women) |
|  | Premature mortality (men) |
|  | Smoking rate among adolescents |
|  | Smoking rate among adults |
| — | Obesity rate among children and adolescents |
|  | Obesity rate among adults |
|  | Emissions of air pollutants |
|  | Share of the population with increased exposure to PM10 |
|  | Germany's contribution to pandemic prevention and response world-wide |

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

Improving the health of all people on Earth is a central concern of the 2030 Agenda. Good health is a **goal** of sustainable development but also its **prerequisite** and **result**. Monitoring, promoting and providing for it is a **human rights obligation**. The crucial requirement in this context is universal health coverage or UHC, i.e. **access for everyone to affordable healthcare of appropriate quality**.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown what drastic effects such an outbreak and the accompanying strain on health services can have on all areas of life – on public and private life as well as economic activity. In this respect SDG 3 is connected not only to SDG 2 (no hunger), SDG 6 (drinking water and sanitation) and SDG 13 (climate action) but also to all the other goals.

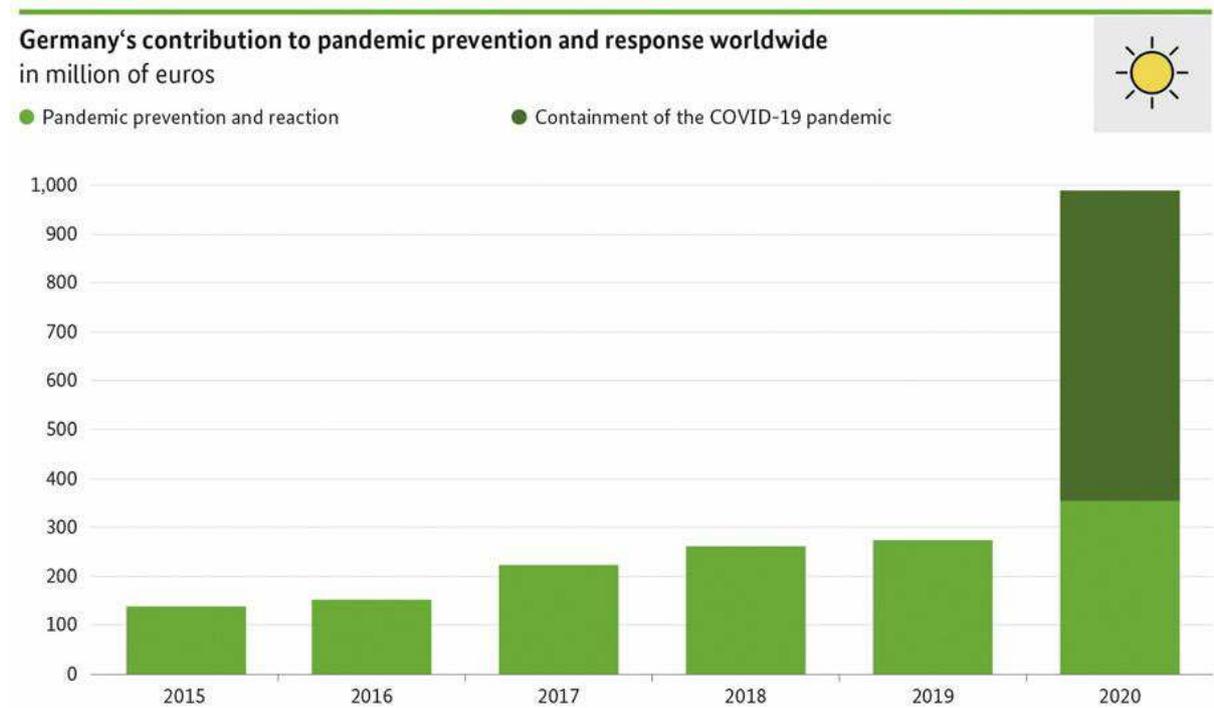
Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 3 is covered by nine indicators in three categories:

- Health and nutrition: Premature mortality among women and men, smoking rates among adolescents and adults, the obesity rate among children and adolescents and the obesity rate among adults

- Air pollution: Emissions of air pollutants and share of the population with excessive exposure to PM₁₀⁶
- Global health: Germany's contribution to global pandemic prevention and response

The last of these listed indicators is examined below by way of an example; it is intended to depict **Germany's willingness to assume increasing responsibility in the international effort to combat the pandemic worldwide**. The indicator covers expenditure and pledges made by Germany for global pandemic prevention and response programmes. It excludes programmes designed to contain the COVID-19 pandemic (see the paler part of the green column for 2020 seen in the graph).



Source: Federal Foreign Office, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Federal Ministry of Health, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

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Preliminary values

Germany's pledges for global healthcare funding, that is to say for global pandemic prevention and response programmes, particularly in countries of the Global South, have been **continuously increased over the past few years**. The aim is to raise Germany's contribution to global pandemic prevention and response substantially from its 2019 level in the period up to 2030.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Application of the **prevention principle** and **reinforcement of healthcare systems** are **priorities of German health policy** both at home and abroad.

The German healthcare system is regarded internationally as a **model for universal coverage in the event of illness**. Both the statutory and the private health insurance schemes offer their members reliable protection covering all essential health services. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of the healthcare system in Germany must be continuously reviewed and refined. The same applies to other key areas, such as the development and qualitative improvement

⁶ Particulate matter (PM₁₀) comprises the mass of all particles contained in TSP (total suspended particulates) with an aerodynamic diameter of less than 10 µm.

of healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic, moreover, has shown that vital importance attaches to the **upgrading of the public health service, which is an indispensable pillar of the healthcare system**. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to pose formidable challenges for healthcare systems, both worldwide and within Germany, for some time to come.

The **reinforcement of global players in the field of health, particularly the WHO, and of national healthcare systems in partner countries** is a key objective of Germany's international activities, which are described in the Global Health Strategy of the German Government. At the heart of the German Government's international cooperation in the health sector is its contribution to ensuring that **universal basic healthcare** is also available to the **poorest people**.

In Germany:

- **Enhancing prevention and health literacy, especially digital health literacy, in everyday life and protecting public health:** The **Prevention Act (*Präventionsgesetz*)** raises the standard of **prevention and health promotion**, especially in schools, child daycare centres and workplaces, by means of services provided by the health insurance funds and services for the early detection of diseases.
- The **Protection against Measles Act (*Masernschutzgesetz*)**, adopted in 2020, stipulates that proof of adequate vaccination against measles or of immunity to measles must be presented for all those who are looked after in communal facilities or who work there.
- **Strengthening the public health service:** The adoption of the 2020 Pact for the Public Health Service provided for measures to upgrade the human, technical and digital resources of the county or district health authorities.
- **Strengthening the health service infrastructure, especially its digital infrastructure:** A Future of Hospitals Act (*Krankenhauszukunftsgesetz*) was adopted in 2020, particularly with a view to expanding the digitalisation of hospitals and improving their IT security.
- **Digitalisation of the healthcare system to improve the quality of urban and rural medical care and to meet the challenges of demographic change:** A system of electronic patient files is being introduced; from 2021, health insurance funds are to make it available to all their members.
- Implementation of the **National Reduction and Innovation Strategy for Sugar, Fats and Salt in Processed Foods:** Processed foods are to contain fewer calories and fats and less sugar and salt. This strategy is focused clearly on ready-made products, particularly those that are designed to appeal to children and adolescents.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **Closer coordination of global health players** and reinforcement of national health systems: A joint initiative was launched by Germany, Norway and Ghana for the preparation of a **Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All** (SDG 3 GAP), which was adopted by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** together with 11 other multilateral organisations in 2019. Following the accession of the ILO at the start of 2021, a total of 13 organisations are now involved.
- Germany also supports the activities which the United Nations has announced for the 2021-2030 Decade of Healthy Ageing being run by the WHO.
- **Strengthening global health players:** Germany is a reliable partner to many multilateral health organisations, particularly the **WHO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (**GFATM**). In this vein, Germany was able to increase its funding for the WHO from EUR 181 million in 2016-2017 to EUR 313 million in

2018-2019. The funds provided to fight the pandemic bring the total for 2020 up to EUR 564 million. Similarly, the funding for the GFATM was raised from EUR 210 million in 2016 to EUR 350 million in 2020. Other important international partners with which Germany cooperates are the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Global Financing Facility (GFF) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), to which the German Government is providing aggregate funding of about EUR 190 million in 2020 and 2021.

- **Stepping up multilateral cooperation on the basis of the One Health approach:** Germany has been doing this by initiating the establishment of the One Health High Level Expert Panel to advise the WHO, the FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and by supporting its work.
- **Global access to and global distribution of vaccines, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic:**

ACT Accelerator: Germany is a founding member of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and its second-largest donor. The Accelerator is a global platform for the development of COVID-19 vaccines, therapies and diagnostics.

COVAX: Germany actively supports the United Nations' **COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX)** initiative, the aim of which is to obtain reasonable prices, especially for poorer countries, through bulk ordering and to distribute vaccines worldwide. Germany is providing the COVAX facility with EUR 1.08 billion to procure vaccines for the world's 92 poorest countries as part of a total allocation to the ACT Accelerator of about EUR 2.2 billion.
- **Bolstering research and development for vaccines against pathogens that may cause epidemics:** Germany plays an active role in the international **CEPI** initiative (Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations) and is providing it, as part of the aforementioned ACT Accelerator allocation, with a total of EUR 350 million for 2020 and 2021.
- **Initiative on Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health:** In this initiative, Germany helps to ensure that the right conditions are created in 21 partner countries for the avoidance of unwanted pregnancies and for **professional medical assistance at births**. Another priority is access to **comprehensive sexuality education**, especially for adolescents and young adults, to empower them to take independent informed decisions about their health and to protect women and girls effectively from unwanted pregnancies. Since 2016, the German Government has made resources amounting to about EUR 480 million available for this initiative in its development cooperation budget.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **Pandemic prevention and preparedness** measures require constant improvement.
- Health system structures require **further modernisation** through **innovation and digitalisation**.
- The **care system** needs to be **improved and reinforced**.
- There is a need to keep **building capacity for the manufacture of vaccines** and other **important pharmaceutical products in Germany, Europe, and developing and newly industrialised countries**.
- **Research into vaccines, medicines, treatments and diagnostics** has to be **accelerated in Germany and Europe**.
- There is a need to **strengthen global health entities** and **improve their capacity for cooperation**.

- There is a need to strengthen global health structures with due regard to the lessons learned from COVID-19, particularly by advancing the proposal for an international treaty on pandemic prevention and preparedness with a view to building national, regional and global capacity for greater resilience in the face of future pandemics.
- **Investment** is needed to **improve pandemic prevention and preparedness**, particularly by strengthening the political, financial and institutional position of the World Health Organization to enhance its response capability.
- There is a need to **make more use of the One Health approach** nationally, regionally and in the context of international cooperation, since human and animal health and environmental factors are closely intertwined.
- **National health systems must be continuously strengthened** to guarantee access to essential services, including sexual and reproductive services, and the exercise of reproductive rights, even in crises, as these are prerequisites for stability, welfare and global health.
- Access to preventive measures of sexual and reproductive health, including comprehensive sexuality education, and to related rights must be maintained.
- There is a need for more dovetailing of **multilateral and bilateral activities** as well as for an **extension of cooperation among all key players in the health system**– the public sector, the private sector and the academic community.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



Early school leavers



Persons with an academic or higher vocational qualification
(30 to 34-year-olds with a tertiary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of education)



All-day care provision for 0 to 2-year-olds



All-day care provision for 3 to 5-year-olds

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

With SDG 4, the international community has undertaken to ensure **inclusive and equitable quality education** and promote **lifelong learning** opportunities for all. **Education has a key role to play** if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved. Other SDGs have reciprocal links with education, whether explicitly or implicitly, especially SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). Education is a crucial factor in determining people's opportunities to develop their individual skills, realise their

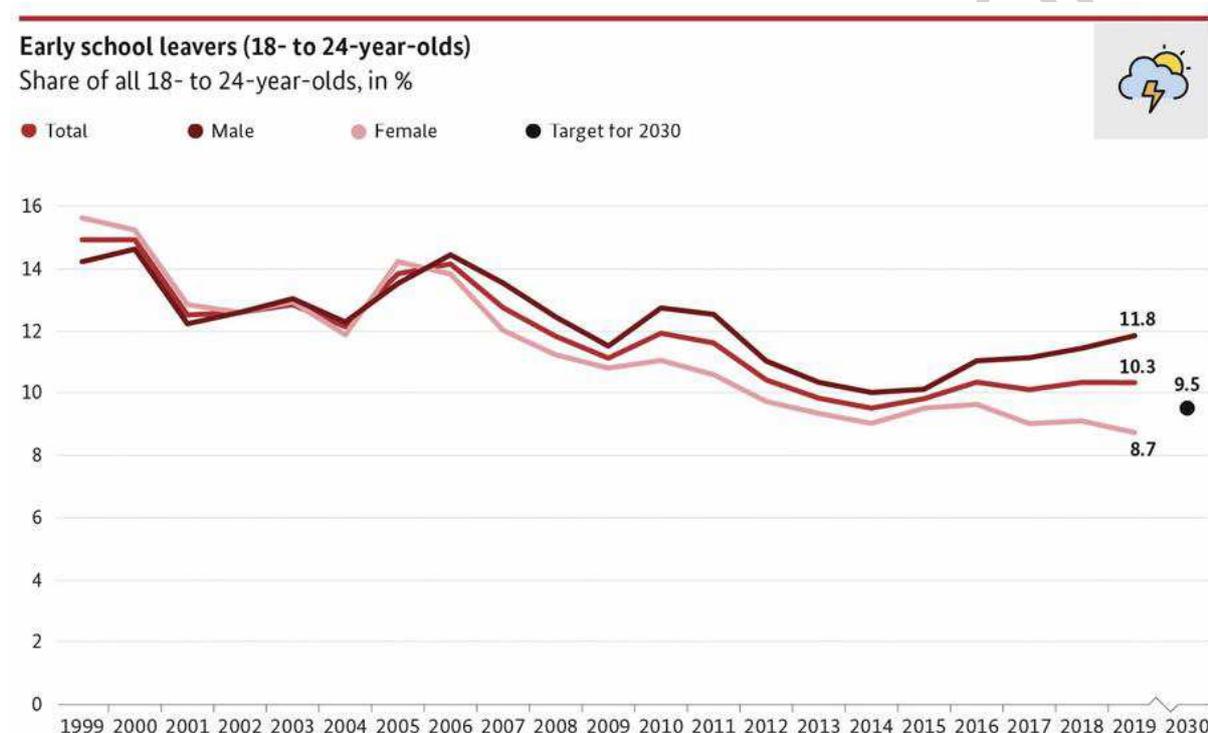
professional aims and participate in and shape their society. Education is a **human right**. High-quality institutional education courses and social conditions that permit successful learning both inside and outside educational institutions are keys to the exercise of that right.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, four indicators are assigned to SDG 4 in two categories:

- Education: Early school leavers and 30 to 34-year-olds with a tertiary or post-secondary non-tertiary level of education;
- Prospects for families: All-day care provision for children from birth to the age of 2 and for children aged 3 to 5.

The early school leavers indicator is examined below to illustrate the challenge of enabling all adolescents and young adults to obtain educational qualifications.



Source: Federal Statistical Office

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The indicator shows the percentage of all people in the **18-24** age bracket who have neither gained a university entrance qualification, such as an *Abitur* or *Fachhochschulreife*, nor completed a course of vocational training, and who are not currently undergoing training or continuing education. The indicator value rose slightly from 9.5% in 2014 to 10.3% in 2019, which means that **the trend has been moving in the wrong direction**. If the current trend were to continue, the **target** of 9.5% for 2030 would **not be met**.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is one of Germany's key objectives, both at home and abroad.

Levels of educational attainment and rates of participation in education in Germany are high in all sectors of the education system. Despite the improvements with regard to equal opportunities, however, **social background** still influences young people's educational

opportunities and future prospects. An important **political aim** throughout the education system is **to establish equality of opportunity**. The **digital lesson formats** deployed during the **COVID-19 pandemic** have made explicit the extent to which socio-economic status influences young people's education opportunities. In a highly developed economy such as Germany's, there is a constantly increasing demand for skilled labour. In addition to **tertiary qualifications** from diverse types of institutions of higher education, particular importance attaches in Germany to the practice-based **dual system of training**, which offers **options to obtain tertiary qualifications** through advanced vocational education and training. Since it does not depend on possessing a university entrance qualification, the **dual training system** enables many people to obtain **access to the skilled labour market and to attractive further qualification opportunities** regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds and their origins.

In the context of development cooperation and the German Government's other international activities, Germany provides particular support to partner countries in the realms of **extended basic education, vocational education and training, higher education and university partnerships**.

In Germany:

- Adoption of the **National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development** in 2017: Germany assigns a key role to **ESD** in its pursuit of the 17 SDGs and supports education processes based on the ideal of lifelong learning for sustainable development. Working in close cooperation, the federal and Länder governments have drawn up a Global Development guidance framework that contains recommendations for educational authorities and schools on putting ESD into practice in curricula, teacher training and the development of schools as sustainable organisations.
- The funding priority and initiative Vocational Training for Sustainable Development promotes key green skills for climate-friendly, resource-efficient action at work.
- **Joint federal-Länder initiatives to increase education opportunities for everyone:** Examples that may be cited in this context include the *Schule macht stark* ("School empowers") initiative, designed to support schools with a high percentage of socially disadvantaged pupils, and an initiative entitled Graduation and continuation – Education chains up to the vocational training qualification.
- **Increasing the availability and raising the quality of child daycare:** These aims are pursued through the 2019 Act on Good Early Childhood Education and Care (*Gute-KiTa-Gesetz*) and the 2020-2021 Investment Programme for Childcare Funding, which was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Expansion of all-day care facilities for primary pupils:** An investment programme to accelerate the development of the infrastructure of all-day care facilities for primary school pupils was launched at the end of 2020; the German Government is providing a total of EUR 750 million in federal funds for investments under this programme.
- **Development of technological skills:** Mathematics, IT, science and technology are cornerstones of education in the digital age and as such are known collectively by the German acronym MINT, much as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is used elsewhere. The MINT Action Plan of 2019 provides for new overarching support initiatives and a specialised information campaign.
- **Reinforcement of vocational education and training:** The Federal Republic, by revising the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*) and particularly through the introduction of the new internationally compatible professional bachelor's and professional master's degrees, has strengthened advanced vocational education and training and so widened career prospects for trainees in the dual training system. At the same time, the

corresponding funding opportunities have been considerably expanded through grants awarded under the Upgrading Training Assistance Act (*Aufstiegs-Bafög*).

- The Federal Government, the Länder and the representative bodies of business and labour are all committed to the continuous improvement and updating of vocational training. Initiatives such as the **federal programme to secure apprenticeships** and coordinated measures put in place by the Alliance for Initial and Further Training are helping to maintain the level of training during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To **support the residential centres for child and adolescent education that have been closed during the COVID-19 pandemic**, the organisations running these centres have been receiving liquidity grants in 2020 and 2021 through the Special Programme for Child and Youth Education and Welfare.
- **Package of measures for the integration of refugees with academic potential**: With the aid of this programme, which was launched in 2015, more than 20,000 refugees have been able to enrol in mainstream courses of higher education in Germany, while others have taken preparatory courses for higher education.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **The UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development and the UNESCO ESD for 2030 programme**: Germany is a key partner of UNESCO and plays an active part in the implementation of its ESD programmes.
- Germany funds and reinforces key multilateral education initiatives. At the heart of its efforts in this field is the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**, to which the German Government pledged EUR 141 million for the 2018-2022 period. Germany's funding has been further increased, particularly in view of the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Of its EUR 75 million contribution to the **GPE** for 2020, for example, the German Government made EUR 25 million available for the **COVID-19 funding window** to assist partner countries in alleviating the impact of the crisis and dealing with its consequences.
- The **Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund**: This is the central global fund for education in emergency situations and chronic crises. Since 2017, Germany has supported the ECW fund with a total of EUR 68.8 million to make education possible in refugee camps and host communities and to offer children a brighter future.
- Education is an **important element of German development cooperation**. The education strategy of 2015 entitled "Creating equitable opportunities for quality education" forms the basis for targeted assistance to partner countries in the areas of extended basic education, vocational education and training and higher education.
- The **schools partnership initiative PASCH (Schools: Partners for the Future)**: In the framework of Germany's foreign cultural and education policy, more than 600,000 pupils in more than 120 partner countries are learning German and cultivating intercultural dialogue as an international learning community in a global network of some 2,000 schools.
- **Development Policy School Exchange Programme (ENSA)**: This programme supports existing and new school twinning arrangements between general or vocational secondary schools in Germany and their counterparts in African, Asian, Latin American and South-East European countries. These collaborations enable them to campaign together in school and everyday life, through exchange visits, for global sustainable development.
- As the world's largest bilateral donor in the realm of education (EUR 2.1 billion in 2018), Germany banks on close cooperation between government and business to **assist partner countries** in establishing high-quality, inclusive, practice-based **vocational training systems** reflecting the needs of the labour market.

- Germany has stepped up its worldwide support for **cooperation in the field of higher education** through manifold activities of individual federal ministries, for instance in the framework of centres of excellence and research funding, as well as through the Centres of African Excellence of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and its excellence programmes, such as Bilateral SDG Graduate Schools. What all funded activities have in common is that they are intended to reach “agents of change”, or multipliers, in partner countries so as to support or inspire transformation processes.
- The German Government also sees digital progress as a potential driver of equal opportunities in education. Accordingly, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is pursuing a strategy built on the following three pillars: (1) development of ICT infrastructure; (2) support for digital training opportunities; (3) development of the skills required for the digital transformation. For example, the BMZ uses ICT in the education sector to train teachers, establish innovative learning formats and enable a more efficient, data-supported educational policy. Examples of its efforts in this direction are the upgrading of digital skills of women and girls through the #eSkills4Girls initiative and the training of workers in the ICT sector through the Digital Skills Accelerator Africa (DSAA) project.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- There is a need to establish **equality of opportunity** in all areas of the education system.
- **Education for sustainable development (ESD)** must be further developed so that the implementation of the National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development can be further expedited.
- There is a need to develop the technical infrastructure to create the right conditions for the **digital transition in the education sector** as well as providing for **universal accessibility**, regardless of socio-economic status.
- A **legal right to all-day care provision** for children of primary school age must be established.
- There is a need to support the expansion and further development of **key multilateral education initiatives** such as the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** and the Education Cannot Wait fund.
- More **promotion of equal opportunities** is needed, along with the accompanying reduction of inequality in the education systems in partner countries.
- More work is needed to reinforce high-quality, inclusive, **practice-based vocational training systems reflecting the needs of the labour market** in partner countries.
- There is a need to support education through **distance teaching and digital learning resources** in partner countries.

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Gender pay gap |
|  | Women in management positions in business |
|  | Women in management positions in the federal civil service |
|  | Proportion of fathers receiving parental leave allowance |
| — | Vocational qualifications for women and girls through German development cooperation |

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

In the *2030 Agenda*, **achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls** is firmly enshrined as both **a goal in its own right** and an **overarching theme** of the entire agenda. More than 25 years after the *Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women* and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, various obstacles still prevent women and girls from leading self-determined lives and from exercising an equal right to realise their potential for the good of society. These include violence against women and girls, uneven distribution of income and property and limited control over material assets, insufficient involvement in private and public decision-making, inequitable distribution of care and upbringing duties, and gender stereotypes.

