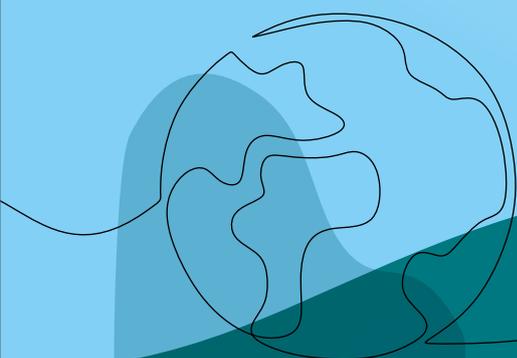




# *Germany's Third Voluntary National Review to the HLPF 2025*

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The  
Federal Government





The  
Federal Government

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# 1.

## Foreword – Participation Works!



Human dignity shall be inviolable – this provision of the German Basic Law sets forth the commitment and principle guiding action by the German Government.

Germany stands for peace, freedom and prosperity. Sustainable development offers the opportunity of a bright future for all. The [German Sustainable Development Strategy \(GSDS\)](#) – the basis for this report – sets out a correspondingly positive and comprehensive vision. A “sustainable” Germany must be a progressive, innovative, open and liveable country. It is characterised by a high quality of life and effective environmental protection. It is integrated, inclusive and excludes no one. It creates opportunities for the equal participation of everyone in all areas and at all levels. It fulfils its international responsibility.

Implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial to achieve these objectives. The German Government is therefore committed, at national and international level, to their accelerated implementation, an integrated approach and the strengthening of the basic principles enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. This includes Germany’s fulfilment of its responsibility within the United Nations.

With the third Voluntary National Review (VNR), Germany signals its resolute support for strong multilateralism – particularly in response to current challenges – and reaffirms its commitment. Germany continues to be a reliable partner!

With the VNR 2025, we are making the comprehensive national strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda in Germany – the [German Sustainable Development Strategy 2025 \(GSDS 2025\)](#) – accessible to the international community, with selected examples. Following the recommendations made in the [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#), Germany has identified six areas of transformation and five policy areas with considerable leverage, which serve as the reference point for the individual examples of actions presented in this report. The areas of transformation clearly identify synergies and conflicts within the SDGs and focus on specific needs for change. The VNR website, linked in this report, provides additional and more detailed content. A further aim is to identify challenges and potential for scaling up the implementation of the Agenda. This topic is addressed in a separate chapter for the first time.

The selected examples offer an insight into developments and progress made since the last VNR in 2021, covering the period to June 2025. The measures listed in the report or future measures arising from it with financial impacts do not imply a budgetary commitment, nor do they prejudice the legislator in respect of budgetary matters. All measures not covered by the federal budget and financial programming period are therefore contingent upon funding being available. The constitutional division of powers between the Federation and the federal states (*Länder*) must be duly considered.

The hybrid approach adopted for the VNR 2025, comprising a report and a website, is based on clear principles: it is target group-oriented, practice-oriented and, above all, participatory.

Target group-oriented: examples were chosen with a focus on the international sustainability community as the target group, and with the aim of contributing to peer learning among UN member states. The emphasis was on selecting examples that may be of particular interest to an international readership and encourage shared learning.

Practice-oriented: the report has a clear and transparent structure, based around key questions, with a selection of examples highlighted in the publication.

Participatory: we ensured the intensive involvement of stakeholders from civil society, business, the scientific community, the *Länder* and municipalities, particularly young people, in the VNR preparation process, the report itself, the presentation of the VNR at the High-Level Political Forum in New York in July 2025, and the post-VNR 2025 process.

Furthermore, an international peer learning process was conducted with six other countries in order to facilitate the international exchange of experience on challenges, success factors and lessons learned in the preparation of VNRs. At the Second UNDESA Global Workshop for 2025 VNR Countries, which was hosted by Germany in Berlin, German stakeholders participated in the international exchange of experience on the VNR process.

The German Government and stakeholders discussed and jointly developed content for the VNR 2025. The boxes with quotations contained within the text reflect the positions of relevant stakeholders and are intended to illustrate the diversity of perspectives.

The result is this report, which has been greatly enriched by this cooperation and exchange. As it shows: Participation works!



**For further information  
on the VNR process, go to  
[www.vnr-germany.de/  
vnr-en/process](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/process)**

# 2.

Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda:

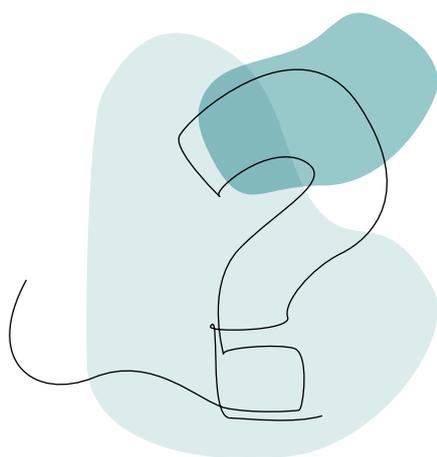
## Features of sustainability governance in Germany



In Germany, the 2030 Agenda is implemented at three levels: national (*in Germany*), bilateral (*with Germany*) and multilateral (*supported by Germany*). Sustainability governance in Germany encompasses structures for steering, implementing, monitoring and evaluating sustainability policy. Two aspects are crucial in this context: institutional cooperation with all relevant social groups, and vertical integration of sustainability policy in collaboration with the *Länder* and municipalities.

## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ Germany has established viable institutional structures and processes, which are being continuously reviewed and improved, in order to steer, implement and evaluate sustainability policy. This sustainability governance serves to ensure effectiveness and binding commitment and includes evidence-based monitoring for the purposes of follow-up.
- ➔ German sustainability policy relies on a systemic approach. One example is the consistent focus on, and review of, sustainability goals in the legislative process (see Section 3.7).
- ➔ Sustainability strategies are developed at the federal, *Land* and municipal level. The municipalities are agents and drivers of sustainable development.
- ➔ The GSDS 2025 was developed in a comprehensive and participatory interministerial process. It considers cross-border spillover effects at every stage.



Key question:

**What are examples of aspects of German sustainability governance that are particularly relevant for implementing the 2030 Agenda?**

## 2.1 Progress and developments: the 2030 Agenda in German sustainability policy since 2021

The international community's adoption of the 2030 Agenda marks a milestone in international cooperation for a better future. It represents a shared, positive vision of a world without hunger, poverty and discrimination, with fair growth while preserving biodiversity, protecting the environment and the climate and safeguarding the prospects and opportunities of future generations. Germany is working hard at national and international level to that end.

The [German Sustainable Development Strategy \(GSDS\)](#), first adopted in 2002, forms the basis for German sustainability policy. Since 2016, the GSDS has been aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and thus serves as the national plan for implementing the Agenda.

The current, updated version of the German Sustainable Development Strategy, adopted by the Federal Cabinet in January 2025, pursues a systemic approach to sustainability policy: Germany has defined six integrated areas of transformation and five levers (see Chapter 3), which take the connections and interrelationships

between sectors into consideration. In order to promote active, targeted steering of the transformation processes, transformation teams (TTs) – in the form of temporary interministerial project groups – were set up for the areas of transformation and the “international responsibility and cooperation” lever. With the involvement of various social actors, the work of the TTs has given rise to seven transformation reports, among other things. These reports were adopted by the Cabinet and fed into the process of updating the German Sustainable Development Strategy.

