SUSTAINABILITY TRANSITIONS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK (STAF)

SUMMARY OF PURPOSE, TECHNICAL FUNDAMENTALS, AND BENEFITS OF PILOTING

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EU sustainability policies: Key drivers

- **The European Green Deal (EGD) (2019)**
  - *"a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use"*.

- **Recovery Plan for Europe (2020)**
  - Green economy is a central theme.

- **Cohesion Policy (CP) (2021-2027)**
  - Its aim is to *"promote [the Union's] overall harmonious development, [by] the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion"*.
  - Three quarters of the total funding are allocated to less developed regions.
  - A key implementing instrument of the European Green Deal: min. 30% of ERDF resources allocated to Policy Objective 2, Just Transition Fund dedicated to facilitate the transition to climate neutral economy

A focus on five investment priorities, where the EU is best placed to deliver:

1. A **smarter** Europe - innovative and smart economic transformation.
2. A **greener**, low-carbon Europe.
3. A **more connected** Europe - mobility and regional ICT connectivity.
4. A **more social** Europe - implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights.
5. Europe **closer to citizens** - sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas through local initiatives.

Specific policy objectives for a greener, low-carbon Europe are linked to the EGD:

Cohesión Policy Objective 2 - specific objectives

1. Promoting **energy efficiency** measures
2. Promoting **renewable** energy
3. Developing **smart energy systems**, grids and storage at local level
4. Promoting **climate change adaptation**, risk prevention and disaster resilience
5. Promoting **sustainable water** management
6. Promoting the transition to a **circular economy**
7. Enhancing **biodiversity**, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution

Monitoring and Verification:
o Bimonthly progress reports to the Cohesion Open Data Platform.
o Annual reviews in policy dialogues between the implementors and the EC.

Sustainability Transitions

Sustainability Transitions are defined as "*Long-term, society-wide processes that depend critically on the emergence and spread of diverse forms of innovation triggering alternative ways of thinking and living – new social practices, technologies, business models, nature-based solutions*". Key questions to ask are:

How effective are governments and public administrations at achieving long-term sustainability transitions?

How can such effectiveness be assessed?

How can the impact of Cohesion investments be enhanced?

Sustainability Transitions Assessment Framework – Key Objectives

The European Commission partnered with the World Bank to develop a Sustainability Transition Assessment Framework (STAF)

1. The key value proposition of the exercise is facilitating to achieve the goals under Objective 2 of the Cohesion Policy, through sustainability transitions;

2. Identification of key institutional and capacity bottlenecks that may need to be resolved.

Sustainability Transitions Assessment Framework – Phased Approach

1. **Development of the Sustainability Assessment Framework STAF) - completed**

2. **Piloting the STAF – in progress**

   Call for EOI Issued; deadline June 20, 2022

   https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-expressions-of-interest/

3. **Adjusting and Finalizing the STAF – after piloting is concluded**

The Sustainability Transition Assessment Framework (STAF) - Basics

Purpose
- **To assess and contribute to the improvement of MS' capacity to support sustainability transitions.**
- To enhance the effectiveness of CP resources during the 2021-2027 cycle.
- To identify capacity gaps in the design and implementation of sustainability policies and investments.

Scope
- STAF assesses government capacity for transitions towards increased sustainability;
- it covers **six cross cutting areas;** and
- **ten sectors** related to the specific objectives of the second objective of the Cohesion Policy.

Sectors	Cross-cutting areas
Energy efficiency	Tax policy
Renewable energies	Public expenditure
Smart energy systems	Distributional impact
Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience	Land administration
Water	Strategic communication
Circular economy	Behavioral insights
Biodiversity	
Forestry	
Urban development	
Air quality	
Just transition	

STAF – What's in the package?

- **Content**

  - STAF consists of 17 multiple-choice questionnaires.
  - Guidance notes with background information and instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire.

- **Principles**

  - User-friendly (comes with guidance and results are computed automatically)
  - Comprehensive (sectors, government levels)
  - Comparable (within countries between sectors, and between countries)
  - Standardized (uses only one matrix, scoring system, format)
  - De jure and de facto

Key Benefits of Piloting STAF for a participating Member State

- Comprehensive state-of-the-art assessment of Government capacity in eleven (11) sectors and six (6) cross-cutting areas.
- Obtain a holistic improvement plan for strengthening the Government's capacity.
- Targeted institutional and technical advice delivered during piloting by STAF's team of experts.
- Institutional and technical advice on leveraging the assessment results.
- An excellent starting point for continuous tracking and evaluating improvements in government capacity.
- Strengthened institutional and human capacity to conduct STAF again and/or to conduct other self-assessments.
- Results will be based on findings 'owned' by government stakeholders, thus increasing the likelihood they can lead to actions and actual change.

DISCUSSION

THANK YOU

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ANNEX SLIDES

STAF Structure

Structure

STAF assesses how different **government capacity attributes** perform against **sustainability transition features**.

