



Briefing

Debate: The Scottish Government's inaugural Contribution to Development Report

October 2018

[Scotland's International Development Alliance](#) (the Alliance) has over 140 member organisations committed to creating a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats in a similar number of countries. Our members include NGOs, academic institutions, the public sector and businesses.

International Development for the right reasons

The Alliance welcomes this report, and the Scottish Government's clear commitment to international development, providing "ethical leadership on global issues" such as alleviating poverty and inequality, protecting human rights and tackling climate change as set out by the First Minister in [a recent speech](#) at the Alliance Annual Conference.

It is right that international development assistance is contextualised in terms of our role as a good global citizen, and "not primarily for our own national interest" as the FM said. Sustainable development is necessary for everyone, everywhere. The targets under the UN Sustainable Development Goals must be acted upon universally.

Policy Coherence and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The Alliance particularly welcomes the government's explicit commitment to policy coherence in this inaugural report. Policy coherence is recognised by the [OECD](#), the [UN](#) and many [national Governments](#) as being vital to the achievement of sustainable development.

Policy coherence is set out under Goal 17 of the SDGs as an explicit target for national governments to work towards (target 17.14), and the principle underpins the entire 2030 Agenda. Policy coherence, as defined by the UN, means having an integrated approach that includes social justice concerns, environmental sustainability and inclusive economic growth aligned to the poverty eradication agenda.

Partnership and alignment to NPF

The Alliance and its members also welcome the commitment to working with civil society in future iterations of this report. Partnership, like policy coherence, is set out as one of the underlying principles of the [2030 Agenda](#) (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace & Partnership). The report sets out its partnership approach to collaborating with civil

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society, specifically network organisations such as ourselves and others. This is highlighted by their commitment to fund such organisations to engage more people and organisations in Scotland about international development.

This inaugural report also rightly positions itself in the context of the newly refreshed National Performance Framework (NPF), which now includes an internationally focused outcome, from which the report explicitly takes its name. The Alliance supports the evolution of this report and the link to the NPF, as it is embedded into wider Scottish society, making the interlinkages across all 11 outcomes more explicit.

Recommendations

1. **Embed a culture of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development across the whole of Government**

There is now more evidence than ever showing that we are not doing enough globally nor domestically to meet the challenges of sustainable development.

With high level political backing from the First Minister, and the explicit statements in support of policy coherence in this inaugural report, the Alliance and its membership urge the Scottish Government to do more to achieve policy coherence for sustainable development. The following steps seem sensible in the context of the SDGs and the new NPF:

- **policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD)** should be defined in all future iterations of this report as “an approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making.” ([OECD 2018](#))
- The **analytical framework for PCSD requires information and analysis of interlinkages between all policy areas**, not only of those which perform well. In other words, future reference to PCSD, must not only look at **synergies** (the interaction of two or more forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects), but also to **trade-offs** (such as short-term economic gain pit against long term environmental loss) and **spill-overs** (secondary effect that follows from a primary effect).
- Policy coherence requires coordination across the whole of government, so **the NPF and the Performance Team within the Scottish Government is a natural place for the PCSD approach to sit**, in terms of anticipating, balancing and reconciling divergent policy pressures, including conflicting domestic and international priorities; opposing economic, social and environmental concerns; competing sectoral interests;

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and reconciling short-term priorities with the long-term policy direction integral to attaining sustainable development objectives.

- The Scottish Government should commit to using [the OECD framework for PCSD](#) to look beyond government policy, and **consider sustainable development in terms of civil society, public and private actors as well**. The Scottish Government's 'Contribution to Development Report' should reflect this approach - looking beyond government funded initiatives, while using an inclusive and multi-sectoral approach to co-creating the report.

2. Future iterations of the report – broaden scope, adopt biannual focus and ensure Committee scrutiny

In order for future iterations of this report to be as meaningful as possible, the Scottish Government should aim to produce **a more detailed report every second year**, that takes into consideration PCSD in different policy areas (in a similar way to the World Bank's world development report). Responsibility for producing this report should lie with the international development team, but they should be supported by colleagues across government, and **all ministerial portfolios should be considered and referenced through a PCSD analysis**.

The report states that “the naming of this report deliberately aligns with the language of the new National Outcome for the Scottish Government's international work in the NPF, to ensure coherence with that wider framework.” (p12) Said framework was designed to be **inclusive and representative of the whole of Scotland, not just the Government**.

As such, future iterations of this report should **acknowledge that international development efforts out of Scotland go beyond Scottish Government funded projects**, and should reference the contributions of the many charities, businesses, faith groups and academic institutions who operate in countries outwith the Scottish Government's 4 priority countries. The [Alliance membership](#) alone represents organisations working in over 140 Countries.

The Alliance also urges effective **scrutiny of all future iterations of this report through a stand-alone committee, or the existing Culture, Tourism, Europe and External Affairs Committee**, and if a PCSD approach is adopted, a Cabinet Sub-Committee would be useful to maintain senior political support, an essential part of achieving better policy coherence.

For further information, please contact Lewis Ryder-Jones

Email lewis@intdevalliance.scot or call 0131 281 0896

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