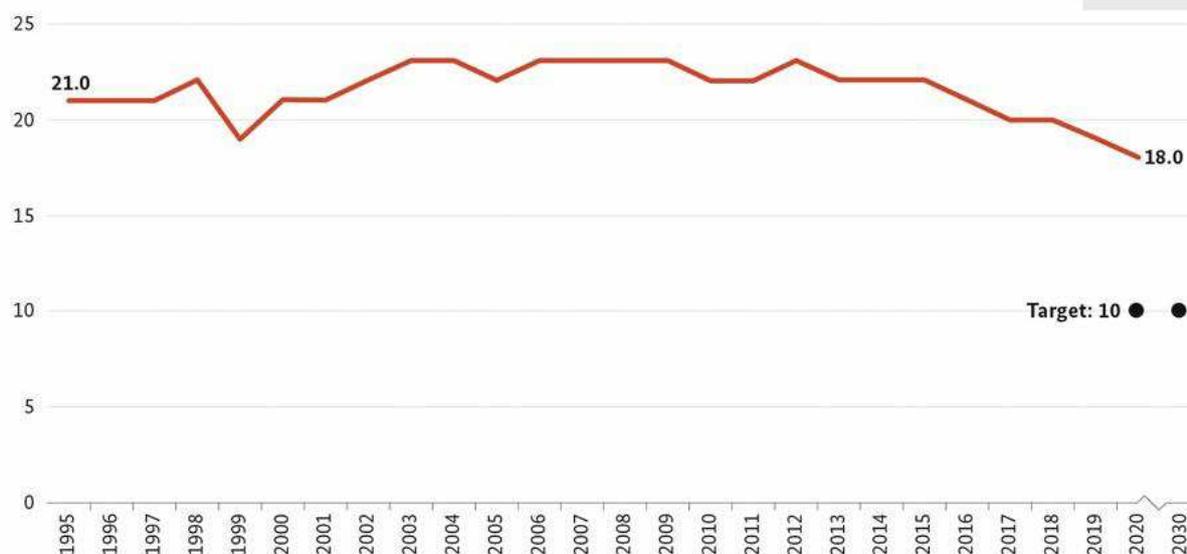
Gender equality is an overarching theme of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Firstly, the focus of SDG 5 is on ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls (target 5.1), eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (target 5.2) and eliminating all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (target 5.3); the other targets focus on the recognition of unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4), women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership (target 5.5) and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (target 5.6). Economic empowerment of women and girls demonstrably reduces child mortality and the number of unwanted pregnancies. Moreover, support for women contributes to the achievement of numerous other goals, especially SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy five indicators are assigned to SDG 5: The gender pay gap, women in management positions in business and in the federal public service, the proportion of fathers receiving parental allowance, and the vocational qualification of women and girls through German development cooperation.

The **gender pay gap** indicator is examined below by way of an example to portray the gender equality situation in Germany.

Difference between average gross hourly earnings of women and men in % of earnings by men



Source: Federal Statistical Office

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The data for 2015 to 2019 has been revised. Preliminary values for 2020.

According to official figures from the Federal Statistical Office, the average gross hourly pay rate for women in **2020** was **around 18% lower than the average pay rate for men**. In 2014, the gap had been around 22%. In the event of a linear continuation of the slight narrowing of the gap by four percentage points that has occurred over the past five years, however, the **targets** for 2020 and 2030 (a maximum differential of 10% in both cases) **will not be achieved**.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

The priorities of **gender equality policy in Germany** are the prevention of violence against women and girls, victim support and equal employment opportunities for women. The last of these objectives includes the realisation of equal access to management positions in politics, administration and the private sector, the continuing development and consistent implementation of a good work-life balance, systematic reduction of the **gender pay gap** and upgrading of social occupations. **Existing inequalities between women and men** should not be exacerbated as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. This means that we should not see even more women taking on the bulk of unpaid domestic work and childcare duties and being in precarious employment worldwide.⁷ The principle of leaving no one behind also involves the inclusion of all people regardless of gender, particularly individuals and groups who are marginalised and subject to multiple forms of discrimination. Gender equality must not be considered in isolation, because it interacts with other aspects of people's identity, such as sexual identity, sexual orientation, age, religious affiliation and disability.

When women **worldwide** are given the opportunity to **realise their economic potential**, the economy is not the only winner. Earning their own income as a result of having received adequate education and training benefits women and girls themselves but also their families and the whole of society in **partner countries of the Global South**.

⁷ <https://data.unwomen.org/features/covid-19-and-gender-what-do-we-know-what-do-we-need-know>

In Germany:

- The German Government is implementing a programme of action on the Istanbul Convention, the latter having entered into force in Germany in 2018. With the federal support programme Ending Violence against Women Together, the German Government is providing a total of more than EUR 140 million from 2019 to 2023 to assist the Länder and local authorities in further developing their aid structures for women affected by violence in line with real needs. Since 2020, as part of a project funded by the German Government, the German Institute for Human Rights has been developing a blueprint for independent national reporting agencies on gender-based violence and on human trafficking. In seeking the establishment of these two reporting agencies, the German Government is fulfilling important provisions of the Istanbul Convention and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.
- Legal bases have been created, such as (1) the Gender Equality (**Management Positions**) Act (*Führungspositionen-Gesetz*), which includes binding gender quotas for the supervisory boards of listed and fully co-determined companies, (2) the **Transparency in Wage Structures Act** (*Entgelttransparenzgesetz*) and (3) the Second Gender Equality (Management Positions) Act **supplementing and amending the provisions for the equal participation of women in management positions in the private sector and public service** (*Zweites Führungspositionen-Gesetz*).
- The **equal participation** of women in shaping society and in political decision-making in the Bundestag, in the Länder parliaments and in local politics is being reinforced, for example, by means of mentoring programmes.
- The **gender pay gap** is being narrowed by means of the following measures:
 - **upgrading of social occupations**, in which women are predominantly employed, including the introduction of minimum wages in care occupations
 - **continuous refinement of the parental allowance** to foster balanced arrangements between partners, resulting in an earlier return to work for mothers which will further gender equality in the labour market
 - **mentoring programmes**, one example being the mentoring programme run by the Women in Culture and the Media project office of the German Cultural Council

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **United Nations Security Council:** One of the main priorities of Germany's term of membership in 2019 and 2020 was the Security Council's Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Thanks to German endeavours, references to women's participation and their protection from sexual violence have been inserted into the mandates of numerous UN peace missions. The range of the analyses conducted by the UN Security Council has been widened through the systematic hearing of knowledgeable contributors from civil society. Acting on a German initiative, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2467 on support for the victims of *sexual violence in conflicts* and more vigorous prosecution of perpetrators.
- Germany is working on the systematic implementation of the **initiative for strengthening women's economic empowerment** that was adopted in 2015 during Germany's **Presidency of the G7** as well as striving to promote gender equality. This applies especially to the target of increasing the number of women and girls in developing countries gaining vocational qualifications through G7 measures by one third by 2030. In the framework of Germany's international cooperation, some 863,000 women and girls were supported by vocational training measures in 2018.

- In the **Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi)**, Germany actively supports the funding of women entrepreneurs and the improvement of basic conditions for women's engagement in business activity. Germany is the largest donor to We-Fi, having contributed EUR 50 million to its multi-donor fund.
- Germany supports signatory states in implementing the **Istanbul Convention**, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.
- By means of a cross-sectoral strategy for *gender equality in German development policy* Germany has since 2014 been pursuing a strategy involving three tracks:
 - integration of a gender perspective into all development policy-related strategies and projects (gender mainstreaming)
 - targeted projects designed to eliminate discrimination against women and girls and to promote women's rights
 - systematic embedding of women's rights and equal rights in development policy dialogues with partner countries
- Gender equality is a priority of the 2021-2022 German Government Action Plan for Human Rights. Among the objectives of the action plan are political participation, voice and representation, equal pay, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and an end to female genital mutilation (FGM).

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- The objective of **equal participation** of women and men in **management positions** in the public service is to be achieved by 2025 on the basis of a second Gender Equality (Management Positions) Act, the bill for which was adopted by the Federal Cabinet in January 2021.
- There is a need to **empower** adolescents and young adults to make non-stereotypical career choices.
- **Application** of the provisions of the Transparency in Wage Structures Act must be **consistently enforced**.
- Long-term, specific and verifiable **sustainability targets** for family policy are to be formulated and must be **achieved** by 2030.
- A **legal right** to all-day care for primary school pupils must be **introduced** by 2026.
- There is a need for **worldwide elimination of legal obstacles and social prejudices** which restrict women's career choices and which, according to the World Bank, still exist in about 90 countries around the world.
- Development programmes for the promotion of vocational education and training in partner countries must be **systematically continued** with a view to achieving an **increase of one third in the number of vocationally qualified women and girls** in partner countries over the period from 2015 to 2030. To this end, the following measures are to be taken:
 - Under the **Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation** at least 30,000 women in eight African partner countries are to benefit from training and upskilling measures by 2025.
 - With the aid of specific initiatives, **digital skills are to be taught to girls** in particular, so as to enhance their educational and employment prospects in an increasingly digital world. The *#eSkills4Girls* scheme may be cited here by way of example.

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Phosphorous in flowing waters



Nitrate in groundwater

— Number of people gaining first-time or upgraded access to drinking water owing to German support

— Number of people gaining first-time or improved access to sanitation owing to German support

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

The quality and availability of water impact directly on **health and habitats**. Agricultural production, industrial growth and ecosystems all depend on water. The availability of water for all uses – particularly for drinking, for hygiene and for producing and processing food – can be the key to well-being and good health. As a source of energy, a transport medium and a raw material, water is also an important **economic factor**. Water resources throughout the world, however, are under pressure from **pollution and overuse** as well as from population growth, urbanisation and climate change.

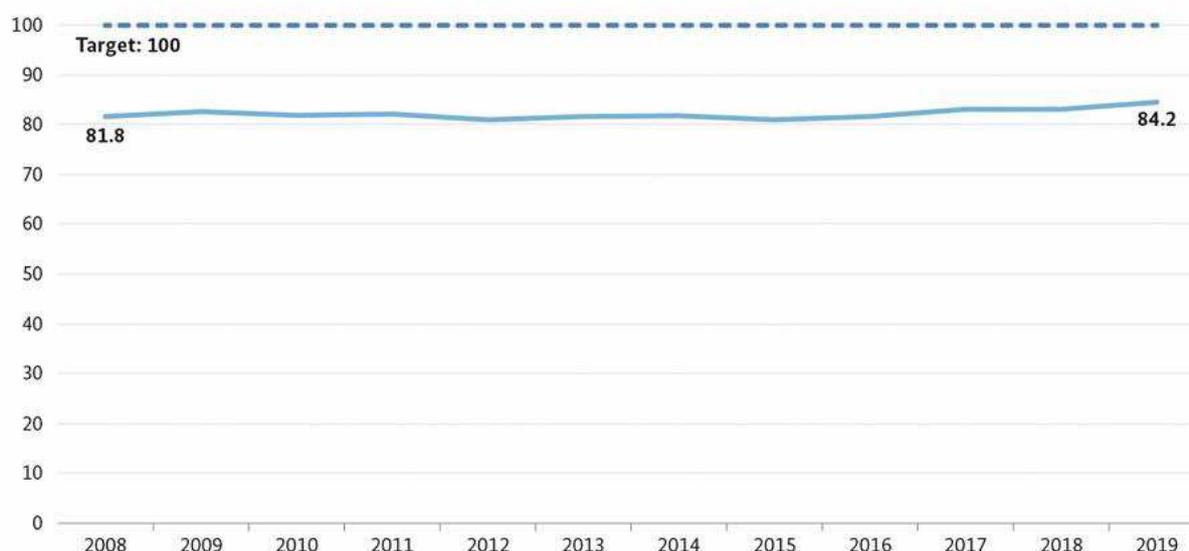
Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, four indicators are assigned to SDG 6 in two categories:

- Water quality: Phosphorus in flowing waters and nitrate in groundwater;
- Drinking water and sanitation: Number of people gaining new or upgraded access to drinking water through support from Germany and the number of people gaining new or improved access to sanitation through support from Germany.

Nitrate in groundwater

Proportion of monitoring points at which the threshold is observed, in %



Source: German Environment Agency, Länder Initiative for a Set of Core Indicators (LIKI)

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Basis: EUA monitoring network: threshold 50 milligrams of nitrate per litre per year on average.

Since 2008, the number of groundwater monitoring points where the nitrate ceiling of 50 mg/l is not exceeded has remained virtually unchanged. The goal of keeping below that ceiling at all monitoring points has not been achieved; nor is the indicator value discernibly moving in that direction. The groundwater is supposed to be below the maximum nitrate concentration of 50 mg/l at every monitoring point by 2030.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

Since the supply of clean water and sanitation is assured in Germany, the main focal point of national efforts to achieve SDG 6 is the **improvement of water quality** (target 6.3). The European Water Framework Directive has already laid down objectives for the quality of surface water and groundwater in the EU, and these have been transposed into national law in the Federal Water Act (*Wasserhaushaltsgesetz*) and various ordinances. The targets must be met by 2027 at the latest. Despite considerable progress in the protection of water resources, almost all of the 9,800 bodies of surface water and more than a third of the 1,200 bodies of groundwater in Germany have **not achieved good ecological status** or good ecological potential within the meaning of the Water Framework Directive. The main reasons for this are overbuilding, straightening and transverse structures interrupting the flow of watercourses. The **chemical status** of some 25% of the **bodies of groundwater** in Germany is **bad** because of high nitrate values (see also SDG 14).

In Germany:

- With the **revisions of fertiliser application legislation** in 2017 and 2020, the German Government has made a major contribution to preventive action to protect groundwater, surface water and coastal waters from the damaging effects of nutrient inputs.
- To protect water resources, the **legal provisions on fracking** that have been in force since 11 February 2017 provide for restrictions on the use of fracking technology in Germany.
- With a view to protecting water as a precious resource in the long term, as part of the **UN Water Action Decade** (2018-2028) the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature

Conservation and Nuclear Safety conducted a two-year **National Dialogue on Water** with stakeholders from October 2018 to October 2020 and has also been engaged in a **National Citizens' Water Dialogue**. On the basis of these dialogues, the Federal Environment Ministry is drawing up a proposal for a **national water strategy**, which is due to be presented in June 2021 and will then be discussed within the Federal Government and with the Länder.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- The German Government is the world's second-largest bilateral donor to development cooperation in the water sector. Water is a priority of bilateral development cooperation in more than 20 partner countries.
- Together with partner countries, the German Government is committed to the provision of the population with safe, affordable and constant access to drinking water and sanitation and follows a human rights-based approach in pursuit of that aim. From 2013 to 2017, Germany assisted partner countries with ODA funds totalling more than EUR 3.3 billion for this purpose.
- Germany is promoting the reinforcement of water governance in the United Nations with a view to faster achievement of the water-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Germany supports processes and initiatives launched by the United Nations, in regional frameworks and through strategic partnerships.
- The German Government is supporting the UN coordination committee for the reinforcement of global monitoring and the review of water-related targets.
- Germany hosts the headquarters of the **Global Water Operators' Partnership Alliance (GWOPA)** of UN Habitat in Bonn and has assisted supply companies during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Germany is participating in the development of a global indicator-based monitoring system for water quality and water resource management.
- Germany manages and is further developing a global database for water quality data as part of the UNEP programme **GEMS/Water**.
- The German Government is supporting the **Global Water Partnership** with a view to reinforcing worldwide implementation of the principle of integrated water resource management.
- Germany sponsors **resolutions within the UN** on the human rights to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.
- Germany has been developing and testing strategic technologies and viable blueprints for sustainable management of water resources.
- The German Government supports **cross-border water cooperation** in various parts of the world, not least as part of its preventive foreign and security policy.
- Germany is implementing the global **UNECE Water Convention** and its Protocol on Water and Health and supporting the accession of other states to the UNECE Water Convention and the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- The German Government is aiming for a revision of the **Waste Water Charges Act (Abwasserabgabengesetz)**.

- The provisions on **wastewater purification** are continuously adapted to the **latest state of the art**. At the EU level, uniform standards for the best available techniques are set in BAT conclusions, which must be transposed into national law and observed by industrial and commercial enterprises.
- Regulatory moves to **reduce the release of chemical substances into water bodies** where the release may have unknown or unexplained effects are a source of controversy. Accordingly, following two and a half years of dialogue with stakeholders on the planned Trace Substance Strategy, recommendations were formulated in 2019 and were then tested and evaluated in a one-year pilot phase. The new Federal Centre for Trace Substances will now press on with the work on the Trace Substance Strategy.
- The German Government is promoting the **integrative approach of SDG 6** with its nexus of water, energy and food security.
- Germany will host a high-level conference on 1 July 2021 in preparation for the 2023 UN Mid-term Review Conference on the Water Action Decade (2018-2028).

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Final energy productivity



Primary energy consumption



Share of renewable energy sources in gross final energy consumption



Share of electricity from renewable energy sources in gross energy consumption

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany - Indicator Report 2021

A secure, environmentally friendly and affordable energy supply is a fundamental prerequisite of successful social and economic development. The manner in which energy is made available and consumed has a crucial influence on the parameters of sustainable development and on attainment of the SDGs. The guiding principles of national climate and energy policy, as well as external energy policy and development policy, are therefore the decarbonisation of energy systems using renewable energy sources as a contribution to greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045, energy conservation, and the greatest possible energy efficiency.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

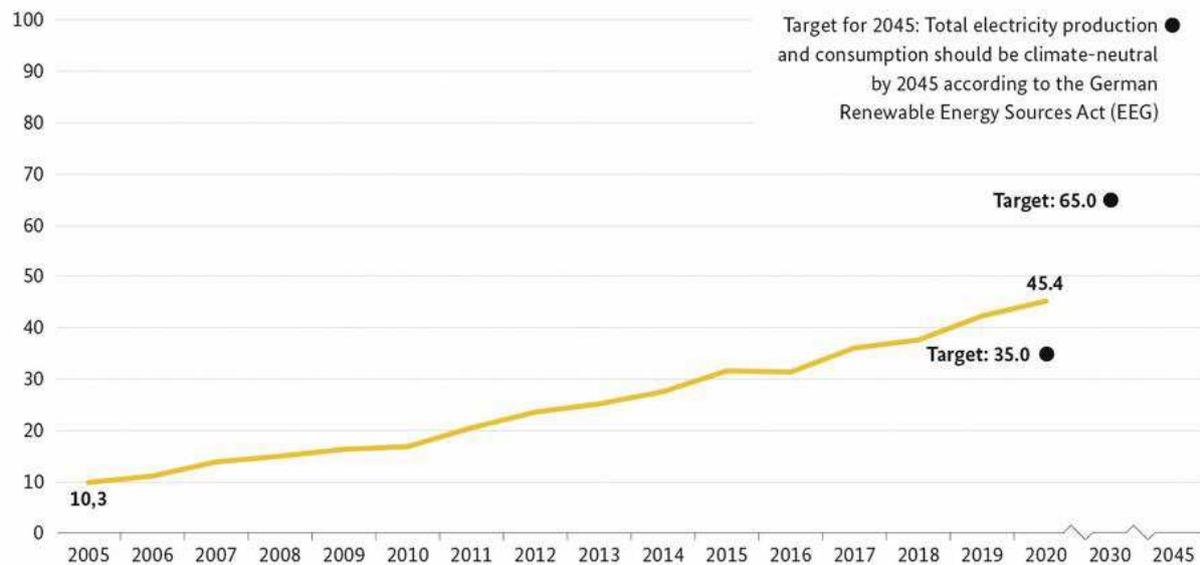
In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 7 is covered by four indicators in two categories:

- Conservation: Final energy productivity and primary energy consumption;

- **Renewable energy:** Share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption and share of electricity from renewable energy sources in gross electricity consumption.

Electricity generated from renewable energy sources

Share in gross electricity consumption, in %



Source: Working Group Renewable Energy Statistics, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy
Preliminary values for 2019 and 2020

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The German Government had set itself the aim of increasing the share of electricity from renewable energy sources in gross electricity consumption to at least 35% by 2020 and at least 65% by 2030. Greenhouse gases are to be cut by 88% by 2040, and greenhouse gas neutrality is to be reached by 2045. Since 2005, the share of renewable energy sources in electricity generation has risen, particularly because of the increased use of wind power, photovoltaics and biomass.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

The national pursuit of SDG 7 is assured by the energy transition, which sets the framework in Germany for sustainable energy policy with long-term goals. The energy transition is also a key element of German climate policy (cf. SDG 13 on the Climate Action Programme 2030 and the Climate Action Plan 2050). It is tightly embedded within the European context and is being implemented in cooperation with international partners. In recent decades, energy consumption has been reduced while economic output has grown, and the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption has increased considerably. As a result of the increasing supply of renewable energy and greater efficiency, net dependence on fossil energy imports has also decreased.

In Germany:

- Germany has set ambitious goals in the area of energy efficiency. In 2019, targets were set in the Energy Efficiency Strategy 2050 and the Climate Action Plan 2030 to cut Germany's **primary energy consumption** by 30% by 2030 and adopt numerous measures to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. For the buildings sector, the

Climate Action Programme emphasises increased support, carbon pricing and information provision, among other areas.

- It remains to be decided how the 2030 energy efficiency target should be amended in line with the updated targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
- The share of **energy from renewable sources** in gross final energy consumption is to rise to 60% by 2050. The intermediate targets are increases of 30% by 2030 and 45% by 2040. The share of electricity from renewable energy sources in gross electricity consumption is to grow to 65% by 2030. Power generation from **coal and lignite** is to be **completely phased out by 2038 at the latest**, while the development of energy generation from renewable sources continues to forge ahead.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Involvement at the EU level and in a large number of multilateral organisations, forums and initiatives to help shape the international **dialogue on forward-looking energy policy**, e.g. in the framework of the Council bodies of the European Union, in the G7 and G20, and in the wider context of climate negotiations, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the UN initiative Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the World Energy Council (WEC), the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), the Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM), the Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue (BETD), the International Renewable Energy Conferences (IRECs) and the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), as well as in regional collaborations like the Pentalateral Energy Forum or the North Seas Energy Cooperation
- Membership since 2019 of the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) to advance the **global phase-out of coal power** and a just transition; participation in the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC) seeking a **transition to climate neutrality in the buildings and construction sector**; involvement in the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP) of the World Bank; participation in the Energising Development partnership
- Internationally, the German Government intends to foster understanding of the energy transition and help create the conditions in which it can take place so that sustainable energy supply can become a global reality. Formalised energy partnerships with strategically important partner countries are the key element of bilateral energy cooperation. These partnerships involve high-level intergovernmental energy dialogues that address specific challenges, promote international experience sharing on matters relating to the energy transition and offer German companies a platform to cooperate with companies and institutions in partner countries in a way that gains acceptance for the pursuit of sustainability. One of the current activities in the framework of research and innovation support is the development of universally deployable energy storage systems for domestic use, particularly in hitherto underserved parts of the world. The potential for the establishment of a green hydrogen economy, including the expansion of renewable energies and export logistics, is being explored and developed in cooperation with various countries in West and Southern Africa and elsewhere around the world. The German Government is supporting the **establishment of sustainable energy systems and the expansion of infrastructure for energy access in 70 partner countries** through technical and financial cooperation.
- In least developed countries (LDCs), sustainable energy strategies based on renewable energy sources are being developed, for example, within the framework of the Bilateral Trust Fund (BTF). Multilateral initiatives like the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI)

and the multi-donor platform GET.invest are working to combat **energy poverty in LDCs** in Africa.