Attributes of Govt. Capacity

Features of sustainability transitions

	Trade-offs & Synergies	Long-term horizons	Evidence based	Resources	Social inclusión & Buy-in
Leadership	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment
Strategy & Legal Framework	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment
Coordination	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment
Policy Instruments	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment
Accountability	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment	Assessment

STAF – Example of Questionnaire

Criterion	Keyquestion	Subquestion	Answers	Score	Selection
2 Economic tools	2.1 Are there sufficient and sufficiently diverse financial, fiscal and economic instruments?	2.1.1. Is there sufficient information on the cost recovery levels for water services?	There is no information on cost recovery levels.	1	4
			There is only information on cost recovery levels for domestic users.	2	
			There is information on cost recovery levels for domestic users and industry but not for farmers.	3	
			There is information on cost recovery levels for domestic users, industry and farmers. However, it is not sufficient.	4	
			There is information on cost recovery levels for domestic users, industry and farmers. It is sufficient for most cases.	5	
			There is sufficient information on cost recovery levels for domestic users, industry and farmers.	6	
		2.1.2. Are there enough financial revenues (taxes, tariffs, transfers) to cover operational and maintenance costs and long-term assets renewal for water services?	There is no cost recovery for water services.	1	5
			Cost recovery exists in the legal framework but is not implemented.	2	
			Cost recovery is implemented but at a level much too low for sustainability of the water services.	3	
			Costs recovery is implemented at a level a little too low for sustainabilty of the water services.	4	
			Costs recovery is implemented at a level that allows for sustainabilty of the water services.	5	
			Costs recovery is implemented at a level that allows for sustainabilty of the water services and includes environmental and resource costs.	6	

STAF – Translating Scoring into Information

Attribute	Leadership	Score	Average
Criteria	1. Champion for Change	3,0	2,7
	2. Implementation Capacity	3,0	
	3. Holistic leadership	2,0	

Attribute	Strategy and Legal Framework	Score	Average
Criteria	1. Strategy	5,0	4,7
	2. Investment	4,0	
	3. Legislation	5,0	

Attribute	Coordination	Score	Average
Criteria	1. Forms of organization	3,0	3,6
	2. Vertical coordination	2,0	
	3. Horizontal coordination	4,0	
	4. Other stakeholders	5,0	
	5. Transboundary	4,0	

Attribute	Policy Instruments	Score	Average
Criteria	1. Policy instruments	6,0	5,5
	2. Economic tools	5,0	

Attribute	Accountability	Score	Average
Criteria	1. Implementation	1,0	1,7
	2. Transparency	2,0	
	3. Information and monitoring and evaluation	2,0	

Government capacity to implement sustainability transitions on water
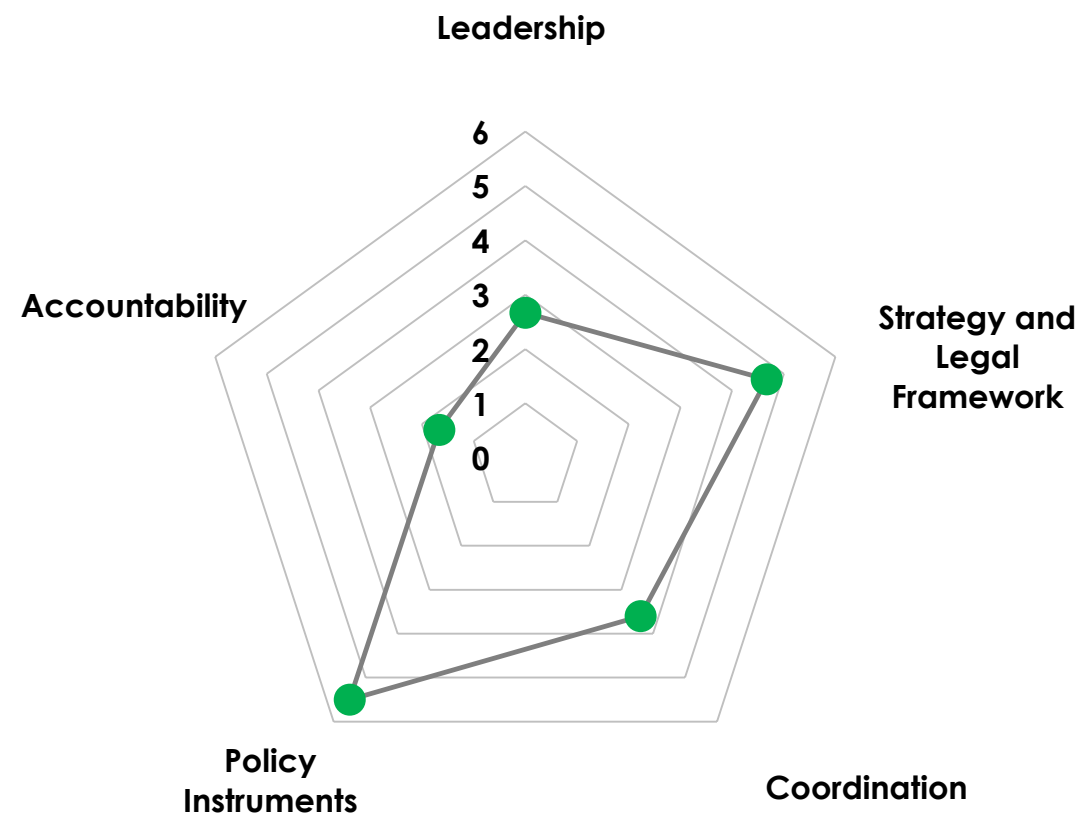
STAF – Operation of Questionnaires

STEP 1 - Organizing the assessment
- o   Installing a steering committee with representatives of the different sectors and areas.
- o   Agreeing on tasks and responsibilities.

STEP 2 - Communicating the assessment

STEP 3 - Assessment training

STEP 4 - Undertaking the assessment
- o   Selecting respondents.
- o   Backing the answers up with evidence.
- o   Suggesting areas for improvement.

STEP 5 - Reporting the results

STEP 6 - Developing improvement plans
- o   Review of the assessment results, identification of key capacity gaps and their drivers.
- o   Formulation and prioritization of improvement actions based on criteria (e.g. effectiveness, efficacy, resources, political feasibility, time-horizon, etc.)
- o   Formulation of an improvement plan.
- o   Monitoring, evaluation and review of the improvement plan.

> **The analysis will permit the identification and prioritization of a number of 'pinch-points' and related recommended actions, in both horizontal and thematic areas.**