



Envision 4.7 Policy Paper: Cross-sectoral Cooperation



What does cross-sectoral cooperation mean in the context of SDG Target 4.7?

Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to ensure that ‘all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development’, through education for sustainable development. To fully serve this target and promote the transformative work that is needed to address today’s challenges and serve Agenda 2030, there is a need to abandon siloed tactics and prioritise cooperation.

Considering its scope, Target 4.7 directly contributes to SDG 4, inclusive and equitable quality education and life-long opportunities for all and is also an enabler for progress towards many other SDGs. The scale and ambition of SDG Target 4.7 therefore requires cross-sectoral partnerships at various levels to ensure its achievement. Such an approach further addresses the inclusiveness and leaving no one behind principles of Agenda 2030.

How can the EU promote cross-sectoral cooperation on SDG Target 4.7?

The Envision 4.7 Roadmap stresses the need to bring together and engage local and national governments, members of national parliaments, the private sector, civil society, EU institutions, the Council of Europe and United Nations system, academics, media, youth and educators, among others. The Roadmap highlights that only through this approach will it be possible to promote, strategize and mobilize adequate resources for the implementation of Target 4.7. This kind of multi-stakeholder engagement will address the need for improved cooperation and coordination at cross-European, national, regional and local levels and across different policy areas.

The EU has until recently coordinated a high-level multi-stakeholder platform on the SDGs.¹ The platform brought together stakeholders from civil society, non-governmental organisations, the private and corporate sector in regular meetings to support and advise the European Commission on the implementation of SDGs at local, regional, national and EU level. EU Member States have also invested in stakeholder participation to advance the SDGs,² although recent reports have stated that only around a third of the countries fully enable participation. As part of its better regulation agenda,³ the European Commission also aims to expand its consultation processes and consider the views of citizens and stakeholders through its ‘Have your say’ website.⁴

Bridge 47 commends this type of initiatives and would welcome a new iteration of the multi-stakeholder platform, as well as the set-up of mechanisms for grassroots stakeholder participation, where key enablers for Agenda 2030, such as Target 4.7, can be advanced. Indeed, Bridge 47 believes that adapting a comprehensive and holistic approach to Target 4.7 in consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders is the only way of assuring its implementation and of the broader Agenda. Such a framework would be supportive of the European Commission’s efforts to systematically mainstream the SDGs throughout its priorities.



¹European Multi-Stakeholder Platform for SDGs. The platform’s mandate expired in December 2019.

²Study: Europe’s approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: good practices and the way forward, European Parliament 2019.

³Better regulation agenda.

⁴Have Your Say.

⁵The mandate of the multi-stakeholder platform on SDGs ended on 31st December 2019.



A European Green Deal

For the EU to successfully transform itself from a high- to low-carbon economy, while improving people's quality of life, there is a need to build the capacities of all individuals to jointly create systemic change – this will require coordination between multiple stakeholders, such as education providers but also private sector representatives, civil society and policy makers. The need for shifting mindsets through stakeholder involvement has been already somewhat addressed by EU's LIFE programme,⁶ but stakeholder consultations and joint initiatives must be taken at much broader and higher levels to make this happen.



A Europe fit for the digital age

The EU's commitment to ensure that the digital transformation serves social, economic and environmental purposes, in full respect with the principles of sustainable development, requires new capacities and capabilities. The Digital Competence Framework has already advanced collaboration as a key component, while being 'aware of cultural and generational diversity' and advancing participatory citizenship. This element should be reinforced should no one be left behind in Europe's digital future.



An Economy that works for the people

For all Europeans to have the same opportunities to thrive, EU's social strategy needs to include all citizens as active players in defining how to turn their rights into reality – this has been a flagship ambition of the European Pillar of Social Rights and continues to be embraced by the communication on A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions.⁷ Social dialogue, cross-sectoral consultation and multi-stakeholder dialogue enables critical and engaged contributions towards upholding social rights.



A stronger Europe in the World

Within the new European Consensus on Development,⁸ the EU states that 'sustainable development requires a holistic and cross-sector policy approach and is ultimately an issue of governance which needs to be pursued in partnership with all stakeholders and on all levels.' It commits to holding consultations and engaging with stakeholders to ensure that its development efforts deliver on Agenda 2030.



Promoting our European Way of Life

The EU is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union) – all key elements which Target 4.7 aims to promote. The future European Education Area will be a key initiative to reinforce these values. For this to be successful, the Council of the EU has called for reinforced strategic partnerships and further cooperation to inform education and training systems.⁹



A new push for European Democracy

The EU recognises that citizens need a stronger role in the EU decision-making process and priority-setting – this realisation is central to the discussions on the Future of Europe. The future Justice, Rights and Values programme already recognises that 'citizenship is a good policy field for developing synergies between the current funding programmes for education, culture and EU citizenship'.¹⁰ Involving citizens as well as other key stakeholders in consultations on processes which will impact their future is essential to achieving systemic change.

⁶Regulation for the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE), 2014-2020.

⁷European Commission Communication, A Strong Social Europe of Just Transitions, January 2020.

⁸The New European Consensus on Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, our Future', 2017.

⁹Council Resolution on further developing the European Education Area to support future-oriented education and training systems, 18 November 2019.

¹⁰Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Rights and Values programme, 2018.

Recommendations

For the EU to successfully implement the SDGs while advancing its priorities, and in line with the recommendations of the Envision 4.7 Roadmap, **Bridge 47 calls on all actors to:**

1. Create a pan-European overarching strategy for Target 4.7, including strategies for cross-sectoral cooperation, to be implemented at all levels.

Bridge 47 further calls on EU member states to:

2. Establish cross-sectoral and multilateral or multi-stakeholder groups linked to SDG Target 4.7 at national level. Such groups should receive financial support both from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education and should initiate and support the co-creation of relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of Target 4.7.
3. Strengthen existing multi-stakeholder groups by ensuring wider representation, including from the private sector, business and civil society.
4. Foster SDG networks at national, and in some contexts sub-national levels, to promote and work towards achieving the SDGs, including Target 4.7.

Bridge 47 further calls on the European Commission to:

5. Renew the mandate of the European Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the SDGs.
6. Strengthen existing multi-stakeholder groups, including with stakeholders linked to SDG Target 4.7, by ensuring wide representation, including from member states, the private sector, business, civil society, EU and relevant DGs (for instance including DG Education and Culture as well as DG DEVCO).
7. Encourage the participation of these groups in the design, implementation and monitoring of EU programmes for sustainable development, including with a view to assess operationalisation of Target 4.7.

Bridge 47 further calls on the European Parliament to:

8. Take an active role in promoting the SDGs and Target 4.7 in Agenda 2030 networks and multi-stakeholder groups at EU level.



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