- Mobilisation of **private capital** through various tailored funding instruments, including the Facility for Energy Inclusion, the GET FiT Programme, the Geothermal Risk Mitigation Facilities, GET.invest and the Regional Liquidity Support Facility; efforts at the national and international levels to **reduce subsidies for fossil fuels**

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- As of 2021, the German Climate Action Programme includes a national emissions trading scheme to provide blanket **pricing of CO₂ emissions** from heating and transport. In addition, the **abandonment of coal-fired power generation** by 2038 at the latest will make a major contribution to the reduction of CO₂ emissions in the energy sector. With the 2017 **reform of the Renewable Energy Sources Act** (*Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz*), support for renewables was switched in principle to an auction system.
- The German Seventh Energy Research Programme, entitled Innovations for the Energy Transition, pursues a holistic approach to support policy in order to address current and emerging challenges. There is a new focus on technology and innovation transfer through the living labs of the energy transition, a new pillar of support for the process of readying innovative solutions for the market. Besides the key research areas of energy efficiency and renewables, the programme places an emphasis on cross-sectoral and cross-system issues relating to the energy transition, such as digitalisation, sector coupling and community-focused energy transition research. The German Government makes around EUR 1.3 billion available annually within the framework of the Seventh Energy Research Programme.
- Germany has set itself ambitious energy-efficiency goals, for example in the Energy Concept, its blueprint for energy policy, and in the Energy Efficiency Strategy 2050, and has already achieved a great deal. Nevertheless, great scope for savings and requirements for further action still remain.
- Further efforts are essential in the field of renewable energy in the **transport sector**. In 2018, the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption in Germany in that sector was 5.6%.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Total raw material productivity |
|  | General government deficit |
|  | Structural deficit |
|  | Government debt |
|  | Gross fixed capital formation in relation to GDP |
|  | Gross domestic product per capita |
|  | Employment rate, total (20 to 64-year-olds) |
|  | Employment rate (Older people) (60 to 64-year-olds) |
|  | Number of members of the Textile Partnership |

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany - Indicator Report 2021

The 2030 Agenda describes the transition to a **more sustainable economy** in which every country enjoys **sustainable, sustained and inclusive economic development** and there is **decent work for all**. The central issue is how to reconcile and generate **economic strength, protection of the environment, the climate and natural resources, and social responsibility** at the national and international levels. Establishing the **right to work** and the **core labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** is intended to safeguard and create decent work. The 2030 Agenda expressly acknowledges the importance, responsibility and **diversity** of the **private sector** – ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals – in relation to sustainable development. In central Europe and especially in Germany, **SMEs** in particular – or, more accurately, the *Mittelstand* – play a significant role.

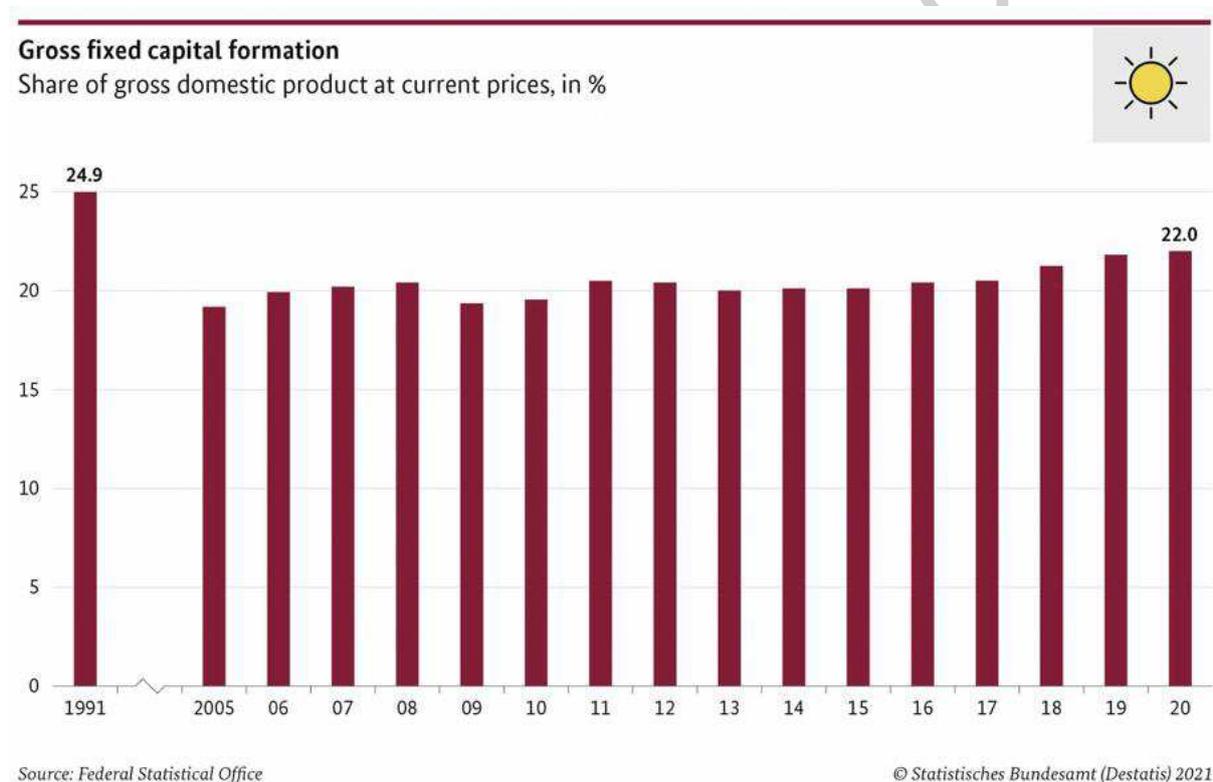
Progress on SDG 8 is also pivotal to the pursuit of other SDGs – or they are mutually contingent – especially SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 8 is covered by nine indicators in six categories:

- Resource conservation: Total raw material productivity
- Government debt: Government deficit, structural deficit and debt
- Provision for future economic stability: Ratio of gross fixed capital formation to gross domestic product
- Economic performance: Gross domestic product per capita
- Employment: Employment rate
- Global supply chains: Number of members of the Textile Partnership.

The indicator on gross fixed capital formation⁸, which is explained in more detail below, is intended as an example demonstrating the readiness to invest which is of such great importance to sustainable public and private investment.



The indicator shows the **ratio** of gross fixed capital formation to nominal **gross domestic product**. This is also referred to as the **investment ratio**.

The German Government's goal is to keep the ratio developing appropriately until 2030. In the short to medium-term view, the indicator has been **moving in the right direction**, with a slight rise from 20% in 2015 to 21.7% in 2019.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Economic growth is important for many reasons. The German Government, however, does not focus on quantitative growth but on qualitative growth that pays equal heed to planetary

⁸ Gross fixed capital formation comprises resident producers' net acquisitions. Fixed assets are non-financial produced assets that are to be used repeatedly and continuously for more than a year in the production process. These include structures, equipment and other systems (intellectual property, investments in research and development, software and databases, copyrights, livestock and crops, etc.).

boundaries and social needs. The social objective is to combine entrepreneurial freedom and effective competition with social rebalancing and social security. That is the ideal of the social market economy. With the principles of social market economics, such as fair competition, corporate responsibility, partnership between management and labour, codetermination and fair distribution of the fruits of economic activity, the foundations are laid for our continuing growth, prosperity and employment. The environmental objective is to decouple the link between economic growth on the one hand and resource consumption and harmful emissions on the other and so achieve a resource-saving and climate-neutral economy. To make this happen, the German Government sees the need for an alliance of society, business and government for climate neutrality and prosperity and regards the **European Green Deal** as a unique opportunity to advance **climate action** and **sustainability** with and within the economy. Accordingly, the goal of economic policy is to strengthen the forces for growth while remaining focused on the social and environmental objectives.

By means of **sound fiscal policies** Germany steadily reduced the government debt ratio in the years preceding the pandemic. At the same time, by putting **federal investments** on a permanent footing and creating incentives for private-sector investment, the German Government has been reinforcing Germany's macroeconomic foundations, thereby ensuring that future generations will inherit a functioning society. Economic and fiscal policy is used to establish **investment-friendly incentives and legislative conditions** with a view to encouraging business in its pursuit of sustainability, fostering innovation and start-ups, and paving the way for new business models. Cementing the realignment of the real economy in favour of sustainability will require a **greater focus on sustainability in the financial sector**. A decisive step in that direction was the German Government's adoption of its Sustainable Finance Strategy. Alongside its aim of mobilising urgently needed investment for climate action and sustainability, the strategy addresses the increasing climate risks facing the financial system in order to enhance the stability of the financial markets.

Germany is working to embed **corporate responsibility** and **sustainability in global value and supply chains** more firmly at the global level. As part of a smart mix of binding and voluntary measures as recommended by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, one focus of Germany's international cooperation is on supporting relevant **multi-stakeholder partnerships**, initiatives, and sustainability standards and labels.

In Germany:

In the context of SDG 8 and its cross-linkages to other SDGs, the German Government is active in several areas: **sustainable economic activity, the digital transformation, the public budget, financial markets, social responsibility** (decent work), ensuring and expanding the **supply of skilled labour**, and **corporate responsibility – sustainable supply chains**. The following are examples of key activities which the German Government has undertaken since 2016 to transition to a sustainable economy:

- The **Industrie 4.0 platform** has been established, uniting some 350 interest groups from business, associations, academic and research institutions, trade unions and politics and taking sovereignty, interoperability and sustainability as key guiding principles and areas for action for the digital ecosystems of the future.
- A programme on the **future of value creation** focuses on researching, developing and applying technologies and innovations for high-quality manufacturing, services and work. It is laying the groundwork for sustainable and future-proof value creation in Germany and Europe.
- **Establishing the *Mittelstand 4.0* programme**: The SMEs Digital network and 26 *Mittelstand 4.0* Centres of Excellence inform and advise small and medium-sized

enterprises about the opportunities and challenges of the digital transition and provide them with support through, for example, demonstration centres and implementation projects. The eStandards *Mittelstand 4.0* Centre of Excellence analyses such matters as potential changes to the environment, to social conditions and to the longer-term economic stability of a business that may result from digitised processes along the whole value chain.

- **Transforming the economy with the objective of climate neutrality and a switch to renewable energy:** The **Climate Action Programme 2030 was adopted** (see SDG 13), **renewable energy** and **energy efficiency** measures have been continuously expanded (see SDG 7), and **raw material productivity** has been enhanced (see SDGs 7 and 15).
- **Strengthening in-house training provision:** The Skills Development Opportunities Act entered into force in 2019 followed by the Work of Tomorrow Act (*Arbeit-von-morgen-Gesetz*) in 2020, with increased support for training for employees whose professional occupations are subject to technological and structural change as well as improvements in retraining and qualifications counselling.
- **Sustainable finance:** The German Government has set up an advisory council and established strategic dialogues with financial market operators and other interest groups to identify and better embed sustainability considerations in the financial sector. The intention is, through the creation of favourable conditions and cooperation with voluntary initiatives emanating from the financial sector, to align flows of private and public capital with the Sustainable Development Goals. The German Government adopted a Sustainable Finance Strategy to that end in 2021. **Federal green bonds** have been issued since 2020, and a sustainability blueprint for semi-public financial assets has been adopted.
- **Continuously expanding the range of funding mechanisms**, including **venture capital:** The focus here is chiefly on SMEs, self-employed professionals, prospective entrepreneurs and innovative start-up businesses, specifically to encourage the development of new products, processes and services.
- Implementing the **National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights (NAP):** Adopted in 2016, the NAP creates the necessary framework for Germany to put the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into practice at home and abroad. It articulates the position that all businesses are expected to introduce a process of corporate due diligence regarding respect for human rights all along their supply and value chains. It also describes the parameters of the state's protective duty and outlines the assistance that the German Government offers for implementing due diligence on human rights. It is with that aim in mind that the German Bundestag adopted the bill for the national Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains Act in June 2021. The German Government is pressing for corresponding EU legislation. Numerous measures provide support to help companies make their supply chains more sustainable overall. Within this context, the German Government conducts **sectoral dialogues**. It has also introduced a central **information platform** on corporate social responsibility (CSR), a National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises in the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, and a NAP Help Desk in the Agency for Business and Economic Development.
- **Combating human trafficking tied to labour exploitation:** Founded in 2015, the federal-Länder working group on human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation developed a joint strategy in 2017 to ensure sustained implementation of the international agreements and conventions. It reviewed the strategy in 2021 to ensure it remained up to date. Also created in 2017 and assured of funding until at least 2022, the national Service Centre against Labour Exploitation, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking run by the civic-education provider *Arbeit und Leben DGB/VHS Berlin-Brandenburg* pools and coordinates activities across the country.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Germany is the second-largest donor of bilateral Aid for Trade (AFT). Within the framework of an AFT strategy systematically aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals, it provides around EUR 4.4 billion a year (2019 figures) to enhance trading capacity in partner countries in the Global South and advance their integration into regional and global trade systems.
- **G20 Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion:** With Germany's support, the GPMI actively contributes to opening up improved access to adequate financial services, especially for poorer sections of society and for micro-enterprises and small businesses.
- **UN Global Compact:** Germany supports the world's largest corporate responsibility initiative and its German chapter. The Global Compact Network Germany has more than 700 signatories and as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda it chiefly works on areas like business and human rights, the climate and the environment, anti-corruption, and sustainability reporting.
- The German Government supports various multi-stakeholder partnerships linking the spheres of politics, business and civil society to promote sustainability in global supply chains, including the Forum for Sustainable Palm Oil, the German Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa and the Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chain Initiative. With its currently 138 members representing businesses, NGOs, trade unions and standards organisations, the **Partnership for Sustainable Textiles** is a multi-stakeholder partnership founded in 2014 that helps improve conditions in textiles manufacturing worldwide as well as the social, environmental and economic standards in producer countries.
- **Alliance 8.7:** By assuming greater responsibility within Alliance 8.7, the German Government is redoubling its efforts to achieve the SDGs in order to end child labour by 2025 and eradicate forced labour and human trafficking by 2030.
- Through the government-run **Green Button sustainable scheme** ("Grüner Knopf") launched in 2019, high environmental and social standards are assured and promoted throughout the global value and supply chains of textile products. Currently (as of May 2021), some 65 businesses have successfully passed the audit required for certification, and another 120 are in the process of being audited. There were already around 90 million textile products certified under the Green Button scheme sold in 2020. The Green Button label has also been protected under trademark law throughout Europe.
- Within the framework of the Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation, the German Government is contributing, in cooperation with the private sector, to the creation of 100,000 **decent jobs** and the improvement of working conditions in eight partner countries.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **New technologies** need to be **comprehensively brought to market** and support for their development has to be made more permanent on the basis of the relevant strategies that have already been drawn up, especially in the fields of the bioeconomy, lightweighting and green hydrogen.
- **Implementation of the High-Tech Strategy 2025:** The mission of creating sustainable circular economies involves shaping the transition from the traditional linear economy to a resource-efficient, greener circular economy.

- Once the bill for **Germany's Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains Act** has been passed, the German Government will support businesses in implementing the new law and press for corresponding EU legislation.
- Consolidation of **sustainability-oriented platforms for associations**: One such platform that is well worth a mention is *Unternehmen Biologische Vielfalt 2020* ("Enterprise Biological Diversity 2020").

On several requirements for the accelerated pursuit of targets, there is now greater urgency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- to continue expanding **multi-stakeholder partnerships** (see also SDGs 1, 2, 12 and 17) to boost joint efforts in favour of sustainability and corporate responsibility;
- to combine the **economic recovery in partner countries** with support for the development and expansion of fair trade relations and sustainable supply chains, as the maintenance of sustainability standards and due diligence helps businesses meet quality and sustainability specifications worldwide, reduces risk in supply chains, and improves local working and living conditions in the partner countries;
- to propagate the **model of partnership between management and trade unions** in more partner countries in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), with a view to paving the way to decent working conditions around the world and creating jobs.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation



Private and public expenditure on research and development



Roll-out of broadband – share of households with access to gigabit broadband services

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

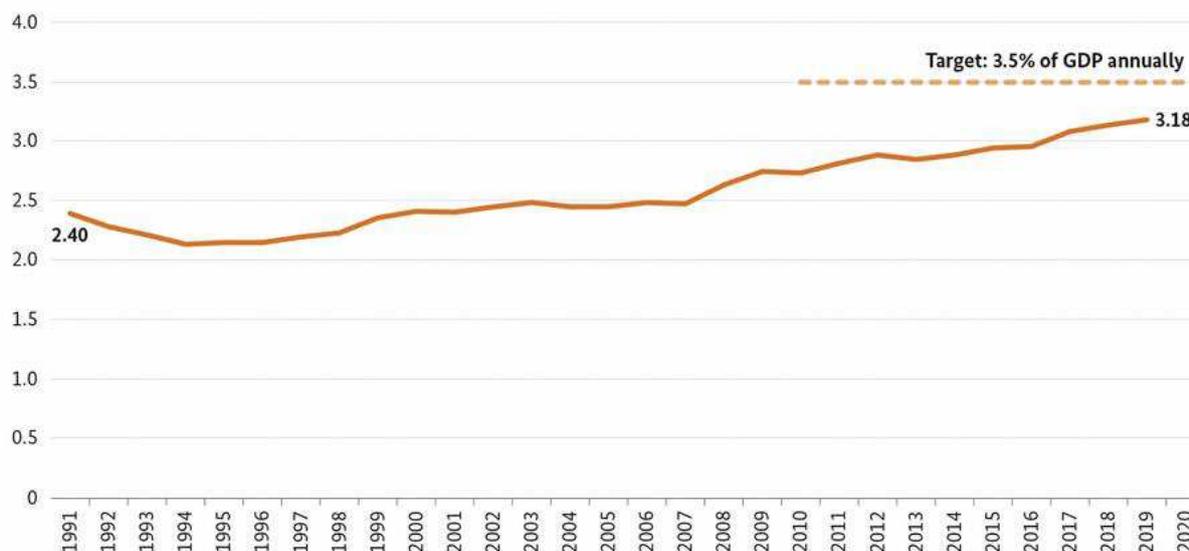
The sustainability of the three closely interlinked elements of SDG 9 – **infrastructure, industrialisation and innovation** – serves as an important foundation for, for example, SDGs 2, 8, 11 and 12. In the pursuit of resilient infrastructure both nationally and internationally, the requirements of **health, noise and air-quality control, climate change and adaptation, and protection of natural resources** have to be taken into consideration when infrastructure is still in the planning stages. So does the need to ensure locally accessible services of general interest and other provision as well as **equal rights** to participate in society and economic life. In addition, it is important to support **innovation**, improve scientific research and technological capabilities, and steadily increase the relevant public and private spending.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 9 is covered by two indicators: private and public spending on research and development, in percent of GDP annually, and expansion of broadband availability.

Private and public spending on research and development

Expenditure in % of gross domestic product



Source: Federal Statistical Office

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Preliminary values for 2019

The German Government has set itself the target, together with the Länder governments and the private sector, of spending at least 3.5% of gross domestic product on research and development (R&D) by 2025. R&D expenditure has been rising continuously since 2007. The latest figures have it at 3.18% in 2019.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

The way **sustainable infrastructure** is designed plays a key role in the processes of transformation required in such sectors as transport and energy. Germany needs mobile communications infrastructure that sustainably supports the digital transition in the economic and social spheres and makes Germany more attractive to business. To strengthen the competitiveness of industrial enterprises in Germany, the German Government's industrial policy is stimulating, sustainable and guided by the long view. Industrial production needs to be made cleaner and more resource efficient. This is happening in the context of structural change caused by automation and digitalisation, climate change and other countries' protectionist economic and trade policy. Germany has a tremendous amount of innovation to undertake. A productive and independent **academic system**, a culture of **openness to innovation**, and the effective sharing of **knowledge and ideas** in the economic and social arenas are therefore key objectives for the German Government.

In Germany:

- The **Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan (FTIP) 2030** comprises the projects for investment in Germany's federal road, rail and waterway network up to 2030. It is guided by the principle that maintenance has priority over upgrading and new construction. FTIP 2030 is the first Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan to have been drafted and developed in **collaboration with the public**. Beyond FTIP 2030, there is also funding for infrastructure for **public transport and cycling** as well as multimodal transport.
- In the interests of establishing full gigabit-capable **broadband coverage throughout Germany by 2025**, the existing support scheme for broadband, which applies to "white

areas” (i.e. areas with data speeds below 30 Mbps), was amended to pursue the objective of gigabit speeds. On the basis of a new funding programme, regions with speeds below 100 Mbps will be eligible for support. 2018 saw the establishment of the **special fund for digital infrastructure**.

- Implementing the **Mobile Communications Strategy** agreed in 2019 is intended to swiftly ensure nationwide provision of mobile telephony and data services (**LTE/4G**), which the additional **roll-out of 5G** can build on – in rural as well as populous areas.
- The German Government’s High-Tech Strategy takes the objective of strengthening Germany’s standing in global competition, pooling resources more effectively and creating fresh stimulus for innovation in business and society.
- The **Research for Sustainable Development – FONA³** framework programme is building the foundations for forward-looking decision-making and supplying innovative solutions for a sustainable society.
- One focus of the German Government’s new research and innovation framework programme for 2021–2024, entitled **Microelectronics. Trustworthy and Sustainable. For Germany and Europe**, is on research and development for sustainable, climate-friendly and energy-efficient electronics in important applications.
- The initiative **Green ICT – Grüne IKT** is reinforcing support for the development of technological solutions to reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions in information and data processing, storage and transmission. It is part of the German Government’s Climate Action Programme 2030.
- Research policy is focused on making digital technologies sustainable and using them to achieve the SDGs. The **Digital Policy Agenda for the Environment** embeds protection of the environment, climate and natural world in policy on digital affairs.
- The National Bioeconomy Strategy fosters the transition to a sustainable, more resource-efficient and bio-based economy founded on natural material cycles.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Germany supports **sustainable infrastructure investment** as a shareholder of multilateral development banks, in international forums such as the G7 and G20, and with its own financing.
- Germany has been actively involved in the Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action (ICLA) track in the UNFCCC and has launched two initiatives: Action towards Climate-friendly Transport (ACT) and Leadership for Urban Climate Investment (LUCI). Between 2016 and 2021, around EUR 2.8 billion were made available for sustainable urban transport through the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI).
- In partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Germany supports sustainable industrialisation in partner countries. This means, among other things, developing industrial-policy expertise in various countries of Southern Africa and supporting sustainable industrial parks in such countries as Ethiopia and Egypt.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, city administrations are receiving support and training for the move to **digital tools and formats** within the framework of the C40 Cities Finance Facility (CFF).
- In developing countries, the German Government is funding **education and training measures**, some specifically for women and girls, the development of innovative digital ecosystems, and support for an African data economy or pan-African e-commerce initiative.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- The German Government promotes the study, development and application of key technologies such as **artificial intelligence, microelectronics, and communications, quantum and battery technology**, as well as the creation and roll-out of infrastructure and training for the required specialists. In so doing, it helps strengthen the technological sovereignty of Germany and Europe. That sovereignty is an important prerequisite for achieving the SDGs. More than EUR 6 billion will go to the above-named areas as part of the economic stimulus package.
- With the **innovation pact for climate action**, the German Government is seeking, in collaboration with the industrial and academic sectors, to put into practice further ideas for reducing greenhouse gases in industry. It will also establish a national action plan for **eco-innovation** to buttress the EU's Eco-Innovation Action Plan at the domestic level.
- Germany supports the development and propagation of different ideas for creating and rolling out **sustainable infrastructure in developing and newly industrialised countries** through, for example, the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA), the C40 Cities Finance Facility (CFF) and the Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA).

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries



Foreign school graduates



Gini coefficient of income after social transfers

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

Within the 2030 Agenda, SDG 10 addresses **inequality both within and among countries**. The equal inclusion of all people is an obligation imposed by human rights as well as by social responsibility. SDG 10 is taken to mean **equal opportunities** and **freedom from discrimination**, aiming to enable everybody to participate properly in our economic progress and social achievements. Equivalent living conditions relate primarily to comparable prospects of development and opportunities for participation in the different parts of Germany, and they are one of the German Government's key objectives.