The project group work undertaken by the TTs implements the recommendations made in the science-based [Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 \(GSDR\)](#) and the whole-of-government approach, which considers holistic and interministerial action to be the key to successful transformation. In the [Global Sustainable Development Report 2023 \(GSDR, p. 48\)](#), the TTs were highlighted as an example of good practice in strengthening internal government capacity in the areas of transformation.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“We welcome the fact that the German Government is now addressing negative spillovers in all areas of transformation. Negative spillovers are, for example, human rights violations at supplier companies along the supply chain and harmful greenhouse gas emissions from German industrial enterprises. [...] Moreover, spillover effects not sufficiently reflected in the indicators. The German Government also fails to differentiate between effects at the national, regional and local levels, which is necessary as the spillovers can have different impacts depending on the level.”*

*Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*

The GSDR is produced every four years by an independent group of 15 scientists. Under a mandate negotiated by the UN member states, the report brings together relevant information from existing research and presents knowledge-based, policy-relevant recommendations. In terms of its content, the GSDS 2025 places particular emphasis on strengthening the social dimension of sustainability and its significance for social cohesion. In particular, cross-border impacts of national policies (known as spillover effects) are considered. Negative impacts of trade, production and consumption patterns and financial markets on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in third countries, particularly in the Global South, should be identified and minimised, while positive spillover effects should be reinforced. The GSDS 2025 states that policies should be framed from the

outset in such a way that they contribute to sustainable development in Germany and partner countries alike.

The GSDS identifies a wide range of measures that contribute towards achieving the SDGs. In addition to the GSDS, other strategies and action plans adopted by the German Government support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

One example is the [Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity \(ANK\)](#), launched in 2023. It contains 69 measures in a total of ten fields of action and combines various measures – from financial incentives, advisory services and education to research and development projects and comprehensive monitoring.

## 2.2 Core elements of German sustainability governance and cooperation with relevant social groups

The Federal Chancellery is responsible for coordinating German sustainability policy. Achieving the objectives of the German Sustainable Development Strategy is the joint task of all government ministries (whole-of-government approach). The [State Secretaries' Committee on Sustainable Development](#), chaired by the Federal Chancellery, is the key management body for the German Sustainable Development Strategy. In the Committee, sustainable development issues are addressed by state secretaries from all government ministries with input from external experts, as well as from the [Council for Sustainable Development \(RNE\)](#) and the [Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development \(PBnE\)](#).

In addition, the Interministerial Sustainability Indicators Working Group (IMA), which is chaired by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, with members from all ministries and the Federal Statistical Office, is responsible for the ongoing development of the set of targets and indicators for the GSDS.

With the [German Sustainable Development Strategy – Update 2025](#), sustainability governance was further developed and at the same time recognised that its impact orientation should be further increased.

Sustainability governance also includes structures for the involvement of relevant stakeholders and knowledge bearers in German sustainability policy. The independent Council for Sustainable Development comprises 15 public figures from civil society, the business community, academia and politics. Established in 2001, the Council is appointed by the Federal Chancellery every three years to advise the German Government on sustainability policy and generate important momentum for the political and social discourse. A further example is the participation of the scientific community via the [Science Platform Sustainability 2030 \(wpn2030\)](#), which also set up the advisory board dialogue, a discussion forum for all the bodies advising the German Government.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Given the tangible impacts of recent crises, climate change and geopolitical shifts, a strong and holistic sustainability framework is more important than ever. This challenge can only be met through the collaboration of politics, society, business and trade unions.*

*The current Sustainable Development Strategy acknowledges the significance of various stakeholders. However, the process should be made more transparent, and more direct interaction between the governance of the Sustainable Development Strategy and key actors should be ensured – for example through stronger institutional links via the State Secretaries’ Committee.”*

*German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)*

At parliamentary level, the Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development (PBnE), established in 2004, monitors and supports the German Government’s sustainability policy. The Parliamentary Advisory Council brings the issue of sustainability into the German Bundestag and monitors sustainability impact assessments for draft legislation proposed by the German Government.

In addition to the formal governance structure, the German Government has set up various participatory and advisory mechanisms at the technical level in order to provide support for a range of transformation processes on a time-limited basis: stakeholder commissions and citizens’ assemblies aim to promote participation and public acceptance for particularly challenging transformation issues and to align diverse

social interests. Examples are the National Citizens’ Dialogue on Water, the Citizens’ Assembly “Nutrition in Transition” and the Citizens’ Assembly “Germany’s Role in the World”. Other examples that should be mentioned are the Borchert Commission, which deals with animal welfare, and the [Commission on the Future of Agriculture \(ZKL\)](#), which was a model for the European Commission’s Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture. A further example is the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment – known as the Coal Commission – which has attracted considerable interest at the international level and has been replicated elsewhere, notably in South Africa.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda are keys to justice – between both societies and generations. Young people’s views on Germany’s National Sustainability Strategy worldwide show that Germany’s efforts are having an impact and can truly lead to immense progress on the 2030 Agenda.”*

*German Federal Youth Council, UN Youth Delegates for Sustainable Development and Greenpeace Germany*

## 2.3 National system of targets and indicators: how Germany measures progress

In Germany, progress on the Sustainable Development Goals is measured within the framework of the [German Sustainable Development Strategy 2025](#) using a national system of targets and indicators with, currently, 82 indicators. The global goals cannot be applied directly to Germany in all cases. An example of this duality of national and global perspectives on achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda is the global Target 3.1 with SDG Indicator 3.1.1 “Maternal mortality ratio”. The global target – to reduce the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births – cannot be meaningfully applied as a national target in Germany, where the rate already ranges between 3.00 and 4.00. Of course, a further reduction in Germany is desirable, but would have very little impact in terms of reaching the global target. Likewise, national GSDS indicators are not a subset of the global indicators, but are separate indicators for the 17 SDGs based on the national context and national challenges.

The task of monitoring and reporting on the progress of these indicators is carried out independently by the Federal Statistical Office. It creates transparency via the online platform [www.dns-indikatoren.de](http://www.dns-indikatoren.de) and publishes an [Indicator Report](#) every two years, which provides information on whether the sustainability indicators are likely to be met.

On its platform, the Federal Statistical Office shows whether progress towards the targets, based on the individual indicators, is being achieved at a sufficient rate (on-track) or not (off-track). An indicator is considered to be off-track if, based on the simple continuation of its current trajectory, a gap of more than 20% is identified between progress to date and achieving the target set by the German Government.

The purpose of monitoring the progress of these indicators and assessing current trends is to enable targeted policy adjustments to be made. With that in mind, the German Government has identified various countermeasures, such as the [Off-Track Indicator Report](#), last published in July 2023, for those GSDS indicators where progress is too slow or on a negative trajectory.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“The 2025 revision of the German Sustainable Development Strategy strengthens the aspect of Decent Work for the first time by including collective bargaining coverage as a key indicator. This acknowledges the fact that Decent Work, strong trade unions and works and staff councils are essential prerequisites for both combating poverty (SDG 1) and reducing inequalities (SDG 5, SDG 10). They foster decent working conditions, fair wages, gender-equal pay and the enforcement of workers’ rights. They form the foundation for a thriving economy that raises living standards globally and reduces poverty. The principle of Decent Work (SDG 8) is thus a key starting point for achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals.”*

*German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)*

## 2.4 Sustainability policy – together with the *Länder* and municipalities

Within Germany's federal system, all levels of government are jointly responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Sustainability strategies are developed at federal, *Land* and municipal level. Furthermore, legislative and administrative authority over key aspects of sustainable development rests with the *Länder*. Regular dialogue is therefore important and is supported by forums such as the Federation-*Länder* Exchange on Sustainable Development (BLE NE). The [Regional Hubs for Sustainability Strategies \(RENN\)](#), established in 2016, make an important contribution to linking up sustainability activities at regional level and ensuring a broad impact.

Sustainability policy must be shown to be viable at the local level as well. The action taken at the municipal level to implement the 2030 Agenda helps to raise public awareness of sustainability issues.