Worldwide, the top 1% of the population have done more than twice as well from economic development since 1980 than the poorest 50%. To make matters worse, many direct and indirect ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic are affecting disadvantaged groups particularly badly. This is exacerbating existing inequalities within and between countries.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 10 is covered by two indicators in two categories:

- Equal educational opportunities: Foreign school graduates
- Distributive justice: Gini coefficient after social transfers

The latter indicator describes a statistical measure of distributive inequality, mapping the distribution of equivalised disposable income and assets per capita.

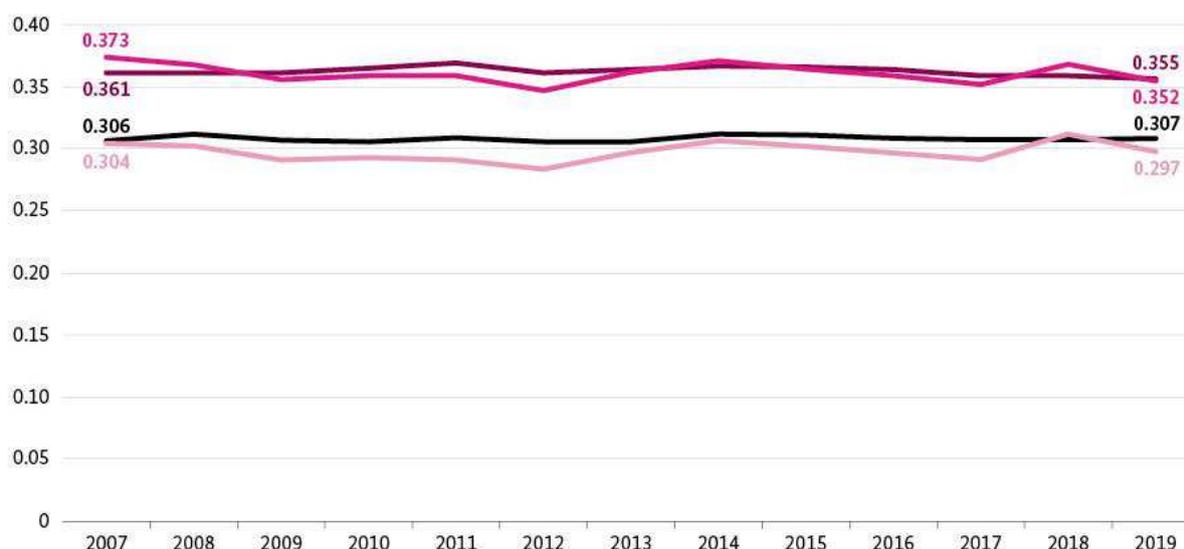
Inequality in income and wealth distribution is a generally accepted feature of a dynamic market economy. However, the income and wealth gap must remain moderate, and social inclusion must be guaranteed for all. Otherwise, it has the potential to offend people's sense of justice and jeopardise social cohesion.

In Germany, **income inequality** rose from 1999 to 2005 but has remained **largely stable** since then. After tax and social transfer payments, income inequality in Germany is close to the EU average. In contrast, **wealth is far less equally spread than income** in Germany. There has also been hardly any change over time, with wealth inequality remaining stubbornly at a **relatively high level**.

Equivalised disposable income Gini coefficient



- Gini coefficient of equivalised income before social transfers, Germany
- Gini coefficient of equivalised income before social transfers, EU-28
- Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income, Germany
- Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income, EU-28



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Eurostat, German Bundesbank, European Central Bank, German Institute for Economic Research

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Social transfers do not include pensions; gini coefficient was calculated for EU-27 (until 2009), and for EU-28 (from 2010 onwards)

The German Government produces a **report on poverty and wealth** once every legislative term.⁹ Alongside a **comprehensive analysis of inequality** in Germany, the report contains its own set of indicators.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

In Germany, income inequality is mitigated by taxes and transfer payments. At 0.297, the Gini coefficient for equivalised disposable income is clearly below that for equivalised income before social benefits (0.352). **High levels of employment, low unemployment, strong representation for both labour and management, and a functioning system of employee involvement at management level serve to further combat inequality.** As new challenges

⁹ See www.armuts-und-reichtumsbericht.de (German only)

present themselves, however, questions arise about the future of work (e.g. the digital transition) and the welfare state. Germany has to safeguard future cohesion and heal existing and emerging divisions.

Inequality also has a regional dimension. That is why the German Government is signposting the dismantling of existing regional disparities by implementing the structural measures agreed in the course of the Commission on Equivalent Living Conditions. For the newly established pan-German funding system for structurally weak regions, funding programmes previously limited to eastern Germany have been extended to all disadvantaged areas. Programmes available nationwide offer particularly favourable funding conditions. The subject matter of these programmes includes economic stimulus, research and innovation, decentralisation of public institutions, the skills base, broadband and digitalisation as well as infrastructure and public services.

Support for structures fostering civic engagement by the general public and civil society is intended to strengthen social cohesion and democratic awareness as well as to help improve quality of life at the local level.

Germany sees the **reduction of inequality worldwide** as a vital precondition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It therefore contributes to reducing inequality both nationally and around the world.

In Germany:

- Adopted in 2017, the **Transparency in Wage Structures Act** improves the legal framework for comprehensively making pay equality between the genders a reality.
- The **general statutory minimum wage** introduced in 2015 is evolving further, rising to EUR 9.50 on 1 January 2021 and thereafter increasing incrementally to EUR 10.45 by 1 July 2022.
- The **Federal Participation Act** (*Bundesteilhabegesetz*) adopted in 2016 contributes to equality in living standards for people with disabilities.
- The 12 priority measures agreed by the Federal Cabinet in July 2019 set the course for the convergence of living conditions in the 2020s.¹⁰
- As part of the suite of programmes for **innovation and structural transformation**, strategic alliances are formed connecting businesses, academics and other stakeholders in disadvantaged regions. They receive support to make use of and develop the potential that exists for innovation in pursuit of sustainable structural transformation.
- The German Government is committed to fostering inclusive societies and **protecting the rights of people with disabilities**. The aim is for accessibility and inclusion to allow people with disabilities to determine their own lives, participate in society and develop their own potential. To pursue this beyond the national level, Germany has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and thereby committed itself to campaigning for its worldwide implementation.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Germany played an active role in the **drafting of the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration** (GCM) and in the 2020 regional review process. Germany is the largest contributor to the GCM **implementation fund**, providing EUR 7.25 million, and serves on its Steering Committee. The fund finances projects in partner countries.

¹⁰ Interim assessment by the German Government of its policy for the convergence of living standards in the 2018-2021 legislative term

- **To promote safe, orderly and regular migration, approaches focused on development and partnership**, including consultation for selected partner countries' migration policy, are being **trialed, established and refined**. The German Government also helps give people better prospects of remaining in their home countries, not least by providing counselling in **Centres for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration in 12 countries**.
- The **Skilled Immigration Act** (*Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz*), which entered into force in March 2020, plays a pivotal role in fostering safe, orderly and regular migration in that it has expanded the ways in which people, especially the vocationally qualified, can immigrate. Germany moreover supports partner countries in making use of the possibilities the Act offers with regard, for example, to vocational training, time in Germany for trainees and qualified professionals, and capacity building for partner institutions.
- **Addis Tax Initiative**: Germany is actively assisting the implementation of this multilateral initiative with the aim of doubling partner countries' domestic revenue compared to 2015.
- **Combating illicit financial flows**: As part of its development cooperation, Germany supports partner countries primarily in Africa, the Western Balkans and Latin America with, chiefly, prevention, financial investigation and asset recovery. It remains an important priority of Germany's Presidency of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to strengthen and support FATF-style Regional Bodies (FSRBs).
- **Promoting sustainable, socially responsible and inequality-reducing tax systems**: Germany supports 30 partner countries in making their systems of taxation fair and their management of state revenue and expenditure sustainable.
- The **strategy for the inclusion of people with disabilities in German development cooperation** was adopted in 2019. This contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda principle of leaving no one behind.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **Reducing existing inequalities and avoiding new inequalities** caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany and around the world
- Safeguarding the **maintenance of social services** in Germany and across the globe in order to prevent social hardship and crisis situations
- **Creating and safeguarding jobs** in the *digital transition*: This includes developing specific recommendations for political action to implement the findings of the New Work – New Security dialogue with the objective of figuring out how to ensure future-proof, appropriately remunerated work in safe, regular jobs, better guard against risks to earnings, and qualify people for work in the digital age.
- **Reforming the global financial markets**:¹¹ This includes not only, for example, the implementation of regulatory and fiscal reforms, but also incentives to guide private financial investment towards greater sustainability. It is also crucial to accommodate the right of countries in the Global South to help shape policy with a view to ensuring sustainable governance of the financial markets.
- **Orienting the support strategies of multilateral and regional financial institutions towards reducing inequalities**: **Development banks** like the World Bank Group should more systematically direct their substantial investments towards a socially just economic transition. They should also intensify their path-finding analysis activities in that area and

¹¹ See the various high-level UN financing for development (FFD) formats, some of them involving the participation of heads of state and government.

share relevant expertise and experience with other public and private financial market operators.

- Ensuring **equal access to land (land rights)**: There is a growing need to support partner countries in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests formulated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) so that all sections of a population, particularly marginalised and indigenous groups, can have equal access and have their rights to that effect protected.
- Systematically **promoting universal access to basic services**: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increasing need in partner countries to ensure fair access to basic services, chiefly in the areas of healthcare, education, food, water, sanitation, social security and digital technology.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Expansion in settlement area and transport infrastructure in ha per day



Loss of open spaces



Density of settlements



Final energy consumption in goods transport



Final energy consumption in passenger transport



Accessibility of medium-sized and large cities by public transport



Housing cost overload



Number of objects in the German Digital Library (DDB)

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

SDG 11 underlines the value of sustainable urban development policy focused on the long term and highlights the significance of increasing urbanisation. Currently, the keys tasks for integrated urban development chiefly include encouraging social participation, modifying buildings, neighbourhoods and urban infrastructure for resource efficiency, environmental sustainability and accessibility, and preserving the attractiveness of cities.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

The German Sustainable Development Strategy altogether assigns eight indicators to SDG 11 in three categories:

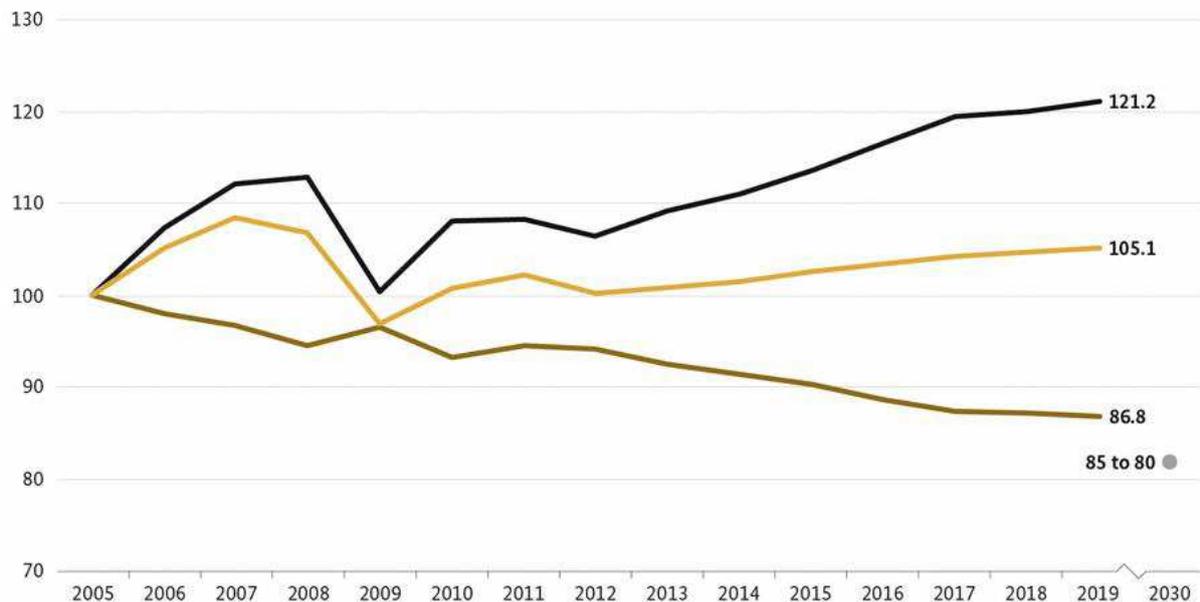
- Land consumption: Expansion of settlement and transport area, loss of open space and density of settlements;
- Transport: Final energy consumption in goods and passenger transport respectively and accessibility of large and medium-sized cities;
- Affordable housing: Housing cost overload and cultural heritage (objects in the German Digital Library).

Final energy consumption in freight transport

2005 = 100

● Energy consumption for the carriage of goods
● Energy consumption per tonne-kilometre

● Goods transport volume
● Target for 2030



Source: Institute for Energy and Environment Research, Federal Statistical Office

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Preliminary values for 2019

The German Government has committed itself to reducing energy consumption in passenger transport to 80-85% of the 2005 level by 2030. Although the efficiency of energy consumption is rising, i.e. less energy is used per passenger kilometre, this is offset by the growth in passenger transport, so efforts in this area need to be stepped up further. A similar picture emerges for energy consumption in goods transport.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

The aim of SDG 11 is to practise urban development in cities and communities that is focused on the common good, partnership and resilience and creates sustainable, effective structures. All sections of the population do not only have the opportunity to participate, but urban development is to be turned into something that concerns everyone, with projects and programmes developed in collaboration with the public. It is with this in mind that the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities drawn up in 2007 has been revised to focus particularly on the **public interest aspect of urban development**. On 30 November 2020, the European government ministers responsible for urban development adopted the New Leipzig

Charter subtitled “The transformative power of cities for the common good”. It serves as a basis for modern urban development in Europe and formulates its remit in terms of the three dimensions of any city: the *green city*, the *just city* and the *productive city*.

In Germany:

- The existing successful cooperation of the Federal Government, Länder, communities and national associations of local authorities is being continued within the framework of the **National Urban Development Policy** launched in 2007. The aim is to establish integrated urban development that addresses economic, environmental and social challenges in cities and communities and takes account of international experience.
- The German Government supports the Länder and local authorities in their role as sustainability stakeholders through the **Municipalities for Global Sustainability** programme. The programme, for example, promotes the creation of local sustainable development strategies, strengthens cross-sectoral cooperation and improves the management of sustainable municipal development. It raises awareness of the global responsibility of local players, thereby encouraging local authorities’ engagement with matters of development policy. In signing a specimen resolution of the Association of German Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, around 200 local authorities across the country have committed themselves to implementing the 2030 Agenda. They form a network known as the Club of 2030 Agenda Municipalities.
- Since 2019, model projects and implementation of the Smart City Charter have been supported within the framework of the national **Smart Cities** Dialogue Platform. The **City of the Future Innovation Platform** feeds the findings on sustainable urban development into the international context.
- The City of the Future funding measures run as part of the Research for Sustainable Development (FONA) Strategy are used, for example, to support the transition to sustainability in urban areas (urban production, resilience, climate action, quality of life, open and green spaces, etc.) and advance sustainable urban mobility.
- The **Stadt.Land.Digital** initiative (“Urban.Rural.Digital”) aims to improve people’s quality of life, particularly in the fields of education, energy, healthcare, transport and administration, by fostering networks using digital technologies.
- The Federal Government supports the Länder and local authorities in meeting binding quality specifications for sustainable building. The role of timber as a building material is also being strengthened. The aim is to achieve **climate-neutral building stock**. The Future Building innovation programme provides important stimulus for the sustainable development of building stock.
- The Urban Environmental Protection research priority focuses on the interplay between urban development and protection of the environment.
- With its urban development assistance, the German Government has supported **cities and communities in their sustainable urban development**, including action to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change. As in previous years, it made EUR 790 million available for 2020. Integrated rural development is intended to foster **attractive villages** with accessible basic services, vibrant centres and the reactivation of vacant buildings. Strong cultural and creative industries will also help to revitalise cities and communities.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Germany sets great store by reaching a common understanding with its partners on sustainable, integrated urban development. The focus is on reciprocal learning, knowledge-sharing and the adaptation of existing problem-solving ideas. The German Government supports these activities by means of, for example, **networks to foster**

learning between German and international local authorities and local authority partnerships for sustainability and climate action.

- Germany also supports climate-friendly and resilient urban development in developing and newly industrialised countries. One example is the **City Climate Finance Gap Fund**, which is funded by Germany and Luxembourg with a total of EUR 55 million and implemented by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and GIZ. This was jointly developed with the Global Covenant of Mayors in connection with the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit.
- In pursuit of the **recover better** principle, Germany and its partners are committed to increasing cities' resilience to external shocks with reconstruction measures and economic stimulus packages and reducing their adverse impact on the environment by means of climate-neutral measures (e.g. for mobility and buildings).
- As part of its international cooperation, Germany is supporting a wide range of sustainable urban development projects with a total sum exceeding EUR 22 billion. These concentrate on reinforcing the capacity of local, regional and national governance structures to steer sustainable urban development or promoting good local governance and civic engagement. Others focus chiefly on local authority financing, urban mobility, and sustainable urban infrastructure and services such as waste processing and disposal, water supply and sanitation.
- As a member of **UN-Habitat**, Germany supports the creation and dissemination of ways to make urban development sustainable. City decision-makers are assisted with **sustainable, climate-friendly urban development** through **international networks** such as the Cities Alliance, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, C40 Cities, the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (CCFLA) and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC). In addition, the NDC Partnership supports interested countries in making their NDCs – their nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change – more ambitious with regard to cities. At the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit, Germany campaigned for subnational climate finance within the **Leadership for Urban Climate Investment** initiative (LUCI).
- Both in Germany and around the world, the German Government is actively committed to the maintenance, protection and conservation of **cultural heritage**, especially cultural and natural world heritage sites. It uses the culture-related agreements and programmes of UNESCO as a platform for promoting and supporting culture-focused implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- As a strategic framework, the **New Leipzig Charter** turns the spotlight onto the transformative power of cities and communities, focusing on integrated urban development approaches in the face of climate change, demographic developments and the digital transition.
- With a view to further reducing land consumption in Germany, deliberations are under way as to the extent to which the development of municipal spaces should in future be concentrated more on small and medium-sized urban centres. More support could go to communities with around 5,000 inhabitants. In the European context, where the aim is to achieve circularity in land use – with zero net land consumption – by 2050, more work is needed to reach agreement among the member states on the achievement of targets, given the very broad disparity between the different concepts and terms they use.
- An annual EUR 1 billion will be available for measures to improve communities' transport options between 2021 and 2024, rising to EUR 2 billion in 2025. These funds will go primarily towards infrastructure projects in the realm of local passenger rail.

- The measures of the housing strategy will continue to be implemented. Another improvement to housing benefit is the heating costs relief available to households receiving housing benefit in the context of carbon pricing, which is applicable as of 2021. Furthermore, measures for the convergence of living conditions are designed to ease the migratory pressure on conurbations and encourage use of the existing infrastructure in rural areas.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Market share of products certified by publicly managed eco-labelling schemes



Global environmental impact caused by private household consumption – use of raw materials



Global environmental impact caused by private household consumption – energy consumption



Global environmental impact caused by private household consumption – CO₂ emissions



EMAS eco-management



Paper with Blue Angel certification as a proportion of the direct federal administration's total paper use



CO₂ emissions of commercially available vehicles in the public sector

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

The aim of SDG 12 is to bring about the necessary changes to our lifestyles and business practice. In order to achieve sustainable consumption and production, we must ensure that our current consumption and production do not jeopardise satisfaction of the justified needs of current and future generations. Proper consideration must also be given to the limits of the Earth's resilience, universal human rights and the other SDGs. To this end, growth and wealth must be decoupled as much as possible from the consumption of natural resources.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

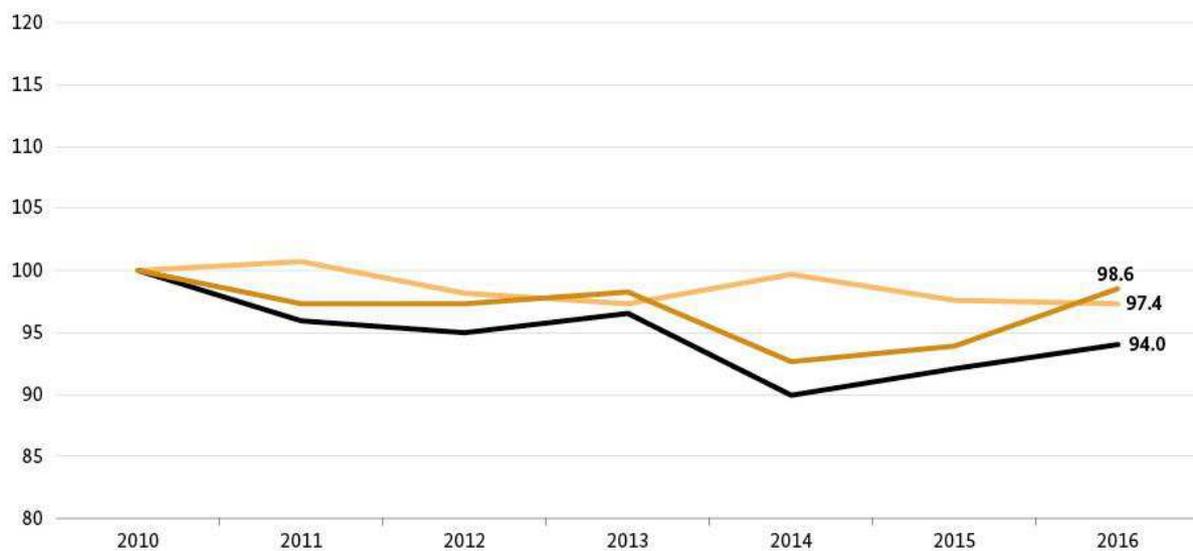
The German Sustainable Development Strategy assigns four indicators to SDG 12 in three categories:

- Sustainable consumption: Market share of products certified by publicly managed sustainability labelling schemes and global environmental damage caused by private household consumption;
- Sustainable production: Use of the EMAS environmental management scheme in Germany;
- Sustainable procurement: Sustainable public procurement

Global environmental impact by private household consumption
2010 = 100



● a) Direct and indirect CO₂ emissions ● b) Direct and indirect energy consumption ● c) Direct and indirect raw material consumption



Source: Federal Statistical Office

© Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021

Preliminary values for 2016; Due to methodological changes, data is only partly comparable with the preceding years

The strain placed on the environment around the world by private household consumption is shown here in terms of domestic and foreign energy consumption, emissions of CO₂ and the use of raw materials that go into the consumption of private households in Germany. While the data for energy consumption and emissions follow a fluctuating but generally downward trend, the change in the use of raw materials is less marked. However, a slight decline of 3% can be observed for the period from 2010 to 2016. By contrast, energy consumption went down by 6% during the same period. Between 2010 and 2016, direct CO₂ emissions fell by 6%, while the emissions footprint of consumer goods fell by 1%. The last five years, on the other hand, show a slight increase in emissions overall rather than a reduction.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

Our past consumption behaviour has involved only scant consideration of our planet's limitations. At present, 20% of the global population consume 80% of the available raw materials. Industrialised countries have an important role to play in the global development of sustainable consumption and production patterns and in efforts to improve resource efficiency. As their economies are so firmly integrated in global value and supply chains, they have a significant impact on production methods in other countries. The German Government's aim is therefore to **further decouple the use of natural resources from economic development**, continuously increase efficiency and keep reducing the consumption of natural resources. Germany should be a global pioneer on the way to a fully **circular economy**. The

German Government is also working to strengthen **sustainable public procurement**. **Sustainable production** focuses throughout the entire value chain on using natural resources more efficiently, avoiding and reducing pollution including greenhouse gas emissions, and preventing the destruction of ecosystems. It emphasises the importance of keeping nature intact as well as respecting human rights, observing labour and social standards, and ensuring fair trade.

In Germany:

- The **National Programme on Sustainable Consumption**, launched in 2016 and updated in May 2021, focuses on six areas of consumption: mobility, food, home and household, workplace and office, clothing, and leisure and tourism. The central point of contact and dialogue on this is the Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Consumption (www.k-n-k.de), with the National Sustainable Consumption Network and a newly created database (<https://sdg12.de/>) for the implementation of SDG 12 in Germany.
- The German Resource Efficiency Programme ProgRes III (third iteration published in 2020) is being implemented and updated.¹²
- The bill for a **Corporate Due Diligence in Supply Chains Act** was adopted by the German Bundestag on 11 June 2021, designed to protect **human rights in global supply chains**.
- In implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) for Business and Human Rights, numerous measures assist businesses in adopting processes of corporate due diligence as to whether human rights are upheld throughout their supply and value chains and in making their supply chains more sustainable overall (see also SDG 8).
- **Deforestation-free supply chains**: Germany is a signatory of the New York Declaration on Forests and the Amsterdam Declarations (see SDG 15). The Federal Cabinet adopted its guidelines on promoting deforestation-free supply chains for agricultural commodities on 8 April 2020.
- The 2020 **National Hydrogen Strategy** is geared towards building a hydrogen economy.
- The German Government's **Raw Materials Strategy** of 2010 is to be updated.
- Within the framework programme to promote materials research, **From Materials to Innovation**, the digitalisation of materials research is being accelerated in order to map the life cycles of materials from development and use through to recycling.
- The Steel Action Concept is a comprehensive political strategy for a **steel industry** which is strong, internationally competitive and **climate-neutral** on a long-term basis.
- The German **Waste Prevention Programme**, updated in 2021, is being implemented, and work to foster the **circular economy** continues.
- The National Strategy for **Food Waste Reduction** has been put into practice since 2019, and the Too Good for the Bin! Initiative is being updated.
- The state is leading by example as a consumer with a variety of measures for **sustainable procurement** in the federal administration. It promotes sustainable, innovative products and services and injects the right impetus to promote a sustainable economic recovery. Provisions for this are contained, for example, in the revised Circular Economy Act (*Kreislaufwirtschaftsgesetz*) and the Federal Climate Change Act (2019). Further centrally implemented measures include the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for

¹² More information on this is available in German here: <https://www.bmu.de/download/deutsches-ressourceneffizienzprogramm-progress-iii/> and in English here: <https://www.bmu.de/en/topics/economy-products-resources-tourism/resource-efficiency/overview-of-german-resource-efficiency-programme-progress/>

Sustainable Procurement to provide advice and support to public contracting authorities, the introduction and implementation of German Government guidelines for sustainable textiles procurement by the federal administration, and the amendment of the General Administrative Regulation on the Procurement of Energy-efficient Products and Services.

- An action network for sustainability in culture and the media assists in the provision of corporate-ecology advisory services. Support also goes towards the environmentally sustainable production of audiovisual content.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- Germany is implementing the **Elmau commitments made by the G7** heads of state and government for sustainability in global supply chains. These comprise supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships, strengthening OECD National Contact Points and promoting the maintenance of social and environmental standards throughout global value and supply chains through development cooperation. Advisory and information events are also held to assist businesses in implementing the OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains.
- Germany supports the United Nations **One Planet network** via, for example, the development of global guidance on trustworthy consumer information. Germany also participates in the UNEP International Resource Panel and supports the **Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)**.
- Germany established the independent **International Sustainable Chemistry Collaborative Centre (ISC3)** in 2017.
- In the context of global supply and value chains, the **PREVENT Waste Alliance** was founded in 2019. The multi-stakeholder partnership is intended to help ensure that waste is minimised across the world, harmful substances are eliminated and resources are managed in circular patterns. More than 200 member organisations from over 30 countries jointly campaign for the avoidance, collection, recycling and deployment of secondary raw materials in developing and newly industrialised countries. Innovative trial runs are currently taking place in 15 countries.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **Eco-management/sustainability management:** EMAS, the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, will be adopted at all supreme federal authorities by 2025 in accordance with the German Government's Climate Action Programme 2030. Corporate **sustainability reporting** is being promoted on the basis of environmental EMAS reporting.
- In their procurement activities, the federal ministries and the contracting authorities of the Federal Government, Länder and local authorities will consistently use the available flexibility of public procurement law to favour sustainable procurement, and they will examine the possibility of incorporating minimum standards of due diligence in respect of human rights into public procurement procedures. Correspondingly, the German Government will also advocate for an increase in sustainable procurement at the EU level.
- Support also goes to **research** projects and measures on topics including sustainable business and work, the sustainable city of the future, sustainable urban mobility, valuing biodiversity, plastics in the environment, sustainable digital platforms and the data economy, pathways and components of a digital agenda for sustainable consumption, and consumer protection in the service of the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- In 2020, during Germany's Presidency of the Council of the EU, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia produced a paper on **Consumer Protection in Europe – Lessons Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic**.

- Germany supports partner countries, e.g. with implementing internationally recognised environmental and social standards, encouraging sustainable consumption and production patterns, establishing circular systems and **transitioning to a green economy**. The GO4SDGs initiative was launched in 2019 with the support of Germany by the UNEP, WEF, ITUC and other partners and is geared towards collaboration with young people and SMEs. It is also intended to contribute to a green recovery, as is the global Green Forum of the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, which was launched in 2021 for interactive dialogue on specialist topics relating to the socio-economic transition.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Greenhouse gas emissions



International climate protection funding for the reduction of greenhouse gases and adaptation to climate change

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

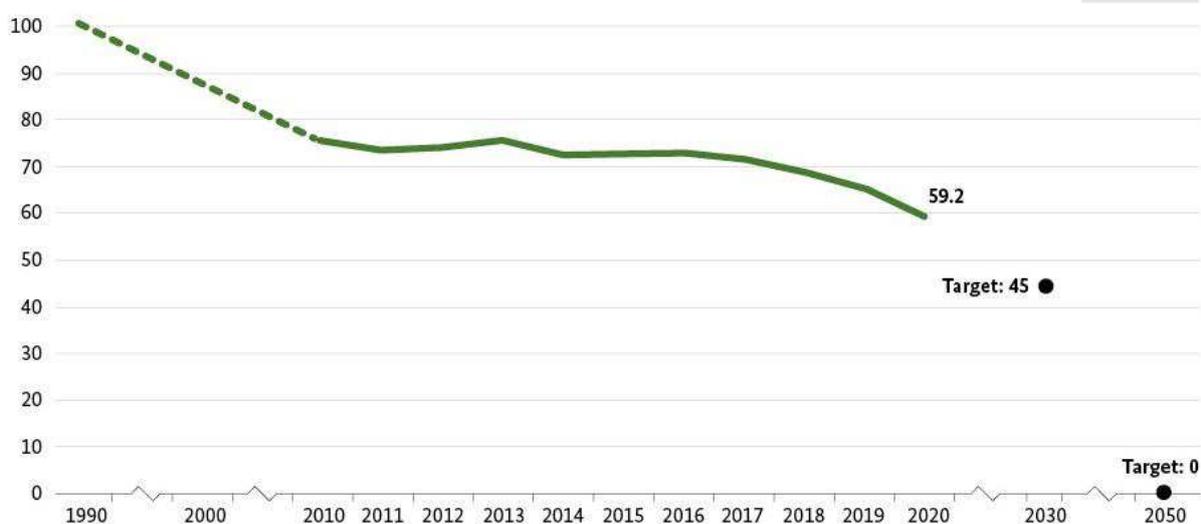
Increasing global temperatures entail a greater risk of abrupt, irreversible changes in the climate with the potential for major damage to society, nature and the economy – in Germany as elsewhere. They also increase the potential for conflicts and instability; ongoing climate change has ever more serious implications for security policy. If we are not to exceed these planetary boundaries, swift and effective measures are called for to reduce climate-altering emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. With the German Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change and its associated action plan, the German Government is pursuing the goal of reducing the vulnerability of natural, social and economic systems to climate impacts and increasing their resilience in respect of climate-related risks.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

The German Sustainable Development Strategy assigns two indicators to SDG 13 in the climate action category: greenhouse gas emissions in CO₂ equivalents and international climate finance for the reduction of greenhouse gases and adaptation to climate change.

Greenhouse gas emissions

1990 = 100



Source: German Environment Agency

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Preliminary near real-time forecast for 2019. Greenhouse gases = carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), nitrogen trifluoride (NF₃), hydrofluorocarbons (HFC) and perfluorocarbons (PFC)

The German Government's policy objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Germany by at least 40% compared with 1990 levels by 2020 was achieved, as were the reduction targets for the year 2020 set out in the Federal Climate Change Act. The German Government decided in May 2021 to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 65% compared with 1990 levels by 2030, by at least 88% by 2040 and by enough to reach greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045 at the latest. Germany had already achieved its target of raising the amount of international climate finance provided from public funds to EUR 4 billion by 2020, double the value for 2014, in 2019.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

The guiding principle and yardstick of the German Government's climate policy is the Paris Agreement. When it comes to climate action, the German Government relies on a broad toolkit consisting of legal provisions, economic instruments and support programmes as well as information provision and consulting. The aim of this is to keep the increase in the global average temperature **well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit that rise to 1.5°C** in accordance with the Paris Agreement. Within the EU, the United Nations climate negotiations, the G7, G20 and informal forums, the German Government is campaigning for ambitious international climate policy and appropriate targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to accelerate the necessary transition towards decarbonising the global economy and increasing resilience to the consequences of climate change at the international level. In so doing, it is fulfilling its constitutional mandate under Article 20a of the Basic Law: as the Federal Constitutional Court found in its order of 24 March 2021, the Federal Climate Change Act is unconstitutional insofar as it fails to provide adequate specifications for emissions reduction pathways after 2030. It also inferred from Article 20a a constitutional climate action mandate with an international dimension, pointing out the essential need for Germany to campaign for global climate action in its international negotiations.

In Germany:

- The **Climate Action Plan 2050** adopted in 2016 provides strategic orientation for the process required to reach the national climate targets in all areas of action and sets out Germany's long-term strategy. The Climate Action Plan is being reviewed and updated in a broad-based discussion process involving the Länder, communities, business, civil society and the public.
- To ensure that the German climate targets for 2030 would be achieved, October 2019 saw the adoption of the **Climate Action Programme 2030**, with extensive measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions in all relevant sectors, and the **Federal Climate Change Act, which was revised for the first time in May 2021**. The progress made on the measures within the Climate Action Programme 2030 is recorded annually in the German Government's Climate Action Report. A Climate Cabinet was set up in March 2019 and will continue to meet.
- The **Coal Phase-out Act** (*Kohleausstiegsgesetz*) entered into force in 2020. Following the recommendations of the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment, coal-powered electricity generation is to be reduced in stages and completely phased out by 2038 at the latest.
- In the **Fuel Emissions Trading Act** (*Brennstoffemissionshandelsgesetz*), the German Government has introduced a carbon price in the heating and transport sectors that has been in force since January 2021 and will rise incrementally.
- The German **Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change** assesses the risks of climate change, identifies action required and defines corresponding targets and measures for maintaining the adaptive capacity of natural, social and economic systems.
- The **National Climate Initiative** to promote broad climate action in Germany and the support programme run as part of the Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change will be continued and amended if necessary to suit evolving needs.
- The *Forschungsfabrik Batterie* umbrella concept ("**Battery Research Factory**") promotes research and development in Germany for new battery technologies – from materials to battery cells to recycling – which are key technologies for e-mobility, for example.
- The federal administration is leading by example, aiming to become climate-neutral by 2030 in accordance with the Federal Climate Change Act. The Coordination Office for a Climate-neutral Federal Administration was set up to that end in February 2020.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- By regularly organising the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, Germany promotes international dialogue and cooperation for implementation of the Paris Agreement. It also supports research on climate change and thereby aids the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- Germany is one of the main donors for global climate action in international development cooperation and supports measures designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions, advance adaptation to climate change, and protect forests and biodiversity via bilateral and multilateral programmes and funds. In total, Germany provided around EUR 7.58 billion for **international climate finance** in 2019. An average of 41% (EUR 1.78 billion) of Germany's climate finance from public funds in 2019 went towards adaptation measures. That share is significantly higher when it comes to LDCs and small island developing states (SIDSs), at 57% and 60% respectively. Germany contributes further to international climate finance through instruments to leverage capital market funding and mobilise private investments.

- Germany is one of the largest contributors to multilateral climate funds. These include the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to which Germany has pledged EUR 2.25 billion to date, as well as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIFs) and the Adaptation Fund. Germany set the Green Recovery Initiative in motion in collaboration with the World Bank and has provided it with EUR 20 billion to date, seeking to **combine economic recovery programmes with sustainable development and particularly climate action**.
- Through the **International Climate Initiative (IKI)**, Germany has provided EUR 5 billion to support developing and newly industrialised countries since 2008, funding climate change mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity projects to support the creation of political, technological, economic and financial market conditions conducive to sustainable economic systems in partner countries. The **NAMA Facility** supports supplementary sector-specific CO₂ reduction activities as an independent funding body. In addition, also within the framework of the IKI, Germany set up a package of measures for a green recovery in July 2020, worth an initial total of EUR 68 billion.
- The InsuResilience Global Partnership, initiated during Germany's G7 Presidency in 2015, is the main global initiative for the development of climate and disaster risk finance and insurance. Germany is its largest contributor, providing **EUR 670 million**.
- Germany is one of the founding members and supporters of the **NDC Partnership**, a global partnership for the realisation of the nationally determined contributions that assists developing and newly industrialised countries in drawing up and realising ambitious NDCs.
- The objective of the **Nitric Acid Climate Action Group (NACAG)** is to quickly reduce nitrous oxide emissions and bring about a long-term transformation of the sector. The global reduction potential in this sector in the next ten years amounts to well over a gigatonne of CO₂ equivalents.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- The **Federal Climate Change Act** prescribes what quantity of greenhouse gases each sector is permitted to emit each year. If a sector exceeds its legally prescribed emission volumes, the relevant ministry must present an immediate-action programme. The Council of Experts on Climate Change supports the German Government in regularly reviewing the progress made on targets.
- To create a level playing field for climate-friendly investment across Europe, the German Government advocates the introduction of **EU-wide carbon pricing for the transport and heating sectors**.
- Under the Climate Action Programme 2030, an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions is to be played by **e-mobility**. The lithium ion batteries currently required for electric vehicles have their own carbon footprint. Challenges lie, for example, in the energy intensity involved and the need for sustainably extracted and processed raw materials. There is also a need for research into the recycling of battery cells so that valuable raw materials can be brought back into circulation.
- Germany will continue to pay its fair share into **international climate finance** and keep up its involvement in the future. In this context, it is important to agree on an ambitious post-2025 climate finance target.

SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

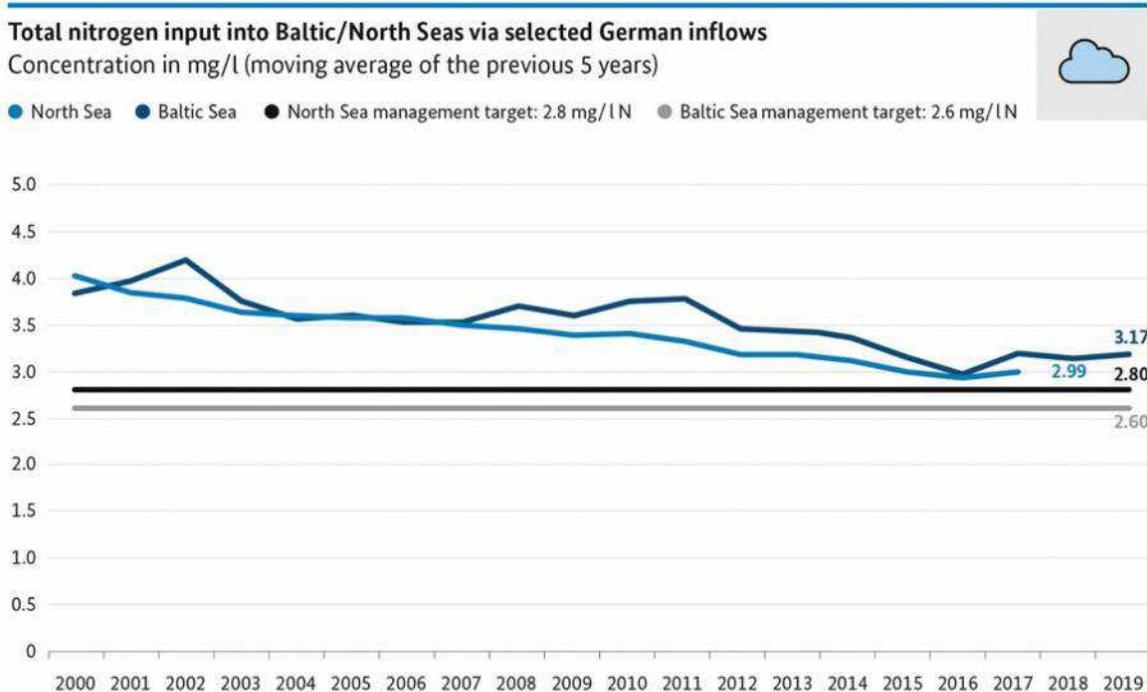
-  Nitrogen input in coastal and marine waters – nitrogen input via the inflows into the Baltic Sea
-  Nitrogen input in coastal and marine waters – nitrogen input via the inflows into the North Sea
-  Share of sustainably fished stocks of fish in the North and Baltic Sea

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

Strong, healthy marine and coastal ecosystems are of paramount importance for global food security, sustainable economic development, and the adaptation of coastal inhabitants to the effects of climate change. These ecosystems are crucial to the planet’s ecological equilibrium and, as carbon sinks, help regulate the climate and lower temperatures.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

The German Sustainable Development Strategy assigns two indicators to SDG 14 under the heading protecting the oceans – protecting and sustainably using oceans and marine resources: nitrogen inputs via the inflows into the North and Baltic Seas and share of sustainably fished fish stocks in the North and Baltic Seas.



Source: German Environment Agency (using information from the Länder and river basin communities) © Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021
 Due to diverging reporting intervals, data for the Baltic Sea is available until 2019, data for the North Sea is available until 2017

In order to counter eutrophication effects such as oxygen depletion and the subsequent loss of biodiversity and destruction of fishing grounds, the intention is to reduce nitrogen inputs into the North and Baltic Seas. Concentrations of nitrogen displayed a downward trend in recent years. Overall, however, the management targets are not being sustainably and universally fulfilled at present. The 2013-2017 average for the North Sea inflows was a concentration of 3.0 mg/l (target value: 2.8 mg/l). For rivers flowing into the Baltic Sea, the average concentration for 2015-2019 was 3.2 mg/l (target value: 2.6 mg/l).

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

The German Government's goal for future generations is to still find ecologically intact and functional coasts and oceans whose resources they are able to use indefinitely. Germany is also helping to ensure that additional coastal and marine areas in developing and newly industrialised countries are placed under conservation protection, are managed effectively and sustainably, and are financially secure.

In Germany:

- In order to attain a "good environmental status" in accordance with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and a "good ecological status" in accordance with the programme of measures of the Water Framework Directive, a variety of measures are being implemented to bring about the necessary significant reduction of nutrient inputs into the North and Baltic Seas. The 2016 revision of the Ordinance on the Protection of Surface Waters (*Oberflächengewässerverordnung*) specified quantitative reduction targets to guide their management.
- The **Fertiliser Application Ordinance** (*Düngeverordnung*) revised in 2017 and amended again in 2020 is intended to reduce inputs of nutrients generated by agricultural fertilisation into inland waters and seas. Agri-environmental and climate measures and the **Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming** adopted in 2017 are also making important contributions.
- Ensuring the **sustainable management of fish stocks** is a central concern of the German Government's fisheries policy. The reform of the 2013 EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), stipulating that all stocks are to be maintained at the level giving the maximum sustainable yield by 2020 at the latest, is being put into practice by means of **multi-species plans for the individual marine areas**. The plan for the Baltic Sea has been in force since July 2016 and that for the North Sea since July 2018. The **landing obligation**, introduced incrementally to apply to all fishing that is subject to catch restrictions by 2019, also serves to improve the way fisheries resources are used.
- **Eight further marine protected areas were placed** under nature conservation and landscape protection in 2017, having been designated in line with the Habitats Directive.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- In the EU and the UN, the German Government is advocating that **an implementing agreement for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea be agreed** to create the necessary conditions for the effective protection of **marine biodiversity** in the high seas, beyond the boundaries of national sovereignty.
- The German Government supports the **establishment of protected areas in the Arctic and Antarctic** as well as the designation of a high seas marine protected area in the Arctic under the aegis of the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. It has drawn up an EU proposal for the Weddell Sea in the Southern Ocean of Antarctica.

- In the **fight against marine litter**, the German Government's main focus is on avoiding waste and preventing inputs of debris. Germany is campaigning intensively on this within the framework of the OSPAR and HELCOM Conventions for the Protection of the Marine Environment and made marine litter one of the topics of its G7 and G20 Presidencies in 2015 and 2017.
- Since 2008, the German Government's **International Climate Initiative** has supported projects for ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) to the tune of more than EUR 270 million. A focus is placed on adaptation support in connection with mangroves and the protection of coastal habitats.
- The German Government is also funding marine projects worth more than EUR 140 million. Germany supports the **Blue Action Fund** and its expansion of marine protected areas, which have currently reached an area of almost 200,000 km².
- Germany promotes **sustainable fisheries and aquaculture** in partner countries and supports the **fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing**.
- The German Government supports the European Commission in its efforts for a swift and successful outcome to the WTO negotiations on an agreement to eliminate fisheries subsidies which contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing or to overcapacity and overfishing (SDG target 14.6).

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- At the end of 2020, none of the EU member states with reporting obligations had achieved "good environmental status" as per the MSFD on schedule. The German Government and the Länder are working for more effective implementation of the national environmental targets for marine conservation, particularly by means of a national **MSFD programme of measures** to be updated in 2021 and the drafting of the Water Framework Directive for the 2021-2027 management period.
- The German Government will in future do more to ensure that the framework plans for the **improvement of agricultural structures and coastal protection** are consistent with sustainable coastal development and also examine whether the 2006 **Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy** should be updated, possibly with reference to implementation of the MSFD.
- Through a funding programme, Germany is supporting projects in countries on the banks of the ten rivers which cause 90% of the world's **river-borne plastic waste** in the oceans. The German Government is continuing to expand its international cooperation for the reduction of marine litter.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss



Species diversity and landscape quality



Eutrophication of ecosystems



Preserve and/or restore forests in developing countries under the REDD+ rulebook



Gross German bilateral development expenditure to implement the UN Convention to Combat Desertification

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

Intact terrestrial ecosystems with a natural variety of species are the foundation required for ensuring varied diets. They supply clean air and drinking water and provide important raw materials. As carbon sinks, they help to regulate temperatures and protect the climate, provide stronger resilience in the face of environmental disasters, are better placed to adapt to climate change and can prove more resistant to the spread of infectious diseases.