On behalf of the German Government, Engagement Global – via its [Service Agency Communities in One World \(SKEW\)](#) – helps cities, municipalities and districts to embed the Sustainable Development Goals strategically at the local level.

For example, as one of its key offers, SKEW provides support for municipalities that are preparing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), in which local authorities report on their contribution to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Germany has already submitted 18 VLRs to the [United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#). In 2024, the cities of Bonn and Kiel (for the second time in each case), Bad Köstritz and the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region presented their VLRs in New York. In preparation for the Voluntary National Review, the Federal City of Bonn, the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, the City of Mannheim and state capital Stuttgart initiated a [Voluntary Local Government Review 2025: The Local Contribution to the Federal Government's Third Voluntary National Review of the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). A further 11 local authorities participated in this review: Bad Köstritz, Düsseldorf, Enzkreis, Freiburg im Breisgau, Geestland, Hanover, Kiel, Cologne, Münster, Oldenburg and Regensburg.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Municipalities are places where citizens can actively shape and experience the sustainability transformation. A host of projects in Germany have shown that the SDGs benefit enormously from decentralisation and a local governance approach. Sustainability, including climate action, should therefore be recognised as a collective and thus central task for municipalities in all areas and should be ensured through sufficient funding.”*

*German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)  
Germany and German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU)*



### Stakeholder contribution

„The following section presents the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in cities, counties and towns that have already published a Voluntary Local Review. By reporting on their sustainability efforts to the United Nations in this way, municipalities are considered the pioneers in Germany when it comes to actively shaping sustainable development. [...] Thematically, most municipalities share a common focus on climate action, with ambitious climate neutrality targets and corresponding implementation measures. These include the use of renewable energies, sustainable mobility and energy-efficient construction, all of which contribute to sustainable development in many areas. The principle of “thinking globally, acting locally” is also evident in fair trade and global partnerships. Many cities, counties and towns are committed to fair procurement and maintain decentralized development cooperation. All these measures rely on broad participation processes coordinated by sustainability councils or steering groups in the administrations.

German Institute of Urban Affairs (Difu), excerpt from the Voluntary Local Government Review 2025

In cooperation with the [Council for Sustainable Development \(RNE\)](#), SKEW has also developed a [Local Sustainability Reporting Framework \(BNK\)](#) as an additional offer of support. Since it was launched in 2021, the framework has been utilised by around 30 local authorities across Germany. German municipalities also make an important contribution to implementation, maintaining more than 800 partnerships with local authorities in the Global South.

Germany has already submitted  
**18 VLRs** to the  
 United Nations High-Level Political Forum  
 on Sustainable Development.



### Stakeholder contribution

#### Shaping sustainability at local level

“In signing the declaration “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Building Sustainability at the Local Level”, 265 German municipalities have made a commitment to local and global sustainable development.

#### Sustainability as a task for the whole of society.

The only way to successfully implement sustainable development is if local policymakers and local authorities, businesses at the local and regional levels, cultural entities and civil society all work together. Municipalities are the driving forces here for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Locally embedded initiatives contribute towards achieving the SDGs; in many municipalities, so-called sustainability councils bring diverse actors together. They are a way for the topic of sustainability to also be addressed as a task for the whole of society. Municipalities organise creative campaigns, competitions and exhibitions in order to strengthen public awareness of the SDGs. Furthermore, they embed sustainability in their city strategies and city budgets.”

Federation of German Local Authority Associations

# 3.

## Transformation in action

Germany has defined areas of transformation and levers for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This chapter of the Voluntary National Review provides illustrative examples of approaches and actions relating to these areas of transformation and levers.



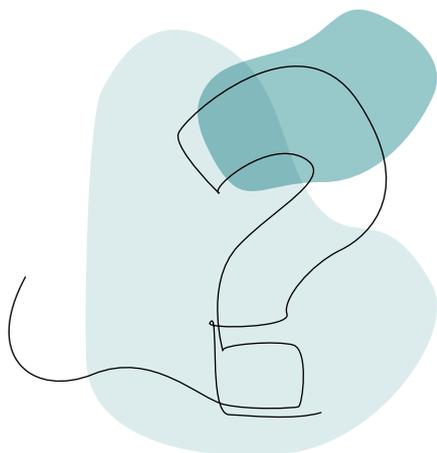
## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ In order to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda 2030, six key areas of transformation and five policy areas with considerable leverage (“levers”) were identified. Germany is thus acting on the recommendations made in the [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#).
- ➔ With the updated GSDS 2025, Germany has placed more emphasis on the social dimension of sustainability in order to guarantee a socially just transformation and strengthen social cohesion.
- ➔ Germany takes action in all areas of transformation to minimise negative interlinkages and cross-border spillover effects.

The title of the updated [German Sustainable Development Strategy: Shaping transformation fairly together](#), adopted by the Federal Cabinet in 2025, expresses the German Government’s ambition to make transformation participatory and socially compatible. The necessary processes of adjustment should thus be driven forward in a socially equitable way. The GSDS is structured around the entry points and levers proposed in the [GSDR 2019](#). In the German context, this structure comprises six “areas of transformation” and five “levers”. The areas of transformation are: (1) Human well-being and capabilities, social justice, (2) Energy transition and climate action, (3) Circular economy, (4) Sustainable construction and sustainable mobility, (5) Sustainable agricultural and food systems, (6) Pollutant-free

environment. The cross-cutting levers are: (1) Governance, (2) Social mobilisation and participation, (3) Finances, (4) Research, innovation and digitalisation, (5) International responsibility and cooperation.

This structure is intended to facilitate a holistic approach, draw attention to synergies and conflicts within the SDGs and identify key transformation needs and processes. The Strategy highlights the cross-border impacts of national actions on other countries as a cross-cutting theme. Germany aims to design measures in such a way that they do not hinder but strengthen the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in other countries.



Key question addressed in this chapter:

**Which best-practice strategies and actions has Germany adopted since the VNR 2021 to implement the 2030 Agenda?**

## 3.1 Area of transformation: Human well-being and capabilities, social justice – examples

Germany puts the focus on the social dimension of sustainability and well-being for everyone. Strengthening health, education, equality, social justice and decent employment for the long term establishes the basis for everyone to play an active and self-determined role in shaping the sustainable transformation.



SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ At national and international level, Germany supports the teaching of key skills required for the future in the transformation to sustainability in all areas of education.
- ➔ Germany strengthens the education system as the key to innovative capacity and performance and to prosperity and inclusion for everyone.
- ➔ Germany strengthens public and global health and promotes the systemic One Health approach.

### 3.1.1 How Germany strengthens public and global health

The German Government strengthens public health with a triad of health promotion, prevention and care. To that end, the Federal Centre for Health Education has been reorganised into a new [Federal Institute of Public Health \(BIÖG\)](#). The Institute's task is to share knowledge of healthy behaviours in an accessible way and to analyse and collate data as a basis for creating target-group-specific prevention offers. Other elements of the strategy to boost public health are the

modernisation and sustainable strengthening of the public health service ([Pact for the Public Health Service](#)), the promotion of prevention and the expansion of health literacy ([Health Literacy Roadmap 2024](#)), and initiatives to address the various health challenges associated with climate change adaptation and mitigation, such as the [Climate Pact for Health](#) and the [Heat Protection Plan](#) initiated together with key health-sector stakeholders.