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

In the German Sustainable Development Strategy, SDG 15 is covered by

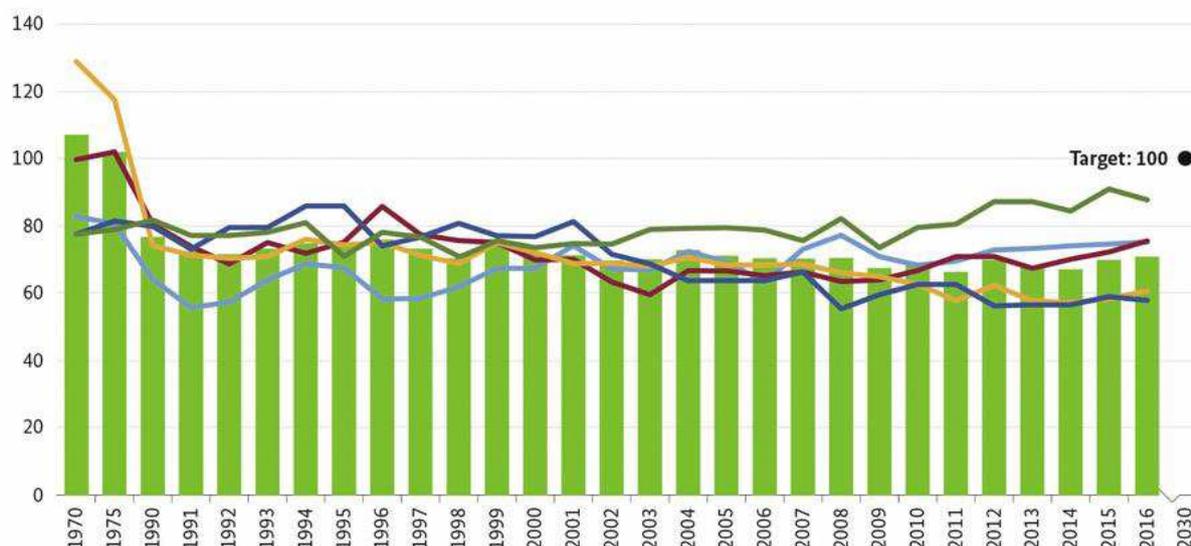
- an indicator tracking populations of representative bird species in different main habitats and landscape types in the biodiversity and landscape quality category,
- an indicator measuring ecosystems in which critical loads for eutrophication due to nitrogen input are exceeded under the heading protecting ecosystems, conserving ecosystem services and preserving habitats,
- and two indicators on the REDD+ rulebook and international soil protection depicting the preservation or restoration of forests under REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) and international soil protection.

Species diversity and landscape quality

2030 = 100



● Sub-index forests ● Sub-index farmland ● Sub-index coasts/seas ● Index overall
● Sub-index settlements ● sub-index inland waters ● Target index overall



Source: Federal Agency for Nature Conservation

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The indicator shows the development of population numbers for 51 selected bird species in the form of an index. Other species besides birds also rely on landscapes with intact, sustainably used habitats, which means that the indicator also indirectly reflects the development of many other species in the landscape and the sustainability of land use. The indicator value stagnated over the last ten reporting years (2006-2016), reaching 70.5% of the target value in 2016 compared with 70.2% in 2006. If this trend continues, the goal for 2030 will not be achieved. While a negative trend is emerging for farmland, coasts and seas, the trend for forests, settlements and inland waters has been positive in the last ten years.

Context, challenges and activities since 2016

As an industrialised country with a high population density, Germany has to strike a balance between protecting and using ecosystems. More than half the area of Germany is used for agricultural purposes, and a third is woodland. In publishing its National Strategy on Biological Diversity in 2007, the German Government presented an ambitious national programme for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to halt and turn the tide on the decline of biodiversity in Germany. The measures are aimed not only at governmental stakeholders but at all relevant decision-makers. Germany is also active in numerous multilateral organisations, forums and initiatives, helping to shape the international dialogue for forward-looking policy on biodiversity, forests and land.

In Germany:

- The **National Strategy on Biological Diversity** adopted in 2007, which contains roughly 330 targets and 430 concrete measures across 16 areas for action is to be updated for the post-2020 period.
- The **Action Programme for Insect Conservation**, adopted in 2019 to turn the tide on the falling numbers and diversity of insects, is being implemented.

- As the key guide for forestry and forest-based industries, the 2020 Forest Strategy is being recast to incorporate the ethos of biodiversity in a **2050 Forest Strategy**.
- Published in 2017 as a result of the Climate Action Plan 2050, the **Charter for Wood 2.0** is being implemented as a dialogue process on enhancing the contribution of wood from sustainable forestry to protecting the climate, conserving finite resources and safeguarding value creation.
- The German Government is implementing the **Strategy on Agrobiodiversity**, the **Strategy for the Future of Organic Farming** adopted in 2017 and the **National Bioeconomy Strategy** adopted in 2020 as well as to draft an **Arable Farming Strategy** and a **Bog Protection and Peat Reduction Strategy**.
- With a view to taking account of the great economic value that diverse, intact ecosystems have for Germany, the German Government is working on **measuring and mapping the health and performance of ecosystems nationwide** as well as **incorporating the value of natural capital into the environmental economic accounts** at the Federal Statistical Office.
- Adopted in 2019, the **Stadtnatur master plan** is being implemented to support local authorities in protecting and creating high-quality natural spaces in urban areas, as is the **federal Blue Belt programme** for the restoration of 2,800 km of rivers and their adjacent meadows in subsidiary parts of the federal waterways network.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- In the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Germany is advocating an **ambitious post-2020 global framework for biodiversity** that needs to support the member countries in better implementing the CBD's goals, provide adequate responses to the poor state of the natural world and address the factors driving the rapid loss of biodiversity. Germany assists countries in Africa, Oceania and Latin America with implementation of the Nagoya Protocol of the CBD, the valorisation of genetic resources and the creation of value chains that observe the applicable access and benefit-sharing (ABS) rules and contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through benefit-sharing.
- Germany is a party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), home to their secretariats, and the largest contributor of funding to support the Convention's implementation (around EUR 545 million in 2017 under the Rio marker for desertification). Since 2013, Germany has provided more than EUR 500 million a year for the conservation of forests and other ecosystems.
- The New York Declaration on Forests of 2014 aims to end natural-forest loss by 2030 and restore degraded landscapes throughout the world. The German Government is supporting this with the **Bonn Challenge** platform for action, whose target has been extended since 2011 to encompass the restoration of a total of 350 million hectares of destroyed forest by 2030. It also supports the African **AFR100** initiative that has been working since 2015 to restore 100 million hectares of forest landscape in Africa by 2030. In connection with the Amsterdam Declaration signed in 2015, the German Government adopted its **Guidelines for the Promotion of Deforestation-Free Supply Chains in Agricultural Commodities** in 2020 in order to encourage initiatives on the part of producers and consumers and to support a uniform and more robust approach at the EU level. In tandem with this, the German Government established the **Thünen Centre of Competence on the Origin of Timber** as well as initiating and financing the **Global Timber Tracking Network (GTTN)**. Within the framework of the GTTN, innovative measures have been developed for identifying types and geographical origins of wood. Altogether, the GTTN accommodates experts from over 40 countries.

- Combating **wildlife crime** is a priority of Germany's environmental and development policy. It was at the G20 Summit held in Hamburg in 2017, under Germany's Presidency, that the High Level Principles on Combatting Corruption Related to Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Wildlife Products were adopted.
- In the context of international cooperation, Germany supports its partners with the establishment and sustainable management of natural world heritage sites, national parks, biosphere reserves and nature reserves. In 50 partner countries, an overall area larger than France and Germany combined is supported with an ongoing funding volume of more than EUR 1 billion.
- Germany has provided more than EUR 1 billion for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) since 2008. The International Climate Initiative also focuses on lowering emissions and reducing deforestation and destructive forest use. Germany will continue to work on these targets together with Norway and the United Kingdom in 2021 and thereafter, beyond the original term of the Germany-Norway-UK (GNU) partnership.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- Despite the progress achieved, there is still a loss of habitats and species to be observed in Germany. Achieving the existing targets will take additional effort, in some cases a significant amount, at the federal, Länder and local levels in all the relevant policy areas.
- The number of **nature reserves and national parks** is increasing steadily, and they accounted for around 4.4% of Germany's land area as of 2016. Areas of national natural heritage are to be expanded.
- In the light of new targets set at the EU level in 2020 and in the context of the 2021 meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, a revision of the National Strategy on Biological Diversity is planned for 2022. In addition, a wide variety of steps are being taken for the conservation and sustainable use of natural and cultural landscapes and the protection of biodiversity and genetic resources. They include agri-environmental, climate and conservation measures.
- With regard to **soil protection**, the German Government is endeavouring to develop a meaningful soil indicator which covers all relevant forms of land use and changes in the various functions of the soil. The indicator cannot be incorporated into the German Sustainable Development Strategy until it is next updated. Doing so will also help to support the pursuit of SDG target 15.3 on **land degradation neutrality**.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Criminal offences |
|  | Number of projects to secure, register and destroy small arms and light weapons carried out by Germany in affected regions of the world |
|  | Corruption Perceptions Index in Germany |
|  | Corruption Perceptions Index in partner countries of German development cooperation |

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

SDG 16 is seen as central to the 2030 Agenda as it describes the **mutual dependence** of **peace and security** and **sustainable development**. SDG 16 calls for violence in all its forms to be significantly reduced, **mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts** to be established and the principles of the **rule of law** and **good governance** to be promoted.

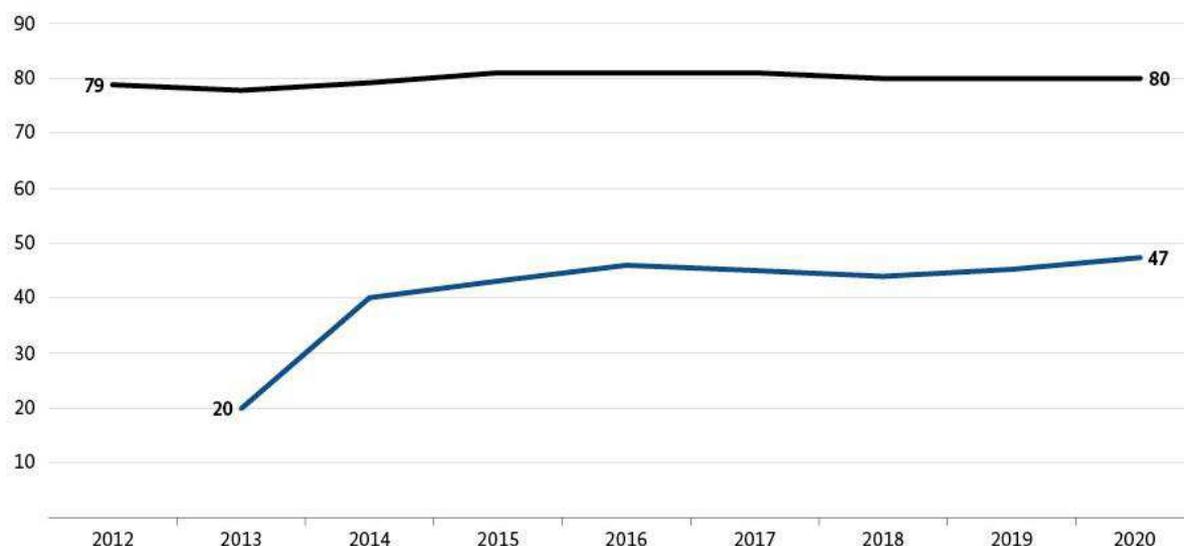
Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

The German Sustainable Development Strategy assigns four indicators to SDG 16 across three categories.

- The criminal offences indicator comes under the heading crime,
- the peace and security category is represented by the number of projects to secure, register and destroy small arms and light weapons (SALW) carried out by Germany in affected regions of the world,
- and good governance is measured by the Corruption Perceptions Index in Germany and in partner countries of Germany's development cooperation.

Corruption Perceptions Index

- Number of partner countries of German development cooperation whose rating has improved compared with 2012
- Rating for Germany



Source: Transparency International, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

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The country list for Germany's bilateral official development cooperation was updated in 2020; 10 countries were added (in addition to China and Sudan)

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores reflect the extent to which a country's public sector is perceived to be corrupt. The indicators show how the CPI score has developed both in Germany and in partner countries. The latter is based on the number of partner countries in which improvements have been observed.

However, continued and increased efforts will be required – not least in the area of regulation – to achieve the target of a significant improvement in 2030 compared with 2012.

Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Germany firmly believes that **peace and security is symbiotic with sustainable development** and that **good governance and sustainable development are mutually dependent** too. This means that, on the one hand, sustainable development is impossible without peace and good governance; on the other hand, there can be no permanently peaceful societies and no chance for **people to live a life of dignity, freedom and self-determination** without sustainable development. Access to justice for all and public trust in an **operational, rules-based constitutional state** with a functioning separation of powers are crucial to sustainable development, throughout the world and in Germany itself. The same applies to effective, accountable and **inclusive state institutions** and the effective participation of the **public in political opinion-forming and decision-making**.

The intention in Germany is to further expand the rule of law, simplify **access to justice** for all and combat **crime and corruption** more effectively. One priority of the work in Germany lies in creating the conditions for an **inclusive society** in which particularly people with disabilities are able to gain equal access. This involves targeted measures to make **accessibility** and **inclusion** a reality. The aim is furthermore to establish **better protection of women, young people and children** against violence and sexual violence.

Around the world, Germany supports and promotes initiatives for **crisis prevention, conflict management** and **peacebuilding**, as well as for the **rule of law** and **good governance**, with a particular focus on neighbouring regions of the EU and the countries of the Global South. Implementation of the UN Security Council's Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a unifying theme here.

In Germany:

- **Promoting good governance and creating easier, non-discriminatory access to justice for all citizens** as well as 'representational' access to justice for people and the environment through non-governmental organisations
- **Introducing a model declaratory action under civil procedure law:** Created in 2018, this form of judicial remedy makes it easier for consumers to have their claims – such as those against large companies – upheld.
- **Adoption of an Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks:** The entry into force of the Act to Improve Enforcement of the Law in Social Networks (*Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz*) in 2017 and its revision in 2020 mean that social networks now have an obligation to run effective complaints systems for illegal content.
- The Enhanced Criminal Prosecution for **Money Laundering Act** (*Gesetz zur Verbesserung der strafrechtlichen Bekämpfung der Geldwäsche*) passed by the Bundestag and Bundesrat in 2021 further strengthens the foundations of effective and consistent criminal prosecution of people involved in money laundering.
- **Adoption of a Sexual Violence against Children Act** (*Gesetz zur Bekämpfung sexualisierter Gewalt gegen Kinder*): New criminal offences were defined, and the associated penalties increased with the entry into force of this law in 2021.
- With the **Competition Register Act** (*Wettbewerbsregistergesetz*) of 2017, the German Government sent an important message about fighting economic crime, especially corruption and bribery in the context of public procurement. The Competition Register, currently being set up, is to be a modern digital register which public contracting authorities can access easily and swiftly. They can use the register to reliably obtain information about those offences which must result in exclusion from public procurement – chiefly bribery, human trafficking, formation of criminal organisations, financing of terrorism, money laundering, withholding of social-security contributions and tax evasion.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- The **2021-2022 German Government Action Plan for Human Rights** prioritises, among other things, the inclusion of women in crisis prevention, peace processes and post-crisis rehabilitation as part of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, advancement of the rule of law, especially for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and an end to impunity. The tools of development cooperation are to be deployed in pursuit of these objectives. The implementation report on the Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2017-2020 provides information about almost 700 activities implemented by the German Government in the past four years.
- The German Government campaigns throughout the world for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three optional protocols.
- The inclusive **involvement of young people** is crucial to democratic and just societies. The German Government champions the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security, particularly the protection of young peace activists and the promotion of youth-led organisations in countries afflicted by or vulnerable to conflict. Resolution 2535 was consequently adopted under Germany's

Security Council Presidency in 2020, underscoring the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and emphasising the role that young peace activists have to play.

- The **German Government** adopted **three relevant interministerial strategies** in 2019 on the basis of its voluntary commitments under the **policy guidelines Preventing Crises, Managing Conflicts, Building Peace**: one for promoting the **rule of law**, one to support **security sector reform** – i.e. to reform the security services such as the armed forces and police under democratic oversight – and one on dealing with the past and reconciliation (**transitional justice**) after wars and violent conflict. In 2021 the German Government **published a report** illustrating the successful **implementation** of the above **policy guidelines** and describing existing challenges as well as the priorities for the years to come.
- Through the **Civil Peace Service**, the German Government seconds peace experts to NGOs in partner countries to support them in promoting non-violent ways of dealing with conflicts and potential sources of conflict. Germany will actively maintain that commitment.
- As its second-largest financial contributor, Germany advocates further strengthening the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** as the central institution in the global struggle against impunity for major crimes that affect the international community as a whole. This includes supporting the ongoing review and reform process to improve the ICC's operations and enhance the effectiveness of its procedures.
- **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control**: Germany is among the world's leading contributors to projects relating to the control of small arms and light weapons. Altogether, the German Government provided EUR 19 million in Federal Foreign Office funds in 2020 to support projects throughout the world. The successful model for combating the SALW problem in the Western Balkans in a holistic and regionally integrated manner, which was developed in 2018 under Franco-German mediation, has served as a model for other affected regions such as the Caribbean and West Africa.
- **G20 initiative to prevent and fight corruption**: During its Presidency of the G20 in 2017, Germany pressed for the adoption of High-Level Principles to advance the cause of integrity in the public and private sectors.
- **Open Government Partnership (OGP)**: Within the framework of this alliance of 78 states, Germany is pushing for greater **transparency, civic engagement, action against corruption and use of new technologies**. In the context of the **ongoing implementation** of the **Second National Action Plan (2019-2021)** of the **Open Government Partnership (OGP)**, Germany is helping to advance measures for transparency, inclusion, cohesion and digitalisation in development cooperation and foreign affairs as well as youth participation and better regulation.
- **Increased global anti-corruption efforts**: Germany is currently supporting more than 20 partner countries and regional institutions engaged in preventing and fighting corruption.
- **Good governance and the rule of law**: Germany has increased its support in this area for partner countries in the Global South from around EUR 730 million in 2016 to over EUR 900 million in 2020.
- **Strengthening of civil society**: Germany has continuously increased its support of programmes for civil society (from EUR 890 million in 2016 to more than EUR 1.2 billion in 2020).

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **Increased measures to prevent and fight corruption**: Germany will continue to press ahead with appropriate measures worldwide and within Germany, particularly to make

government and parliamentary decisions more transparent. This includes the introduction of a lobby register.

- **Enhanced efforts to combat sexual violence against children and adolescents:** After the **National Council to Combat Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents** was put together in 2019, targets and implementation measures for prevention and intervention are to be drawn up by summer 2021 and subsequently put into practice.
- The **National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2021-24)** sets out the German Government's strategy for the next four years. The emphasis is on taking action in the four areas – inclusion of women in crisis prevention, peace processes, post-crisis rehabilitation, and protection against sexual and gender-based violence – as well as strengthening the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and anchoring it in the institutions of the German Government.
- In launching an **LGBTI Inclusion Strategy**¹³ in 2021 to guide its foreign policy and development cooperation, the German Government is raising the visibility of its commitment to the realisation of equal rights for LGBTI people and its condemnation of discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity and characteristics, thereby contributing to better inclusion alongside other committed donors. As part of the strategy, the German Government is promoting the collection of aggregated and anonymised data on the human rights situation of LGBTI people to bring existing inequalities into the light, improve support for LGBTI people and their representatives, and tailor it to their specific needs.
- **Increasing efforts to strengthen human rights:** Through its 2020-2022 **membership of the UN Human Rights Council**, Germany is continuing to campaign for the ongoing development of international human rights instruments.
- **Strengthening the substantive provisions of international criminal law:** On the basis of the preliminary work undertaken by the United Nations International Law Commission (ILC), Germany is working together with its partners on an international convention on crimes against humanity.
- **Increased control and tracing of small arms, light weapons and weapon systems:** In cooperation with international partners such as the United Nations, Germany will continue its commitment to combating proliferation, strengthening control and tracing systems (such as post-shipment controls), creating regional capacities across the world and further developing measurable benchmarks and indicators.
- **Strengthening international processes to enhance regulation of the international arms trade:** Germany supports the implementation and further universalisation of the *Arms Trade Treaty* under the patronage of the United Nations, this being the only instrument establishing globally applicable, legally binding minimum standards for arms exports.

¹³ LGBTI refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Share of expenditure for official development cooperation as a proportion of gross national income |
|  | Number of students and researchers from developing countries and LDCs per year |
|  | Imports from least developed countries |

Source: Sustainable Development in Germany – Indicator Report 2021

The 2030 Agenda is underpinned by a **global partnership** that transcends the old donor-recipient mentality, ascribes joint responsibility to all countries of the Global North and Global South and actively involves non-governmental stakeholders as well. It is only through mutual respect, shared values and the combined efforts of all stakeholders that the objectives of the 2030 Agenda can be achieved. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda calls for a **new partnership model** upheld by the following key **principles**: *universality of goals – all must act; shared responsibility – commensurate contributions from each player; effectiveness, transparency and monitoring – mutual motivation; and the multi-stakeholder approach – all are part of the team.*

Relevant indicators and exemplary trends

The German Sustainable Development Strategy assigns three indicators to SDG 17 in three categories:

- development cooperation is measured by official development assistance as a proportion of gross national income,
- knowledge transfer, especially in technical areas, is depicted in terms of the share of students and researchers from developing countries per year, and
- opening markets is reflected in imports from least developed countries (LDCs).

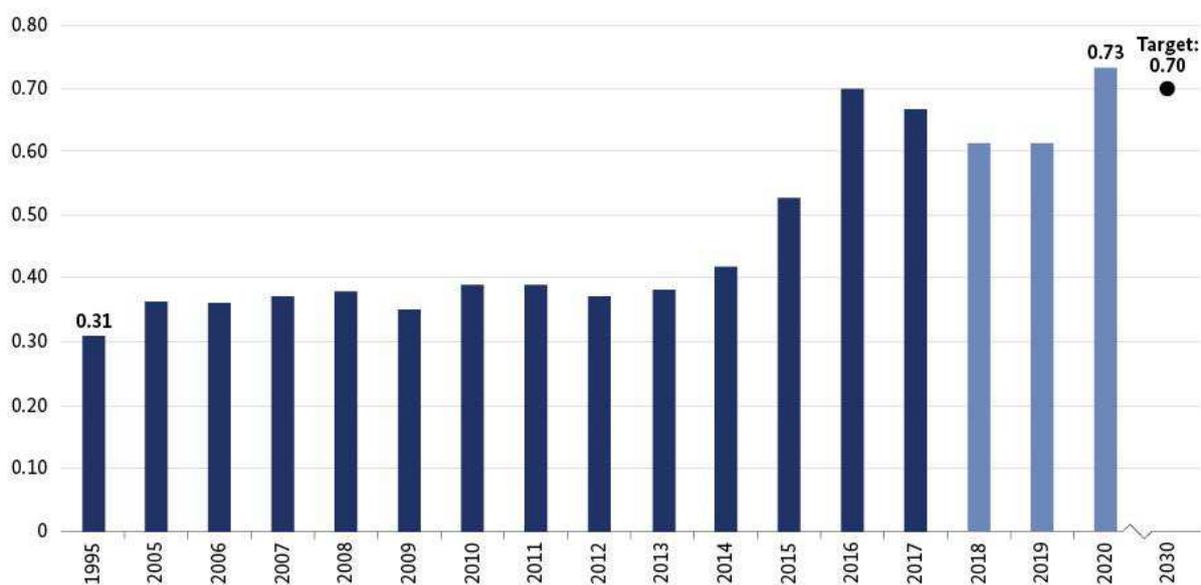
The trends depicted below are given as examples on the basis of the first-mentioned indicator.