#### Stakeholder contribution

*“A sustainable healthcare system that provides all population groups with access to high-quality healthcare is essential. In this context, the DPR emphasises the need to strengthen the nursing profession as a critical infrastructure. Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic show that resilience and crisis resilience must be key priorities. The DPR is paying particular attention to long-term care at home, which is where the majority of people with care needs are provided with care. Innovative local care concepts and long-term investment in the autonomy of the care profession are essential here.”*

*German Council of Nursing (DPR)*

One Health is an interministerial approach. Within the framework of [the Global Health Strategy of the German Federal Government](#), this cross-sectoral approach is given higher priority, enabling human, animal and environmental health to be addressed on an integrated basis. Germany assists its partner countries to strategically embed the One Health approach, e.g. in the preparation of national crisis and emergency plans or disease surveillance systems.

Lastly, Germany's commitment also includes measures to implement the [United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing](#) (2021-2030). In line with the four areas for action identified by the World Health Organization (WHO), this particularly includes measures to promote an age-friendly environment, combat loneliness and ageism, and guarantee the provision of quality care and support.

### **3.1.2 How Germany promotes education for better social participation**

Education is a human right and, as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, a central pillar of the 2030 Agenda. This is the background against which the German Government promotes quality education in Germany and worldwide. The education strategy [Quality Education for All](#) (2025) forms the basis for the provision of targeted support to partner countries in the fields of extended basic education, vocational training and higher education.

### **Stakeholder contribution**

#### **Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

“The German Culture Council has been actively committed to strengthening cultural education for decades. In the years from 2022 to 2024, the Council and the Federal Government Commissioner for Matters relating to Disabled Persons conducted a dialogue process with organisations from the culture sector and with associations and advocacy groups representing people with disabilities.

This process culminated in a set of recommendations on participation and inclusion in the culture sector: “Culture needs inclusion – inclusion needs culture”. The recommendations identify the action that must be taken so that people with disabilities have adequate opportunities to access cultural education as well as vocational and higher education for cultural and artistic professions.

The Green Culture contact point (GCA), funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, guarantees high-quality education through active knowledge-sharing and knowledge-building for everyone in the culture sector. The offer ranges from free digital advisory services and knowledge formats to in-person thematic workshops across Germany. In cooperation with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK), more than 500 transformation managers for sustainable culture have been trained and certified since 2021.”

German Culture Council, Green Culture, Association for Cultural Policy

Together with the National Platform on Education for Sustainable Development and its bodies, the German Government is promoting the teaching of transformation skills in a broad multi-stakeholder process across all sectors of education. The current UNESCO programme [ESD for 2030](#) provides key impetus here. Representatives from the federal level, *Länder*, municipalities, business, the science community and civil society are working on the implementation and further development of the National Action Plan on ESD, which identifies specific measures and milestones for integrating ESD into the education system.

The only one of its kind worldwide, the [Curriculum Framework on Global Development](#), created by the German Government and the [Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany \(KMK\)](#), provides direction here. The Curriculum Framework enables education for sustainable development and related skills to be integrated into school curricula in a structured manner and with a global perspective. It is intended to equip students with the key future-focused skills needed to enhance their understanding of complex global linkages and enable them to grasp options for action. The expansion of the Curriculum Framework to include the upper secondary level is currently being finalised. The Framework offers practical recommendations on integrating the 2030 Agenda into all school subjects and schools as a whole (whole school approach) and shows how education authorities, curriculum developers, schools, textbook publishers and all school-level education stakeholders can be given conceptual support in addressing this task. The Curriculum Framework is the basis for a school competition on development policy, entitled [all for one world for all](#), whose patron is the Federal President, with 33,000 school students recently participating. As a living example of education for sustainable development, it includes a song contest – Your Song for ONE WORLD – as an accompanying measure aimed particularly at motivating children and young people in Germany to act sustainably and engage with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## Stakeholder contribution

### Promoting transformation skills

“Another welcome point is the introduction of an indicator for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the German Sustainable Development Strategy, which uses school labels to measure effective implementation through projects such as the World University Service’s “Across Boundaries – Global Learning in Vocational Education” and Greenpeace’s Schools for Earth initiative. These examples show how civil society activities can become part of the sustainability architecture.”

Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO), German Federal Youth Council and Bündnis ZukunftsBildung (Alliance for Future Education)

The German Government also supports education projects by civil society, as well as projects that promote engagement by individuals and small-scale initiatives, e.g. via Engagement Global or the [Action! Active for a Global World programme](#) run by the [German Foundation for Civic Engagement and Volunteering](#).

### 3.1.3 Leave no one behind: gender equality and inclusion

In line with the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda, namely to leave no one behind in the transformation process, Germany is committed to the consistent reduction of inequalities and promotes equal opportunities, gender equality and LGBTQIA+ rights, among other things. Support measures to safeguard the rights of children, young people and older persons and the inclusion of people with disabilities are also important. The same applies to measures to end gender-based violence and to safeguard comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as sustainable and independent livelihoods for all adults.

For the business sector,  
the Gender Equality (Management Positions)  
Act establishes a fixed quota of **30%**  
for women on supervisory boards  
of listed and fully co-determined companies.



In the field of gender equality, the [opinion on the Fourth Gender Equality Report](#) makes recommendations on further strengthening this issue in the social-ecological transformation and integrating gender equality into all relevant policy areas. The report recommends that in order to achieve a coherent and gender-equitable social-ecological transformation, mandatory interministerial mechanisms be established for equality policy (e.g. an interministerial working group to mainstream tools such as gender impact assessment and gender budgeting and ensure coherence with climate and environmental policy).

For the business sector, the Gender Equality (Management Positions) Act establishes a fixed quota of 30% for women on supervisory boards of listed and fully co-determined companies. In the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#), the German Government goes further than this mandatory minimum quota, with a target of 40% for 2030. The companies covered by this fixed supervisory board quota have already achieved a share of 38.5%. The Management Positions legislation works: as one of Germany's largest employers, the Federation is leading by example and has set itself an even more ambitious goal for its public service segment: an equal share of leadership positions for women by 2025.

The adoption of the European Union's Gender Balance on Corporate Boards Directive is a major step forward for women's equality in Europe. With its mandatory provisions, the Directive will substantially increase the proportion of women in the management levels of listed companies in the EU and create more diversity.

The German Government sees inclusion of people with disabilities and accessibility as key cross-cutting issues that affect all areas of transformation and all of the SDGs. In order to advance the worldwide implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in terms of development policy, Germany hosted the [Global Disability Summit](#) in Berlin in 2025, in cooperation with Jordan and the International Disability Alliance.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/human-well-being-and-capabilities-social-justice](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/human-well-being-and-capabilities-social-justice)

## 3.2 Area of transformation: Energy transition and climate action – examples

The planetary triple crisis of accelerated climate change, environmental pollution and increasing biodiversity loss is already being felt dramatically in every region of the world. Germany is working for a consistent and equitable transition to a sustainable, climate-neutral economy – also as a contribution to its multilateral commitments. Achieving Germany’s climate target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by least 65% by 2030 compared to 1990 is now within reach. The expansion of renewable energies makes a major contribution here.



SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ Germany takes resolute action to advance UN conventions and is working intensively to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
- ➔ Germany is committed to the expansion of renewable energies and, at national level, is creating the conditions for speeding up planning processes.
- ➔ Germany is adopting nature-based climate solutions, thus recognising the climate-nature conservation nexus.