Official development assistance as a proportion of gross national income

Germany has committed itself to the **target** set by the UN of raising its **ODA expenditure to 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI)** and aims to achieve this by 2030. Germany already reached this target back in 2016, not least due to a significant increase in domestic expenditure for refugees at that time. Since then, Germany's ODA/GNI ratio not counting domestic refugee costs has been moving in an upward direction towards the target value. In absolute terms, German ODA in 2020 amounted to around EUR 25 billion, putting the current ratio at 0.73% according to provisional OECD data. Germany is thus the **world's second-largest bilateral donor** and is expected to have reached the 0.7% target for the second time in 2020.

Share of expenditure for official development cooperation in gross national income in %

● Calculated in terms of net flows ● Calculated in terms of grant equivalents ● Target for 2030



Source: Federal Statistical Office, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Preliminary values for 2019 and 2020

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Context, challenges and core activities since 2016

Germany is committed to continuously enhancing **policy coherence for sustainable development** and making greater efforts to align all policy areas even more consistently with the 17 SDGs. The focus is threefold:

- contributing actively and innovatively to the **financing of global sustainable development**
- promoting technological **cooperation**, particularly in respect of **environmentally sound and pro-development technologies**
- guaranteeing the **inclusive, participatory involvement of civil society**

The update of the German Sustainable Development Strategy is an exemplary illustration of the partnership with civil society in Germany (see also Chapter 1.2 above).

Trade policy, which is shaped by the European Union, also makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development. The German Government is therefore continuing to support the European Commission in appropriately enshrining sustainability elements in free trade agreements and the generalised scheme of tariff preferences. In addition, the EU promotes the achievement of the SDGs in the work of the World Trade Organization, another area in which the German Government contributes constructively.

Germany campaigns for the conditions for **new partnership models** to be created not only at home and in Europe but also in its partner countries. Important stimulus for implementation of the 2030 Agenda can come from the **private sector** as long as companies align their **business models** more strongly with the guiding principle of sustainable development. Significant contributions in this respect can come both from suitable **incentive schemes** and from **models of cooperation between management and labour**. Germany sees **key catalysts** for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in strengthening the private sector, promoting

collaborations between the **public sector, private sector, trade unions, civil society** and the **academic community**, and fostering **North-South, South-South** and **triangular cooperation**. **New types of cooperation** are therefore being tried out, **multi-stakeholder partnerships** in collaboration with the private sector encouraged and **innovative funding options** provided within the scope of Germany's international development cooperation, with a view to achieving higher levels of sustainable private investment with an **employment impact** (creation of decent and skilled jobs) in the countries of the Global South. Through these efforts, Germany is strengthening holistic means of implementing the 2030 Agenda and pursuing all 17 SDGs within the framework of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for sustainable development.

In Germany:

- As a sign of increased **cooperation** with the **German private sector** with regard to countries of the Global South, **export credit** and **investment guarantees** are issued that safeguard jobs in Germany and enable newly industrialised and developing countries to access modern technologies. **Export initiatives** and a **managerial training programme** support SMEs from Germany in tapping markets in developing and newly industrialised countries, particularly in green technologies, healthcare and energy. **Development partnerships with business** are instituted to get German and European companies involved in development cooperation, e.g. via PPPs or components of the development investment fund established in 2019. The funds for the aforementioned development partnerships were increased by 87%, from EUR 125 million in 2016 to EUR 234 million in 2020.
- Enhanced **processes of dialogue** between the German Government and **civil society** on the 2030 Agenda (including the 2030 Agenda Dialogue Forum, the #17Ziele (17 goals) campaign and the information campaign *Tour der Nachhaltigkeit* on sustainable development).
- Germany has met its voluntary commitment and continuously increased the share of its **imports** that come from the **least developed countries**, reaching a value of EUR 10.4 billion (0.94%) in 2019. This is up from a share of total imports to Germany of around 0.8% in 2016.

In the global context and in cooperation with partner countries:

- **Alliance for Multilateralism:** Germany founded this alliance together with its partners to bolster multilateral approaches grounded in a spirit of partnership, advance concrete initiatives, stabilise the rules-based international order, uphold its principles and, where necessary, amend them to face new challenges.
- **G20/OECD Action Plan on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting:** Together with other EU member states, Germany has committed itself to implementing the Action Plan on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS).
- **G20 Compact with Africa initiative – reform finance:** Germany has strongly pressed for **African countries focused on reform** to be given targeted support and to this end makes public funds available for particularly reform-focused countries in Africa. So far, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Morocco and Tunisia have benefited from the initiative.
- Continuous involvement in the **WTO Aid for Trade initiative:** Created in 2005, the initiative aims to increase developing countries' trading capacity. By consistently focusing its Aid for Trade strategy on the global SDGs (see also SDG 8), Germany has assumed a leading role. Its chief funding priorities lie in social, labour and environmental standards, trade facilitation, reduction of trade barriers and the promotion of quality-control infrastructure.

The German Government plays an active role in the *German Alliance for Trade Facilitation* and the *Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation*, two multi-stakeholder partnerships.

- Germany has **expanded promotion of the private sector** – particularly with regard to **environmentally and socially sustainable, inclusive business models** – and measures fostering the development of financial markets and systems through the creation of incentives for private sector investors (including guarantees, structured funds, PPPs, microfinance institutions, digital financial services and insurance instruments for climate risks).
- **North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation**: By means of these innovative cooperation formats, Germany supports both technological cooperation and the development of capacities and expertise in countries of the Global South.
- The German Government set up a comprehensive **Emergency COVID-19 Support Programme** as part of its development cooperation as early as April 2020 and reallocated EUR 1.63 billion from the current budget for the immediate crisis response. In 2020 and 2021, a total of EUR 4.7 billion is being made available as part of the programme. This included targeted financial support for international initiatives such as the COVID Emergency Response Window of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (EUR 3.5 million in total). Furthermore, the German Government made available additional funds of EUR 450 million in 2020 for humanitarian measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Boosting the development impact of migrant workers' private remittances: **Germany supports the sustainable use and the secure, swift and cost-effective transfer of remittances** sent home by migrant workers, providing projects on the digital transition and financial literacy as well as financial subsidies for remittances to micro-enterprises in African countries.

Lessons learned, areas requiring action and anticipated priority areas

- **Continuous and targeted increase of the ODA/GNI ratio** (official development assistance as a proportion of gross national income): Germany has committed itself to the 0.7% target and will also deploy innovative financing instruments, such as revenues derived from public sales of emissions certificates, to achieve this.
- **Expansion of Germany's contribution to the financing of sustainable development** and involvement in international activities designed to counteract the effects of the pandemic on implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in partner countries.
- The German Government believes that it is necessary to further **strengthen the UN's sustainable development structures**. The Council for Sustainable Development has drawn up an options appraisal with steps that could be taken to achieve that goal.
- **Greater public support** for the 2030 Agenda is to be drummed up in Germany. By way of cooperation particularly with representatives of civil society and other stakeholders, the intention is to work continuously to **raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda among the population** in Germany and encourage active public participation in the pursuit of the SDGs.
- **Debts and debt sustainability**: Germany will continue its activities within the United Nations, G20 and international financial institutions to facilitate innovative solutions for countries of the Global South. Germany successfully campaigned at the G20 for a **debt moratorium for the poorest states to be kept in place until 31 December 2021** to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Germany will also continue to engage actively in the international discussions already taking place on more detailed topics such as **state insolvency mechanisms**.

- **Research and innovation:** Germany sees research and innovation as a core driver of sustainable development and therefore intends to stabilise corresponding **university partnership and scholarship programmes** (above all via the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation) and to expand **research networks**. The scholarships granted to particularly talented students from developing and newly industrialised countries (through the DAAD's EPOS programme for development-related postgraduate courses) and the *Sustainable Global Supply Chains* research network can be cited here as examples of this commitment.

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5. Outlook

Bearing in mind that it is more than five years since the 2030 Agenda was adopted and the first cycle of the HLPF has run its course, and considering the findings of the first Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), the current state of progress is worrying. Quite apart from the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, the global challenges facing our economies, social systems and ecosystems are more present than they have ever been.

Recent months have moreover revealed just how little resilience many structures around the world can demonstrate. Both internationally and within individual countries, the disparity in living standards has markedly increased. Many young people have been knocked back in their training and education. Across the globe, women in particular have been and still are substantially affected by the pandemic. They represent the majority of staff in the healthcare sector, often work under precarious employment conditions and provide unpaid care work for their families.

Climate change and species extinctions are continuing. However, a new sense of momentum has emerged in several policy areas during the pandemic, to which the younger generation has made an especially large contribution.

Across the planet, global solidarity demands the resolution of the severe socio-economic crises that the pandemic has triggered in many economies. The international community finds itself facing the challenge of making the global recovery socially and environmentally sustainable and fair. The only way to achieve this is by cutting poverty worldwide, dismantling injustices and inequalities, combating climate change, overcoming environmental challenges and reducing gender inequalities. It is also important that individual contributions to implementing the SDGs are rooted in respect for human rights – in other words that they are intertwined with existing fundamental human rights obligations. This will help ensure that global society is well prepared for future shocks and global challenges. In many countries, crises and wars are undermining peace, security and sustainable development.

Germany will resolutely continue along the path of socio-environmental transformation set out in this report, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and advocate for that path at international organisations and conferences. The global challenges that the pandemic has drastically exacerbated call for a concerted response from the community of states and from our international institutions, especially the United Nations. Germany and its partners champion this cause within the framework, for example, of the Alliance for Multilateralism. To strengthen peace and put an end to violence, the German Government backs lasting conflict resolution in which all stakeholders are included.

The focus is on constructing development routes that will lead to climate neutrality and a more efficient systemic use of resources, i.e. a circular economy, and on fulfilling our responsibility as a highly globalised economy to ensure globally sustainable value and supply chains. It is encouraging that some major emitters have set themselves the target of net zero anthropogenic emissions by the middle of the century, especially since they are currently responsible for 63% of global greenhouse gas emissions. This highlights the paradigm shift which is coming for the global economy.

For its part, the German Government will push on and do all it can to nurture that sense of momentum and to support interested states in developing ambitious programmes and legislation which underpin the declared decarbonisation objectives with concrete short and medium-term measures.

Sustainable development and digitalisation require major processes of economic transformation which will affect the life of society in wide-ranging ways. The two are closely

related in their logic, yet increasingly need to be more tightly dovetailed with one another. This will mean taking account not only of the potential positive aspects of the digital transition – such as more efficient use of resources thanks to smarter processes, and more easily traceable value chains – but also of the potential negatives. These include increased consumption of energy and raw materials by IT technologies, the ramifications for competition, the labour market and data protection, and curtailments of human rights. The aim is to grasp the sustainable development opportunities offered by the digital transition while making its risks manageable.

Given how intricately their economies are embedded in global value and supply chains, the industrialised countries bear special responsibility and have an important role to play in leading the way on worldwide sustainable economic development, sustainable investment, sustainable innovation, sustainable trade relations, sustainable consumption and production patterns, and decent work. The German Government will continue to work on this with its partners around the world and with civil society, trade unions, business and the academic community.

This VNR shows that sustainable development is an important guiding principle for German Government policy. Efforts to achieve sustainability will be an ongoing task that extends across policy areas and legislative terms. The next comprehensive update to the German Sustainable Development Strategy is therefore planned for 2023/2024, as initiated by the German Bundestag as part of the 2020 plenary week on sustainability. Germany will furthermore remain committed to achieving progress on sustainable development within the United Nations framework – and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in particular – as well as in other formats such as the G7 and G20, and bilaterally.

The path to sustainable development, be it globally or nationally, has been made even more arduous by the pandemic, yet tread it we must. We must set the right course now, in all areas, to achieve the profound change that is so needed. Together, we can do it. Success is in our own hands.

ANNEX: Position papers of major German stakeholders

- The Association of German Cities, the German Association of Counties and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities
- The Federation of German Industries (BDI)
- The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)
- The German NGO Forum on Environment and Development (FUE)
- Germany's Youth Delegates for Sustainable Development
- Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs (VENRO)

Bundesvereinigung der kommunalen Spitzenverbände



A Municipal Contribution to the Voluntary National Review

Contribution of the Association of German Cities, the German Association of Counties and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities
to the
German Voluntary National Review

State of the SDG implementation in German municipalities

With this brief report of the German Institute of Urban Affairs on behalf of Bertelsmann Stiftung ([hyperlink](#)), we intend to shed some light on the German progress towards reaching the global goals from a municipal perspective: Local authorities play a decisive role in implementing the 2030 agenda. Some German municipalities look back at a long tradition of sustainability development policies and activities – most notably since the rise of the “local agenda 21”. The local agenda 21 was derived from the Agenda 21, the UN action plan passed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, by a network of municipalities. In Germany, some of these processes were initiated by local administration and politics. It should be noted that this report is not a Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR) as is currently discussed in the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) network. A VSR would require more in-depth analyses and would also analyse all activities and progresses on relevant levels between the national and the municipal layer – in Germany, most importantly the federal states.

Enabling environment: SDG implementation at the local level

The implementation of the 2030 agenda is highly influenced by the constitutional framework of the state: Germany is a democratic and social federal state by constitution. According to the German basic law, Article 28, Section 2, German counties, cities, towns and villages are based on local self-government and municipalities must be guaranteed the right to regulate all local affairs on their own responsibility, within the limits prescribed by the laws. The guarantee of self-government shall also extend to the bases of financial autonomy.

Most of the German federal states have adopted or revised own sustainability strategies with reference to the SDGs and have implemented diverse programs and efforts. Some of them specifically focus on supporting their municipalities in developing and implementing their own sustainability strategies. However, sustainable development is a voluntary task and the capabilities of German municipalities, (not only) in terms of budget and personal resources, vary dramatically within and between federal states. Thus, the degrees of localization and implementation of the SDGs on the local level form are quite diverse.

SDG implementation and sustainable development in German municipalities

An instrument provided by the German Local Government Associations allows for a rough estimation of the 'state-of-the-art' level of activity: A specimen resolution "[2030 - Agenda for Sustainable Development: Shaping Sustainability at the Municipal Level](#)" published to facilitate commitment of local authorities to implementing the SDGs. The resolution consists of a general part on the significance of the SDGs, and a modifiable part for individual stipulations on which SDGs are to be localized in what way. It can be signed by cities, towns and counties likewise. With signing the resolution, the municipalities become members of the "club of the 2030 agenda municipalities", a network with diverse possibilities for online collaboration, yearly networking meetings, and provision with and exchange of relevant information. The club had around 175 member municipalities by April 2021 and is constantly increasing.

Programs for SDG localization

While the club of the 2030 agenda municipalities is the only explicit network on the implementation of the SDGs on the municipal level, there are numerous other networks and programs devoted to municipal sustainable development in Germany. For example, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) facilitates a 'sustainable city' dialogue between the mayors of over 30 German cities that also occasionally publishes statements, joint position papers or more detailed 'roadmaps' related to municipal sustainability policy.

The program "Globally Sustainable Municipalities" by the Service Agency Communities in One World (SKEW) of Engagement Global, which is in turn financed by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, contributes to systematic SDG implementation processes in selected pilot municipalities with a specific focus on municipal development policy. The program supports cohorts of about five to 15 municipalities in the development of a sustainability strategy along the SDGs and with consideration of the National Sustainability Strategy and the respective federal state's sustainability strategy.

Bertelsmann Stiftung has supported an impact-oriented sustainability management in other pilot municipalities across Germany since 2015 with a focus on the SDGs as of 2017. Moreover, in 2021, it has commissioned the German Institute of Urban Affairs to coach municipalities in systematic SDG implementation and monitoring. In this project, "sustainability-active" municipalities will be supported as well as newcomers.

Furthermore, the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), as the central German association for the implementation of the international cooperation abroad is keen in promoting the SDGs in collaborative trans-municipal projects.

SDG monitoring activities

Since 2017, a multi-stakeholder working group 'SDG indicators for municipalities', which was initiated by the German Association of Cities, has developed instruments for a systematic municipal SDG monitoring. The German Association of Counties, the German Association of Towns and Municipalities as well as the Council of European Municipalities and Regions are supporting the project work and - like the German Association of Cities - are advocating for the application of the SDG indicators in their respective member municipalities. The German Institute of Urban Affairs is in charge of developing and refining the SDG indicators.

Bertelsmann Stiftung is responsible for the overall organization and financing of the project, the publication of the project results and the provision of data via the portals www.wegweiser-kommune.de and www.sdg-portal.de. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development is involved in the development and refinement of the indicators and provides data via the portal www.inkar.de. The Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global supports the project work in terms of content and promotes the work with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The two most important products from our working group are an SDG indicator set and an SDG portal. The indicator catalogue consists of 120 municipal SDG indicators, applicable for all cities, counties and communities, with detailed profiles, data analyses and additional support for application. It aims at supporting an impact-oriented sustainability management and is conceptualized as a toolbox that can be adapted according to individual needs and monitoring objectives. From the 120 indicators, 54 indicators are provided in the three data portals for about 3.000 German counties, cities, and towns over 5.000 inhabitants – most importantly, the SDG portal. The SDG portal aims at providing a simple and intuitive tool for a quick assessment of the states and dynamics in the provided SDG indicator in a specific municipality and potentially, in comparison to other municipalities or higher-level data. It also offers various additional functions aimed at supporting the implementation of the SDGs, amongst them good practice examples, recommended courses of action in tackling individual challenges, and reporting functionalities. In 2018, a prior and yet simpler version of the current SDG portal was awarded with the UN SDG Action Award (Top 3) at the SDG Global Festival of Action of the United Nations. Moreover, it has been transferred to Italy in 2020, and more international scaling is currently prepared. In March 2021, the SDG portal had about 10.000 users, about one third of these using it several times per month.

In addition, we know many German municipalities who are working with the products that arose from the SDG working group in their local sustainability management and SDG monitoring, specifically the SDG indicators and the respective provided data as well as related publications.

With the “Berichtsrahmen Nachhaltige Kommune” (reporting frame sustainable municipality), a more comprehensive and binding instrument for the monitoring and evaluation of local sustainability strategies – and potentially, SDG implementation strategies – is currently being developed by RNE and SKEW and tested in selected pilot municipalities as of March, 2021. The reporting frame is thus far structured along specific areas of action that were derived from its original equivalent, the German Sustainability Code for companies and other organizations and is therefore not a targeted SDG implementation product in the first place. However, the SDG indicators provided in our data portal are recommended for data-based monitoring activities, and SDG icons are assigned to the areas of action as an additional aid.

SDG indicator analyses

The municipal contribution to the Voluntary National Review contains a presentation of indicator values (2019) based on the indicator catalogue ‘SDG indicators for Municipalities. SDGs with the most positive development we used in our analyses are: SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 8 (economy), SDG 13 (climate) SDG 16 (institutions). The trends of the indicators in SDG 11

are quite mixed, but the negative dynamics of car density and rent prices point to major challenges for municipal development, namely sustainable housing and mobility – which are likewise indicated as essential challenges in the OB-Barometer 2020 (Kühl & Grabow 2020)

Voluntary Local Reviews of German Cities and Best Practice of cities, municipalities and counties

So far, three German cities have published own Voluntary Local Reviews: Bonn, Mannheim, and Stuttgart. These three reports are briefly presented as good practice examples and are roughly compared in the following sections. Bonn's first Voluntary Local Review illustrates the state of its SDG implementation along six fields of municipal action: mobility, climate and energy, natural resources and environment, labour and business, social participation and gender, global responsibility and One World. The report initially summarizes the resolutions by the city councils related to sustainable development since its first sustainability report in 2005 and the cities' related international cooperation with diverse stakeholders, providing some multiplier effect in local SDG implementations according to own statements.

Mannheim's Voluntary Local Review – the first VLR in Germany in 2019 – is based on the 'mission statement' as representative of the whole community's commitment to implementing the SDGs, according to the motto „Think global, act local“. The 2030 mission statement is primarily a wide participatory process with a variety of dialogue opportunities that included individual citizens and the civil society; more than 2.500 residents have directly participated in discussions about SDG localization with international partners and representatives. Another 10.000 were integrated via polls and other events. Stuttgart's first international report about the city's process to SDG implementation from 2019 is called a 'baseline study depicting the SDGs' and is an executive summary of the making of the city's extensive, SDG-oriented sustainability report that was published in the same year. The document can thus serve as a supportive, cross-sectoral instrument to other municipalities who prepare their own comprehensive SDG monitoring or a VLR. Consecutively, a description of the methodological approach for the VLR, which consists of 77 indicators, is provided.

The SDG Portal www.sdg-portal.de contains more than 200 Best Practice Examples from cities, municipalities and counties. The practical examples come from the “Wegweiser Kommune” portal (www.wegweiser-kommune.de) of the Bertelsmann Stiftung and other local practical examples from the applications for the German Sustainability Award for cities and municipalities of the German Sustainability Award Foundation. The examples cover all SDGs and perform practical examples related to SDG 11 such as “Inspiring townspeople for rural life” in the county of Bautzen or related to SDG 3 “Volunteers in Nuthetal offer particularly low-threshold advice to senior citizens and their families”.

Conclusion

The federal government's sustainability strategy is a multi-level approach. Without municipal participation, it cannot be filled with meaningful contents. In a federal multi-level system, the state and local authorities must share responsibility for achieving the goals of the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Agenda. The Association of German Cities, the German Association of Counties and the German Association of Towns and Municipalities have repeatedly committed themselves to the international sustainability and climate goals and considers it necessary, to further develop existing sustainability within a multilevel strategy.

German industry advances SDGs worldwide

With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations sets common goals for sustainable development. The focus is on sustainability issues such as effective climate protection, more efficient use of scarce resources, closing material cycles, respect for human rights and fair working conditions. At the same time, the negative effects of industrial production and products are to be reduced.

German industry is committed to the guidelines of sustainable development. This includes the pillars of economy, ecology and social responsibility. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 will decisively advance the German, but above all the global modernization agenda in the future. Industry in Germany has long been driving forward the implementation of SDGs worldwide, in particular by developing innovative technologies and products. Digital technologies, for example, already enable concrete applications in all sectors that can have a major impact on SDGs, such as saving scarce resources. The consistent implementation of a circular economy will also reduce the use of scarce primary resources and thus contribute to the protection of the environment and climate. BDI has therefore launched the Circular Economy Initiative to address the issues of resource conservation and security of supply in a holistic way - from product development to recycling. The aim of the initiative is to identify technological potential and to define the necessary framework conditions for a functioning Circular Economy.

However, numerous German companies also implement other sustainability goals of the United Nations in their everyday business - from start-ups to large corporations. These include the commitment of companies to observe SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth" by implementing the UN's guiding principles for business and human rights.

In the future, industry will need even more political support in order to fulfil its role as guarantor and enabler of sustainable development worldwide. This includes protection against global competitive distortions caused by differing sustainability standards in the major industrialized countries. The SDGs should be used more intensively to achieve a common understanding of sustainability standards worldwide.

About BDI

The Federation of German Industries (BDI) communicates German industries' interests to the political authorities concerned. She offers strong support for companies in global competition. The BDI has access to a wide-spread network both within Germany and Europe, to all the important markets and to international organizations. The BDI accompanies the capturing of international markets politically. Also, she offers information and politico-economic guidance on all issues relevant to industries. The BDI is the leading organization of German industries and related service providers. She represents 40 inter-trade organizations and more than 100.000 companies with their approximately 8 million employees. Membership is optional. 15 federal representations are advocating industries' interests on a regional level.