### 3.2.1 Expansion of renewable energies

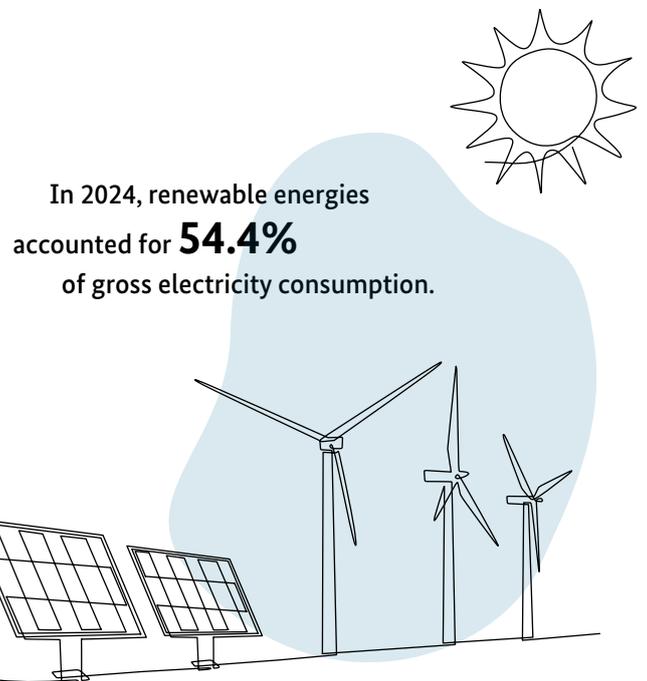
The expansion of renewable energies has made significant progress: in 2024, renewable energies accounted for 54.4% of gross electricity consumption. Germany is aiming for ambitious targets: to increase the share of renewable energies to at least 80% by 2030 and achieve greenhouse gas neutrality by 2045 at the latest ([German Sustainable Development Strategy indicators](#)). The phase-out from coal should be completed by 2038.

#### Stakeholder contribution

##### Trade unions implement social and environmental standards

“The DGB and its affiliates are driving sustainable development forward through various projects and trade union initiatives. One example is the DGB-initiated project ‘Revierwende’. This project aims to actively support the structural transformation resulting from the coal phase-out at both the local and work-place levels, provide security in times of change and offer concrete support to people on the ground.”

German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)



Emission reductions in the energy sector do not only require improved energy efficiency: a major expansion of renewable energies and the adaptation of the electricity grid are also crucial. Energy storage solutions (such as pumped storage and large battery storage systems), system-serving production, and conversion, storage and power generation from low-carbon hydrogen are essential as well. The photovoltaics boom is continuing, with the addition of 16.7 gigawatts (GW) of new capacity in 2024. Germany also issued permits for a record-breaking 15 GW of onshore wind in 2024. Among other things, the German Government supports its expansion via the Federation-Länder Pact for the Acceleration of Planning, Approval and Implementation, designed to streamline and digitalise processes and modernise applicable law.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“With respect to the expansion of renewable energy, in particular, Germany has made significant strides in recent years. More than 50% of electricity consumed in Germany now comes from renewable energy sources. This is a great achievement that needs to be continued and expanded in an environmentally friendly and citizen-oriented way, particularly by including the buildings and transport sectors to a greater extent.”*

*German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany and German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU)*

Renewable and low-carbon hydrogen will also play an important role in the decarbonisation of industry and energy generation in future. With the hydrogen core network, which will extend for 9,040 km across Germany and connect generation and consumption centres, storage facilities and import terminals, the German Government has fulfilled a key prerequisite for the ramp-up of the hydrogen infrastructure.

### 3.2.2 Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions (ANK and Climate Action Programme 2023)

The German Government launched the [Federal Action Plan on Nature-based Solutions for Climate and Biodiversity \(ANK\)](#) in 2023. As an integral component of the national climate strategy, it combines climate action with nature conservation, recognising that intact ecosystems are natural climate protectors and, as such, are indispensable. This increases their contribution not only to climate change mitigation but often to climate change adaptation as well. A key element of the Action Plan is the restoration and rewetting of moorlands. As natural sinks, moorlands store large amounts of carbon, help to lessen the impact of floods and are an important habitat for flora and fauna, as well as providing spaces for recreation, environmental education and research.

With the introduction of the 2023 Climate Action Programme at national level, the German Government decided to establish a social monitoring system for climate protection which will analyse social distribution effects of climate action during the development of measures and ensure that they are designed to be as socially equitable as possible.

### Stakeholder contribution

#### Ecological transformation of the culture sector

“Through knowledge-sharing and -building, networking, data collection and advice, the Green Culture contact point supports the ecological transformation of the culture sector. It also assists cultural institutions to use the country-wide, culture-specific KBK & KBK+ carbon accounting standard and the related free tool from the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder*. This is accompanied by the development of specific measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.”

German Culture Council, Green Culture, Association for Cultural Policy, Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/energy-transition-and-climate-action](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/energy-transition-and-climate-action)

### 3.3 Area of transformation: Circular economy – examples

Germany is actively committed to the transition to a circular economy at national and international level. The holistic approach underlying a circular economy offers solutions to current geopolitical, social and environmental crises caused, among other things, by the overexploitation of natural resources and livelihood bases.



SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



#### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ Germany is committed to a National Circular Economy Strategy, recognising that linear economic models are neither economically nor environmentally viable on a global scale in the long term.
- ➔ At national and international level, Germany is working to ensure that the transformation to a circular economy is mutually beneficial, socially equitable and geared towards protection of the climate and the environment.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Germany has an important role in the negotiations on mining regulations for possible deep sea mining at the International Deep Sea Mining Authority. By instigating a precautionary pause, the German Government has, thankfully, arrived at an agreement to prevent the immediate start of commercial deep sea mining, and has ruled out the awarding of licences for extraction until further notice. In doing so, Germany was one of the first industrialised countries – now numbering 32 altogether – to lobby for a pause, moratorium or ban. However, the German position does not go far enough. In order to protect the already endangered ocean ecosystem against irreversible and unforeseeable consequences and respect the rights of people affected in the long term by deep sea mining, the German Government will need to lobby at the national, European and global levels for the extraction of deep sea raw materials to be prevented. The transition to a circular economy with a reduction in absolute primary consumption of raw materials, ambitious reuse targets, improved recycling and sustainable product design makes deep sea mineral resources superfluous. With the national circular economy strategy, the German Government has embarked on the path of conserving resources. These plans for conserving resources now need to be speedily implemented. However, in order to make the plans more binding, there needs to be a resource protection law with binding stipulations for measurable targets, reduction paths, monitoring, sanctions and mandatory reporting.”*

*German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Working Group Deep Sea Mining, Ozeanien-Dialog, Bread for the World, Fair Oceans, WWF Germany, DEEPWAVE, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) Germany, Gender CC – Women for Climate Justice e.V.*

### 3.3.1 National Circular Economy Strategy

With the highest recycling rate worldwide, Germany has made major advances. However, the share of recycled raw materials used in industry currently amounts to just 13%. The transition to a circular economy is therefore vitally important to keep consumption and production within planetary boundaries – for the sake of the environment, people and the economy.

A key step in this direction is the [National Circular Economy Strategy \(NKWS\)](#), adopted by the Federal Cabinet in December 2024. The Strategy sets out the German Government’s objectives and measures for a comprehensive circular economy, with the following four goals: 1) reduce primary raw material consumption (long-term guidance: from 16 tonnes to 6-8 tonnes per capita); 2) close material cycles (by 2030, increase the share of secondary raw materials from 13% to 26%);

3) increase raw material security (target: to meet 25% of the demand for strategic raw materials from recycling); 4) prevent waste (20% less waste by 2045 by ensuring that products are durable, repairable and recyclable). In this context, removing pollutants from materials cycles or preventing them from entering these cycles is an essential approach for the safety of people and the environment in a circular economy.

As a framework strategy, it takes into account relevant initiatives and programmes, including in the bioeconomy and raw material sectors, as well as the EU’s Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP). The Strategy sets out a comprehensive package of measures – from legislative initiatives, the use of digital technologies and funding programmes to research, training and qualifications, public procurement and knowledge transfer – aimed at achieving the goals mentioned above.



### 3.3.2 How Germany boosts its global engagement

At international level, the German Government is driving cooperation within the G7 and developed the [Berlin Roadmap](#) during Germany's G7 Presidency in 2022. The Roadmap notes that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the global climate and biodiversity goals cannot be achieved without more resource efficiency and a circular economy. The Roadmap adopts a systemic approach, aiming to promote resource efficiency and a circular economy across all relevant sectors while reducing climate, biodiversity and pollution impacts by promoting the sustainable management of materials throughout the entire life cycle of products. This approach also creates synergies with other global initiatives and policies. Furthermore, the German Government has been advocating for some time for an ambitious international agreement to end plastic pollution and participates in the [High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution](#). Together with Norway and the European Commission, Germany had previously initiated a process for like-minded states.

Germany cooperates closely with its partner countries on supporting their transition to a sustainable and just circular economy. For example, in order to raise standards in the treatment of electronic waste worldwide, the German Government supports dialogue formats for knowledge transfer, as well as projects at local level, e.g. by building recycling and technology partnerships (just circular economy partnerships). Efforts to strengthen established financing mechanisms (e.g. extended producer responsibility – EPR) at global level are key in order to ensure that producers' responsibility extends across the whole life cycle of their products. Innovative funding opportunities have also been promoted. The German Government is committed to implementing SDG 12 in the activities of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns ([10-Year Framework of Programmes – 10YFP](#)) under the auspices of UNEP.



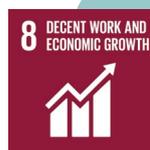
**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/circular-economy](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/circular-economy)

## 3.4 Area of transformation: Sustainable construction and sustainable mobility – examples

The German Government provides support for cities and municipalities working for sustainable development. In the interests of forward-looking urban development, it promotes climate change adaptation measures and the expansion of an environmentally friendly infrastructure and mobility.



SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ The transformation of the building and transport sectors in Germany is crucial for safeguarding quality of life for present and future generations and reaching climate targets.
- ➔ In order to meet environmental and climate targets, it is essential to increase energy efficiency, activate available land and buildings and facilitate the switch to climate-neutral drive technologies, as well as to expand the range of environmentally friendly mobility options on offer and make it easier to switch to and use these options.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“In Germany, as elsewhere, people with disabilities continue to experience systemic discrimination. This occurs in education, employment and health and also with regard to a lack of accessibility in the infrastructure. With reference to the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities regarding Germany’s second and third periodic reports, specific measures should be incorporated into the Sustainable Development Strategy to overcome discrimination of persons with disabilities. The Strategy could, for example, include the provision that mobility and building and construction should not only always be sustainable but also accessible.”*

*Behinderung und Entwicklungszusammenarbeit e.V. (bezev)*

### 3.4.1 German Climate Adaptation Strategy, energy efficiency rules, federal buildings and the Leipzig Charter

With the [German Climate Adaptation Strategy](#), adopted in 2024, the German Government has created a new, binding framework for precautionary climate adaptation. It requires the Federation, *Länder* and municipalities to implement policies and measurable targets for adaptation to the impacts of climate change, based on risk assessments and practical action plans. With the New [Leipzig Charter](#) as the strategic framework for integrated and sustainable urban development that is focused on the common good, the German Government is addressing the challenges of climate adaptation and establishing the bases for a forward-looking transformation. The Federation is also keen to lead by example in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energies, climate action, sustainable construction and innovation. The aim is to show that the climate targets can be achieved while maintaining cost efficiency and functionality in the building sector. To achieve climate neutrality in the federally owned building stock, standards appropriate for meeting the goals should therefore be adopted for federal buildings, which should also integrate new technologies. This is being achieved with the 2021 Energy Efficiency Standards for Federal Buildings (*Energieeffizienzfestlegungen Bundesgebäude*), which stipulates an annual renovation rate and introduces ambitious standards for the construction and renovation of federal buildings. In addition, the Transformation Initiative for an Urban-Rural Future (*Transformationsinitiative Stadt-Land-Zukunft*) provides comprehensive support for (transdisciplinary) research for sustainable cities and regions, aimed at achieving the German Government’s climate and sustainability targets and the SDGs.

### 3.4.2 How Germany promotes environmentally friendly infrastructure and mobility

In order to achieve environmental and climate targets in the transport sector, it is essential to increase efficiency and switch to climate-neutral drive technologies, but also to expand the range of environmentally friendly mobility options on offer and facilitate the use of these options. In order to increase passenger numbers in the local public transport sector, a low-cost ticket – known as the Deutschland-Ticket – was introduced, which is valid for use on local public transport throughout Germany. As a result, the local public transport system gained more than one million new customers within a short timeframe.

Improving mobility in rural areas is a key task in developing environmentally friendly mobility. Again, the switch to climate-neutral drive technologies, particularly electromobility, is a key element of this process. The necessary charging infrastructure is currently being established and is supported by various funding guidelines and programmes.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/sustainable-construction-and-sustainable-mobility](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/sustainable-construction-and-sustainable-mobility)

## 3.5 Area of transformation: Sustainable agricultural and food systems – examples

Germany is committed to a sustainable transformation of agricultural and food systems with the aim of ensuring future-proof, crisis-resilient agriculture, food production and forestry. Here, a priority is achieving global food security while protecting the climate, environment and animals. The way food is produced, the way we eat and the way food environments are shaped are key points of leverage for sustainable development.



SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ Sustainable agricultural and food systems are key areas for achieving the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals, as well as for realising the right to adequate food, implementing the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and conserving natural resources.
- ➔ Germany advocates for a transition to forward-looking agricultural and food systems.

### 3.5.1 The German Government's Food and Nutrition Strategy

With its [Food and Nutrition Strategy](#), adopted in January 2024, the German Government aims to make it as easy as possible for every consumer to eat well, meaning healthily and sustainably.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Food and Nutrition Strategy identifies 90 measures across 11 action areas, building on other strategies and action plans. The further development of the [Protein Crop Strategy \(EPS\)](#) has led to a significant increase in the cultivation of protein crops in Germany. These crops have a synergistic effect by drawing nitrogen from the atmosphere and facilitating more sustainable nutrition within planetary boundaries.

### 3.5.2 National Strategy on Biological Diversity 2030

The [National Strategy on Biological Diversity 2030 \(NBS 2030\)](#) was adopted in order to reach new global and EU targets for the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity. This commitment arises from international agreements such as the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) and the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#) and contributes to the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#). The NBS brings together key themes and objectives for the protection of biodiversity, defining a total of 21 action areas and 64 targets within a strategic framework. It considers overarching biodiversity

objectives such as biodiversity conservation and restoration of ecosystems, as well as other topical issues such as urban nature, global warming, the expansion of renewable energies, and developments in various economic sectors.

### 3.5.3 How Germany promotes climate-friendly agriculture and an organic agricultural and food sector

In addition to the adoption of the [2023 Climate Action Programme](#) with more ambitious emission reduction measures in agriculture, a Research and Innovation Programme on Climate Protection in Agriculture was launched in 2022. Furthermore, in its recommendations, the [Commission on the Future of Agriculture \(ZKL\)](#) identifies pathways to bring reforms aimed at boosting animal welfare, environment protection and mitigation of climate change into alignment with maintaining an economically viable, socially compatible agricultural system. In the Commission, representatives from the fields of agriculture, business, trade and civil society worked with scientists on developing strategies for forward-looking agricultural, environmental and animal welfare policies and made recommendations on a new culture of cooperation.