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A Just Transition in Germany, in Europe and worldwide has a significant value for the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) to ensure a sustainable and social just future. Therefore, the DGB supports the holistic approach taken by the Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which intertwine ecological sustainability with inclusive growth and social progress. They offer a comprehensive guideline, bringing together central trade union concerns like reducing social inequalities, decent work, equal living conditions, gender equality, or effective climate protection measures. The submission of a voluntary national review (VNR) by the German government is welcomed in order to evaluate the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and gives us the opportunity to comment and point out open fields of action from a trade union perspective.

Recognition of the Social Realities

The DGB states that there is still a large discrepancy between the goals of a sustainable development and the social realities across Germany. Over the last decades the unequal distribution of income and wealth has increased sharply and remains on a high level due to a precarisation of employment, the steady decline in collective bargaining coverage, and deep changes within the German social system. According to the latest DGB distribution report published in 2021, the richest 10 percent in Germany own more than 65 percent, while half of all adults have virtually no assets or even are in debt. Further, income poverty is still a major societal problem: Currently, one in six is considered as working poor.

The Corona crisis has further exacerbated these trends. Especially lower incomes have suffered substantial financial losses, while the super-rich further increased their wealth in 2020. Worldwide, 126 million people have lost their jobs due to the Corona crisis. These developments not only increase social conflicts, but also limit the ability to act collectively. In order to tackle those deepening grievances and ensuring large societal support for the current and upcoming transformation, these realities must be clearly recognised and addressed. Acknowledging these social realities requires additional indicators to extensively monitor central SDGs like poverty (SDG 1), decent work (SDG 8), or social inequalities (SDG 5, SDG 10) that are omitted in the VNR-draft, such as:

- The proportion of companies covered by collective agreements
- The proportion of precarious employment
- Statutory co-determination rights
- The risk of poverty and the Gini coefficient
- The Gender Care Gap
- Providing gender-differentiated data on working conditions

A Different Approach is Needed to Tackle SDG 1, 5, 8 and 10

The German government itself mentions a pivotal solution to reverse these negative developments in the VNR-draft: Poverty (SDG 1) and social inequalities (SDG 5, SDG 10) should be reduced through appropriate wages and decent work (SDG 8). Acknowledging that SDG 8 is significantly contributing to the achievement of other SDGs is quite an improvement compared to the German Sustainability Strategy published earlier this year. However, the current German social, labor market and employment policies and the measures presented

in the VNR-draft are not sufficient to tackle SDG 1, 5, 8 and 10. From a trade union perspective, we need to strengthen collective bargaining and co-determination by awarding public contracts exclusively to companies covered by collective agreements. This is particularly important in the context of green recovery measures. In addition, the general application of collective agreements must be improved. Moreover, an appropriate minimum wage of at least 12 euros is necessary to protect low-income households from poverty, and public authorities need more financial and human resources to effectively enforce minimum wage regulations. A fair tax system, in which high incomes and assets are held more accountable to contribute to a just society, is needed as well. Furthermore, gender-equitable aspects should be taken into account in public investment decisions; the quota for women in management positions should be at least 30 percent.

At the European level, the German government should promote mandatory social and labour standards as well as an effective regulation of supply chains. In the international context, a Global Social Protection Fund is needed to support the implementation of social protection floors in the world's poorest countries. This would be an important contribution to compliance with the ILO Core Labour Standards and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Shaping a Just Transition

The proposed measures are of particular importance since the ongoing social-ecological transformation must secure a high level of social acceptance to be successful in the long run. However, a Just Transition towards a green economy also requires fundamental institutional changes and an active state.

Currently, there is a great divergence between climate targets and the actual implementation of climate protection measures in Germany and Europe. An overall Just Transition strategy is needed to ensure a SDG-oriented transformation which links sustainable development to social justice and decent work. Therefore, the DGB calls on the German federal government for substantial investments in climate-neutral technologies and infrastructures to enable significant emission reductions, while preventing negative distribution effects in order to contribute to SDG 7, 10 and 13. At the same time, public policies have to ensure the creation of decent and sustainable jobs, accompanied by Just Transition measures, to guarantee that no-one is left behind. Large numbers of jobs can be created through sustainable investments in infrastructure, health, public transport, housing, repairing ecosystems, and making innovative improvements to cities. In the face of the current and upcoming transformation processes, policymakers must act proactively before jobs are lost. A strong social partnership as well as strong co-determination of employees and democratic participation of the society in general is required to gain acceptance for the fundamental changes in the way we live and work.

The SDGs offer a sound guideline to identify different areas of a sustainable development. In order to implement them, a unified strategy and coordinated measures are needed to shape a Just Transition. These are still missing. The DGB and its member unions will continue to advocate for a Just Transition that will leave no-one behind. In this context the DGB supports the "[Time for 8](#)" campaign of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Where did the ambition go?



German NGO Forum on
Environment and Development

Since its last VNR in 2016, Germany has lost track of SDG implementation

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The 2021 German VNR report starts with big affirmations. A quote by Chancellor Angela Merkel promises accelerated action towards more sustainability. The report confirms the SDGs as a leading principle for German politics. The German VNR shows that the government recognizes the relevance of the SDGs in creating a more just, healthy and sustainable world. There is no knowledge gap. But unfortunately, there is an implementation gap.

Internationally, Germany is considered a champion for sustainability. This might have been the case for the SDG negotiations and the first years of their implementation. Germany contributed and supported much of the ambitious language in the SDGs, was one of the first movers in SDG reporting at the HLPF with its 2016 VNR, and in 2015 even joined a High Level Group of nine countries for fast and progressive SDG implementation. Domestically, in recent years Germany added important new elements to its sustainability governance architecture. Notably, it restructured the German Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) around the SDGs, every ministry has appointed an SDG-coordinator, and a new dialogue group on the State Secretaries' Committee for Sustainable Development was established. Unfortunately, these developments have not led to more sustainable policies. Much of the promising aspirations of the early SDGs years are now lost. Instead of accelerated action, we see decelerating relevance.

We need an accelerated actions SDG strategy now!

The 2020/2021 revision of the GSDS serves as the basis for Germany's 2021 VNR. Yet it is important to note, that the strategy has received a great deal of criticism by civil society. This includes the fact that it tends to list selected policies that are going well in great detail, but inadequately deals with negative effects of unsustainable policies. In order to have an impact on decision-making, a proper sustainability strategy should reflect on problems, voice criticism, find solutions, follow-up on implementation and come up with consequences for non-compliance. The GSDS is not a tool for any of this. Furthermore, of the 75 indicators in the GSDS, only about half cater to the 247 international SDG indicators. While there might be relevance in choosing our own national indicators and limiting the number, the GSDS cannot be called an SDG implementation strategy, as it simply does not reflect most of the SDG targets and indicators at all. Therefore, 6 years after the SDG adoption Germany still has no proper SDG implementation strategy or plan. Consequently, civil society has been calling for a new "Accelerated Actions SDG Strategy" with binding goals and targets!

We need transformation now!

The German VNR in line with the GSDS mentions **six main areas of transformation**: Wellbeing and Social Justice; Climate and Energy, Circular Economy, Building and Transport; Agriculture and Food Systems; and Health. Progress in these areas is much needed, as these sectors have been missing progressive policies since the adoption of the SDGs and the last German VNR. While we welcome that the government specifically highlights the need for transformation in these areas, the VNR only touches upon them and does not sufficiently acknowledge their problems and need for solutions. Some examples:

Germany's export-oriented industrial agriculture has not only led to biodiversity loss, water pollution, and soil degradation in many areas, but also contributed to a concentration of agriculture in the hands of a few huge farms, pushing small-scale farmers out of business in Germany as well as worldwide. As an example: Of the 33 million tons of milk produced in Germany in 2019, 50% were exported to the EU or internationally. A quantity that can only be generated by importing enormous amounts of animal fodder from South America and other regions. The German agricultural model thus contributes to deforestation and climate change in the Global South. Furthermore, it has also led to a dramatic decrease of farms in the country itself. While the overall size of area used by agriculture in Germany has remained the same with about 16.6 Million Hectares, in the last 10 years an average of 3560 farms have closed for good – per year! These developments have only increased in speed in the last years, with little hope resting on the EU-GAP reforms. All the while Germany proclaimed at the 2016 VNR to increase organic

farming to 20% by 2020, yet we have still only reached 9.6% in 2020. The 20%-target has been moved to 2030 and even the 2021 VNR itself suggests that in line with current trends this target will not be reached.

As for the **energy sector**, the last years have seen the same powerful bottom-up climate protest movements as the rest of the world. Yet, Germany has lost its place in the line of champions for a progressive energy transition. It lags behind the EU targets in CO2 reduction and an actual coal power plant went on the grid in 2020. Its goals to reach 65% renewable energies by 2030 is not only less than needed in order to reach the Paris Agreement, but will most likely not be achieved either, as the trajectory hints at only 49% by 2030. The German energy transition has always been mainly community-led with most of the systems run by citizens, cooperatives or public service providers. Yet in recent years, there have been ever new obstacles for a community-led roll-out of renewable energies. It is good to see that the VNR refers to the latest decision by the German Federal Court ruling that the 2019 climate protection act is in part unconstitutional. Once again, the highest court had to push the German government for more sustainable policies.

On **circular economy**, the VNR features an important sentence: "Growth needs to be decoupled from resource use." However, this is not reflected in German policies at all. Even compared to Germany's own coalition government agreement of 2018, the renewed Resource Strategy of 2020 falls behind in terms of human rights in supply chains as well as binding environmental and human rights standards in EU trade policy. Security of supply for the German industry is still the main driver behind German resource policies, and the German industry is the fifth largest consumer of metal resources worldwide. The country's waste production is yet another example of unsustainable practices that keep getting worse. Germany produced 417 million tons of waste in 2018, each German uses 16,000 kg of resources annually, of that only 12% from recycled materials. We need to drastically change this resource waste, stop exporting our trash to the Global South and introduce ambitious circular economy and reduction (sufficiency) policies.

Finally, when it comes to **social justice, wellbeing and health**, Germany's labour market participation is high and real wages have increased over the last years. Until the beginning of the COVID-pandemic, unemployment went down, and during the pandemic, governmental supported short-time work has been an important social and economic factor. Yet, poverty numbers have been going up in recent years as economic growth and increased wealth does not benefit society as a whole. 15.9 % of Germans are at risk of poverty, especially vulnerable groups and people working in low-wage jobs. Germany is one of the richest countries in the world. It is unfathomable why people are living in poverty in Germany at all. COVID-19 has also shown how the privatization of care and health has taken its toll: Hospitals are closing, especially in rural areas, compared to other OECD countries nurses have to care for a much higher number of patients, and the lack of nursing staff lies between 63,000 to 120,000.

We need a Sustainable, Green and Inclusive Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has uncovered the weaknesses of our globalized economic system, its destructive effects on the environment and people, and the lack of social justice worldwide. Billions of euros in recovery funds are putting our economies on pathways that will shape our societies for decades. These recovery packages must deliver a fairer, safer, greener and healthier future for all with the SDGs as a guiding principle. Yet, the recovery plans of the German government and the European Commission have huge gaps in this regard. For a sustainable, green and inclusive recovery, we need a waiver of patent rights for COVID-19 vaccines, structural and financial improvements of our social system and an economy linked to socially and ecologically transformative policies.

Germany has to do better!

We welcome the chance to highlight our reflections on the VNR in this annex. However, we would have expected a much more participatory process. This is especially true for the VNR report itself, which we could only comment on shortly before its finalization without much real influence on the text. In our opinion, this falls behind best practices from other countries, for instance Austria, Finland and Norway, that have included civil society in the writing process or have added CSO analysis for each SDG within the VNR report itself. We consider the VNR an important stepping-stone in preparing a strong sustainability process for the next government. With federal and several state elections coming up, the SDGs need to receive much higher priority in the next government.



Youth Perspective

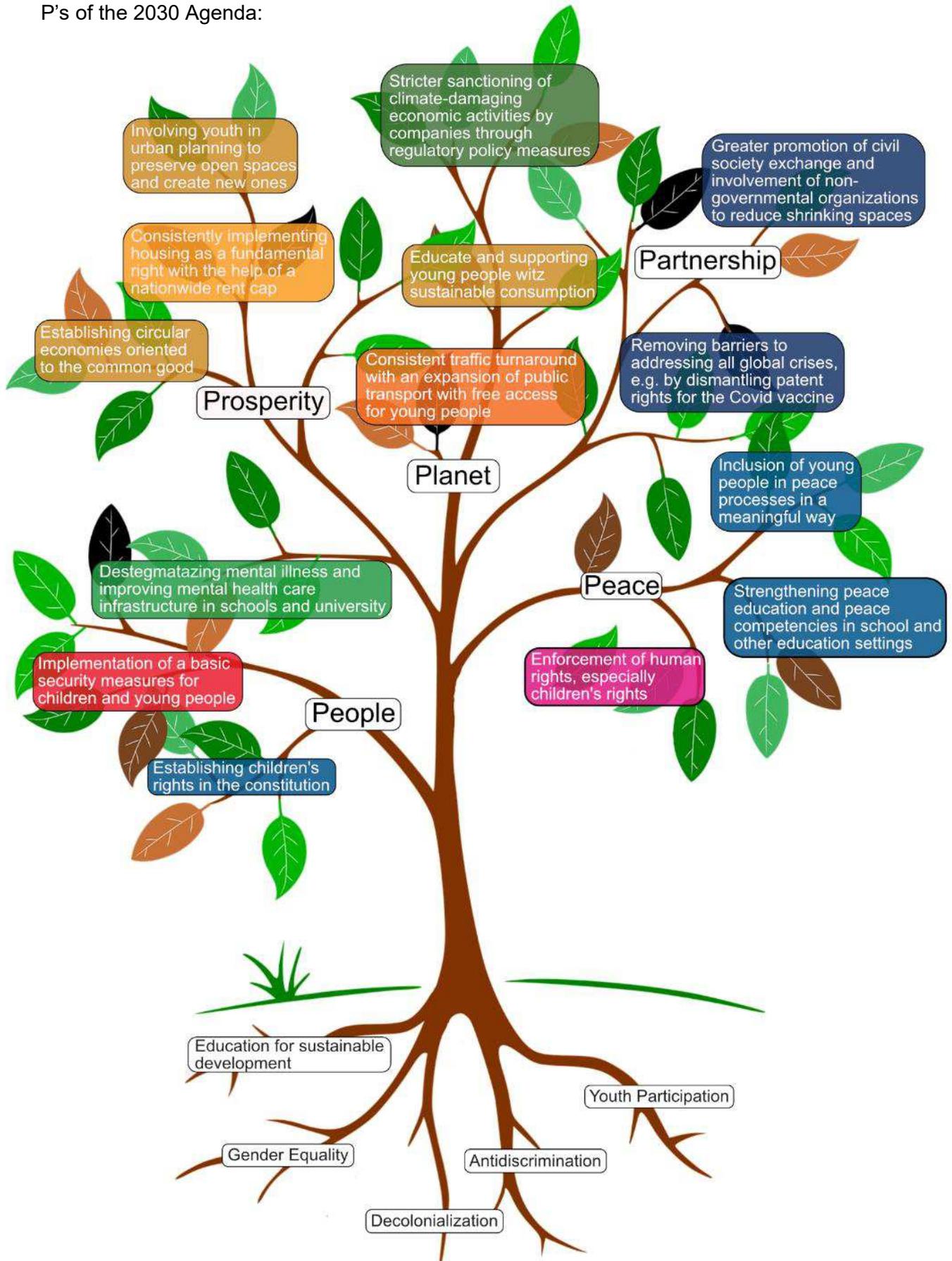
Implantation of SDGs in Germany and on the international Level

From now on, the international state community has nine years left to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda. Until now, neither Germany nor any other state is on track to fulfil the complete agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals until 2030. Therefore, accelerated action is needed as well as the identification of key drivers and enablers for a sustainable development with, in and through Germany. This paper aims to present and to elaborate on identified cross-cutting themes that are crucial preconditions for a successful transformation on an international and national level. One of the most necessary defaults for a long-lasting sustainable development is high-quality education; accessible for everyone. This means that schools and other formal and non-formal educational institutions need to anchor Education for Sustainable Development (abbr.: ESD) structurally in their curricula and places of non-formal education, such as youth-led associations, must be strengthened financially and politically by providing the physical space to create learning locations. Education is key to raise knowledge about complex interrelations and helps to raise the social acceptance for eco-friendly policy measures. To ensure an educational accessibility for all, Germany must tackle its still existing inequalities between people with and without disabilities, between people with and without migration backgrounds and last but not least between all genders. Therefore, all gaps between genders must be eliminated, such as the pay gap or the digital gap, and a total equality of opportunities must become a standard in all spheres of life. This means to establish an overall feministic policy framework and to achieve empowerment of women and other genders in all areas of society; especially in women-based areas such as care work. In this context, there needs to be a better distribution between the genders. Existing inequalities within a country are the most toxic circumstance for any democracy; its consequence is an increasing right-wing populism as it is currently on the rise in many European countries. It is not uncommon for populist attitudes to develop into radical right-wing tendencies, often accompanied by racist or discriminatory attitudes. This doesn't only increase the de facto social inequalities, but also the feeling of inferiority of the people affected by discrimination. Social cohesion gets endangered and a peaceful coexistence becomes a distant prospect. For this reason, Germany must take a clear stand: Racist and discriminatory hostilities must no longer be tolerated and need to be prosecuted more strongly under criminal law. In order to ensure an anti-racist and discrimination-free coexistence within society, educational units and trainings on the topic of anti-discrimination and prevention of radicalisation must get more financially supported by the state. Existing inequalities among different countries have emerged at the expense of the environment and the exploitation of resources. To combat these inequalities, a solidary international cooperation on eye-level needs to be established. Aside from the re-evaluation of the patent protection laws this also a fully decolonized cooperation. A complete decolonization entails a remaining value creation in the producing country and socially and ecologically binding due diligence. Especially when it comes to exporting countries from the global south. This duty of diligence must be strictly monitored and internationally sanctioned in the event of a violation. The last and most important key driver for a successful decade of action is the rise of meaningful and structural youth inclusion and participation, as the overall aim of the transformation is the recreation of justice between the generations. Young people must finally be understood as an integral part of the search for solutions. Including young people in consultations ensures that the interests of future generations get considered in a significant way. Short-sighted decisions can



therefore be avoided as younger generations have an intrinsic interest in living on a healthy and well-functioning planet.

Next to the elaborated cross-cutting key enablers for sustainable development, there do exist various other ideas and visions on how the SDGs can be quickly implemented among the five P's of the 2030 Agenda:



The 2030 Agenda must become the guiding principle of German policy

Statement on the occasion of the Voluntary National Review 2021

Nearly six years ago, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda. The countries involved declared their intention to change the world for the better by 2030 by jointly tackling hunger and poverty, climate change and resource consumption worldwide and leaving no one behind. Germany, too, committed itself to this historic undertaking. The German government is now presenting its progress to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2021 in the Voluntary National Review (VNR). We welcome the fact that VENRO has the opportunity to make a statement on this too – both in the present document, which will be published in an annex to the VNR, and through an input together with other German stakeholders during the official VNR presentation at the HLPF.

The worldwide track record in implementing the 2030 Agenda is disastrous

The current track record of implementing the 2030 Agenda is abysmal. Inequality within and among countries is increasing. The corona pandemic has exacerbated the trend. It particularly severely affects population groups that are already marginalized and vulnerable. According to the United Nations, up to 124 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 alone. The number of people suffering from chronic hunger also increased by 83 to 132 million in 2020. Many health systems are severely under-resourced, and more than half of the world's population has no access to social security systems. At the same time, environmental degradation and climate change are advancing to an alarming extent. Floods, droughts and cyclones are causing great damage worldwide. Especially poorer countries are increasingly struggling to mitigate the consequences of the multiple crises. The number of states that are insolvent or have unsustainable debts threatens to reach a new peak.

The German government has taken important steps in recent years to promote sustainable policies and raise awareness of the subject of sustainability. The German National Review provides good insights into this. However, the efforts made do not do justice to the dimensions of the global challenges. Above all, the activities lack political coherence and a comprehensive global orientation. Too often the negative external effects (spillover effects) of Germany's actions on globally sustainable development are not taken into account. It is high time to fight global economic and social inequality more vigorously and to finally make the 2030 Agenda the guiding principle of German policy, as in this regard Germany is falling far short of what would be necessary and also possible. Specifically, the task is now to act in solidarity also at a global level in times of crisis while at the same time systematically addressing the structural and systemic causes of the multiple crises.

Policies must reflect solidarity with the people in the global South

The corona pandemic makes it abundantly clear that global crises cannot be tackled at the level of the individual state. One pressing challenge is the just distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines. The consequences of the pandemic must also be mitigated in solidarity. This requires targeted measures at the international level on gender equality and support for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly or people with disabilities. Appreciable debt relief is necessary in order for poorer countries to be able to afford expenditures on food, health and social security that are essential for survival. Germany must strongly support this and must spend significantly larger amounts in future than is currently planned to end poverty and hunger. With the immediate action programme on corona, the German government has made

additional funds available for partner countries in the global South in the short term. This was an important step in the right direction. However, according to the cabinet's decision on benchmark figures, the budget of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is to shrink considerably next year. That would be disastrous. Instead, we need reliable financing for official development cooperation, which should not fall below the level of the federal budget for 2021.

The climate crisis demands a more ambitious climate policy

Germany must do more to live up to its responsibility for its part in causing the climate crisis. We welcome that the German government wants to step up its climate protection plans and is now aiming to reach greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045. But the measures and financial resources deployed so far are by far insufficient to reach this goal. Germany must make much more rapid progress on emission reduction, energy transition and climate-friendly agriculture. We will not be able to put a stop to the climate crisis without higher commitments on international climate financing. We therefore call on policymakers in Germany to increase the funds for climate protection and adaptation in poorer countries to eight billion euros annually.

We need a more sustainable economic model

Our economic system is currently based mainly on growth and on the exploitation of humans and nature. The lifestyle in Germany and other industrialized nations contributes significantly to the perpetuation of inequality. If we want to enable all people and generations to live in dignity within the planetary boundaries, we cannot rely solely on innovative technologies and increases in efficiency. We must also change our conceptions of growth and wealth and make our lifestyle socially and ecologically sustainable.

In particular, this change must also be promoted politically. We need binding regulations at the national and international level, for example in the area of business and human rights. The German government's decision to introduce a supply chain law at the national level is an important first step, even though there are still gaps in the law's provisions. Policymakers must now expedite the implementation, amend the law and support binding European regulations.

We must also use the huge investment in economic recovery after the corona crisis for systematically promoting a social and ecological transformation of the economy and society. In order to mobilize additional public funds for this, we also need fairer taxation of transnational corporations, financial transactions and large capital assets, as well as efficient measures against corruption and tax avoidance. Germany must take a more active role in this area in future and must advance internationally coordinated initiatives.

The German government must turn the National Sustainable Development Strategy into an effective instrument of global socio-ecological change

In Germany, the National Sustainable Development Strategy is the essential framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We welcome its revision, which was completed this year. However, the orientation of the German Sustainable Development Strategy is still not sufficient to globally promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It still has overly large gaps in this regard. Moreover, the Sustainable Development Strategy does not carry the weight in political decision-making that would be necessary in order to tackle the manifold crises and systematically work towards a transition to a globally sustainable lifestyle and economic system. Turning it into an effective instrument of change will require the joint actions of all ministries to be oriented towards it in a binding and coherent manner. An obligatory impact assessment based on ambitious sustainability criteria should be required for all federal laws. The role of parliament must also be strengthened considerably. For instance, the government should upgrade the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development to a committee and present an annual coherence report for parliament to debate.