In 2021, the German Government set itself the ambitious target of increasing the total proportion of organically farmed agricultural land in Germany to 30% by 2030. To that end, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity developed the 2030 Organic Strategy through a participatory process. The actions defined in the [2030 Organic Strategy](#) aim to put in place the conditions necessary along the entire value chain to strengthen organic farming and food production at various levels.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/sustainable-agricultural-and-food-systems](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/sustainable-agricultural-and-food-systems)

## 3.6 Area of transformation: Pollutant-free environment – examples

Germany is actively committed to tackling the pollution crisis at national and international level. The German Government is therefore engaging for a comprehensive transition to safe and sustainable materials and cycles that reduce environmental impacts while also generating social and economic benefits.

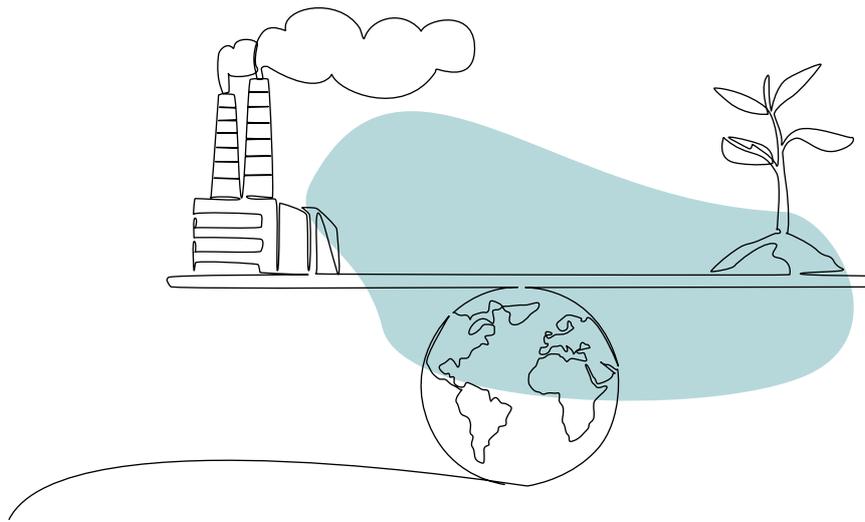


SDGs that are particularly important for this area of transformation:



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- Germany sees the pollution crisis as a major crisis alongside climate change and biodiversity loss and is responding with resolute action.
- Germany is committed to a risk-based approach in chemicals policy at national and international level. Germany participates proactively in the framing of international policy under a number of binding environmental agreements and is committed to implementing non-binding frameworks in the environmental, chemicals and waste sectors.
- Germany is working on closing pollution cycles, establishing sustainable material flows and introducing ambitious global environmental standards.



### 3.6.1 How Germany implements international environmental agreements

The German Government supports cross-sectoral, integrated approaches and systematic cooperation with stakeholders with a diverse range of expertise, e.g. from the environmental, health, social and urban development sectors, in order to promote local and social environmental justice. The adoption of the [National Water Strategy in 2023](#) is one example. The provision of high-quality and affordable drinking water – the core objective of the Strategy – can only be ensured if the negative impacts of wastewater pollution on human and planetary health, biodiversity, the climate and sustainable economic development are mitigated.

Furthermore, the German Government is collaborating on a number of binding environmental agreements and non-binding frameworks in the environment, chemicals and waste sectors and is committed to their implementation. Important conventions relating to the effects and release of substances include the [Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal](#), the [Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade](#), the [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants \(POPs\)](#), the [Minamata Convention](#) (mercury) and the [Hong Kong Convention](#) (ship recycling). Against this backdrop, the German Government made a major contribution to ensuring that the [Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet](#)

[Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste](#) was adopted in September 2023, at the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) in Bonn, by governments and numerous stakeholders from industry, trade unions, the health sector, civil society, academia and relevant UN organisations.

#### Stakeholder contribution

##### Export bans, strict regulation and a ban on harmful chemicals

“Up to 16,000 chemicals are present in plastics worldwide. A quarter of these chemicals are known to be harmful for people and the environment; nothing is known about the potential harm of more than 10,000 chemicals. Chemicals migrate from the plastic and enter into human bodies and into the environment, they accumulate in food chains and pollute ecosystems. At the same time, because plastic is a fossil-based product, its production and use are responsible for a considerable share of greenhouse gas emissions. By 2050, it is likely that the production and use of plastics will consume 13% of our remaining carbon budget in a 1.5°C scenario. Besides reducing the production and use of plastics, the German Government needs to campaign for a ban on using chemicals in plastics that are harmful to health and to the environment, especially those that are persistent pollutants (e.g. PFAS) or that impact on the hormonal system of humans and animals (EDCs). What is more,

Germany must campaign at the European, national and international levels for export bans, strict regulation and a ban on harmful chemicals. That is also a goal in the Global Framework on Chemicals, which Germany is ambitiously supporting. Yet chemicals which are banned in Germany because of their dangerous properties continue to be exported to countries with lower standards and less regulation.”

German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, Exit Plastic Alliance, Health and Environment Justice (HEJSupport), Forum Ecology & Paper, Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) Germany, Gender CC – Women for Climate Justice e.V., Zero Waste Germany e.V., Heinrich Böll Foundation

A key achievement relating to all these measures is the introduction of human biomonitoring (HBM), which investigates the occurrence of pollutants in the environment and in bodily fluids within the public at large, making it possible to determine the effectiveness of measures and any additional regulatory needs.

In order to offer consumers easy access to verified data on chemical substances, a free smartphone application – named “Chemistry in Everyday Life” – was developed (*Chemie im Alltag (CiA app)*). It allows users to scan products, particularly typical consumer products such as food and cosmetics, in order to access general information about the chemicals that they contain.

### 3.6.2 Towards a pollutant-free environment: supporting consumers

The [Environmental Atlas](#), in its section on reactive nitrogen, helps to inform and educate about the effects of high nitrogen emissions. Among other things, the Environmental Atlas provides information about behavioural changes which contribute to lower nitrogen levels and hence to a more climate-friendly lifestyle.

Furthermore, the introduction of a national poisoning register will improve the advice available to the public in the event of exposure to poisons. Overarching evaluations will also make it possible in future to detect potential health effects of certain substances and develop suitable risk mitigation measures at an earlier stage.

In addition, a [German Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy \(DART\)](#) was developed in response to growing antibiotic resistance. A Five-Point Plan on Protection Against Endocrine Disruptors highlights links between regulation, awareness-raising and research on these substances.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/  
 pollutant-free-environment](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/pollutant-free-environment)

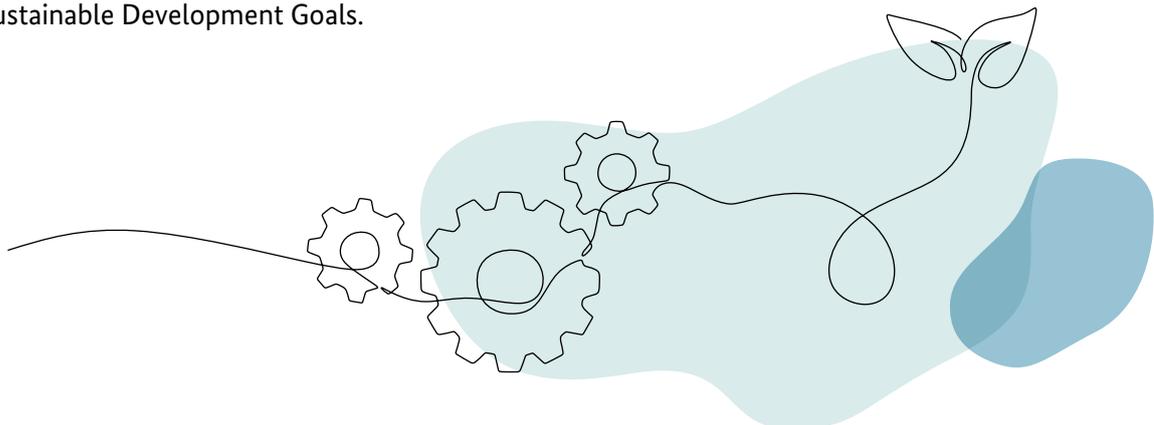
## 3.7 Governance lever – examples

Germany's sustainability governance ensures the participation of diverse stakeholders and ongoing dialogue with the scientific community. The German Government integrates the SDGs at an early stage when drafting legislation and legal ordinances in order to assess their impacts on sustainable development, consider conflicts between different goals and take account of effects on third countries.



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- Germany has set up structures in order to steer, implement, monitor and evaluate sustainability policy and is engaged in their continuous improvement (see also Chapter 2).
- Throughout its ongoing development of sustainability governance, Germany relies on close cooperation with the scientific community and science-based policy advice (science-policy interface).
- When drafting laws and regulations, the German Government assesses their impact on attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.



### 3.7.1 Sustainability in legislation

The German Government assesses all draft legislation and ordinances in terms of their impacts on sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda as well as the national targets and principles set out in the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#) are to be taken into account from the outset at every stage in the conception and development of laws and ordinances and, as a recommendation, in strategies and programmes. Possible conflicts between different goals must also be considered, as well as possible effects on third countries. Sustainability impact assessments thus serve as an important means of ensuring that policies consistently promote sustainability. In accordance with the recommendations set out in the German Sustainable Development Strategy – Update 2025 – this means

- drafting new legislation in such a way that its expected impact is conducive to achieving the SDGs;
- identifying which SDGs are significantly affected by draft legislation and how its aims relate to progress towards SDG attainment;
- highlighting, where applicable, possible interactions between the SDGs, including relevant conflicts during implementation (as well as any negative effects of the draft legislation on progress towards individual SDGs) and instituting systemic solutions.

### 3.7.2 Close cooperation with the scientific community

A well-functioning exchange between the scientific and policymaking communities is vital for sustainable development. Close cooperation with the scientific community is therefore a component of Germany's sustainability governance. In times of disinformation, science-based policy advice is more important than ever. An example is the way in which the ongoing development of the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#) is underpinned with scientific expertise. A number of institutions play key roles in shaping the science-policy interface of sustainability governance. They include, in particular, the [Science Platform Sustainability 2030 \(wpn2030\)](#), the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\) Germany](#) operating at the science-society-policy interface and the input

provided by the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the Leuphana University Lüneburg. For example, wpn2030 and SDSN Germany have set up an advisory board dialogue as a format of exchange. This format brings together representatives of ten scientific advisory boards of the German Government and ten federal ministries from a range of policy fields, allowing them to reflect jointly on challenges for policy action and links to the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#). With regard to the VNR process, the advisory board dialogue has formulated recommendations subsequently taken up by the German Government, for instance when selecting the examples presented in this report.

#### Stakeholder contribution

##### The advisory board dialogue

“The effectiveness of participatory formats and initiatives should be assessed comparatively and based on scientific research. As integrative policies and measures for implementing the 2030 Agenda increasingly involve negotiating fundamental aspects of basic services (e.g. affordable housing, food and energy), their effectiveness should not simply be assumed. The examples of participatory formats collected for the Dialogue of the Scientific Advisory Boards 2024 II on December 9, 2024: Transformation in, with and by Germany: Insights for Germany's Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum 2025 could serve as a basis for exchange with government representatives and civil society actors.”

Advisory board dialogue maintained by the [Science Platform Sustainability 2030 \(wpn2030\)](#) and the [Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN\) Germany](#)



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/governance](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/governance)

## 3.8 Social mobilisation and participation lever – examples

Germany fosters inclusion and reciprocal learning at national level and in concert with its international partners. To this end, the German Government promotes exchange formats, strategic alliances and stakeholder participation across all activities.



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- The German Government takes active steps to involve civil society in all processes that decisively shape the future.
- In parallel, the German Government recognises that civic engagement is changing: young people, in particular, are increasingly getting involved through digital means and outside of classic structures. The German Government is therefore seeking avenues by which to do justice to these changes in its support for civic engagement.

#### ■ 3.8.1 *In dialogue with society*

Civil society engagement is vital to the development and implementation of sustainability policy, for it contributes fundamentally to a diverse and democratic community. Non-governmental organisations inform and raise awareness among the public, work on new policy fields, provide advice and create programmes in education for sustainable development. The German Government therefore fosters civic and civil society engagement, be it by providing financial support via grant programmes or by providing tax relief, notably through the regulations governing non-profit organisations. To enable sustainability policy to exert the necessary influence, the German Government also fosters dialogue processes and the participation of civil society players and their associations in national and international forums.

The German Government regularly invites non-state stakeholders to participate in dialogue forums, mainly on international sustainability policy. The Sustainability Forum is a dialogue format that has taken place annually since 2017, primarily addressing implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the German level and involving diverse stakeholders and the German Government. The Forum creates a space for exchange with key stakeholders representing business, society and academia on the status and future of activities to implement the [German Sustainable Development Strategy \(GSDS\)](#) and the 2030 Agenda. A further example is the participatory process of updating the GSDS. In 2023, the German Government invited all stakeholder groups to two dialogue conferences in Berlin and Bremen and continued the dialogue by means of an online consultation with citizens and stakeholders. The German Government evaluated some 900 online contributions and statements in this way, feeding the outcomes into the GSDS updating process.

Since 2022, the [Joint Action for Sustainable Development](#) initiative has provided an interactive web platform designed to network stakeholders committed to sustainable development and boost their visibility. Almost 2,000 organisations are now registered on the platform, which continues to be implemented from 2025 onwards by Engagement Global (EG). The [German Council for Sustainable Development \(RNE\)](#) uses the platform to organise the German Sustainability Action Days, which bring together numerous initiatives each year during the European Sustainable Development Week. The platform intentionally reaches out to a heterogeneous target group in order to allow networking beyond the boundaries of a silo mentality. Accordingly, it builds upon activating methods of development policy education. For instance, the [#17Ziele](#) mobilisation and education campaign conducted by Engagement Global raises awareness of the SDGs among a broad public and encourages more self-determined action.

The German Government strives to promote the involvement of young people and provides various youth participation formats at both national and international level. For instance, some ministries maintain youth councils; others provide opportunities for involvement in specific activities.

## Stakeholder contribution

### The Coordinating Office for Youth Participation in Climate Change Issues

“One example of successful youth participation since the last VNR in 2021 has been the establishment of the Coordinating Office for Youth Participation in Climate Change Issues at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate, which is coordinated and organised by the German Federal Youth Council. The quality standards and guidelines governing this process were developed with and by young people. The process creates a framework within which youth associations and organisations can obtain the information they need to enable them to select the issues they want to get involved in and on which they want to express to legislators and decision-makers their opinions and demands.

The youth participation formats established by the federal ministries in Germany show how young people can be given a structurally established seat at the negotiating table and easier access to the responsible politicians and decision-makers. The youPAN project at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, for instance, gives young people the right to have their voices heard and to cast their votes as part of a national multistakeholder platform for sustainable development. They engage in discussions with politicians and decision-makers and were actively involved in the drafting of the paper on Germany’s implementation of the UNESCO ‘ESD for 2030’ programme.”

German Federal Youth Council, German youth delegates to the UN for sustainable development, Greenpeace Germany

Youth participation formats reveal how important it is to acknowledge young people as experts on their lifeworlds. This is confirmed by, among others, the German youth delegates to the UN for sustainable development, to the climate conference and the UN General Assembly. Strong youth organisations promote acceptance of policy decisions, particularly if young people actively contribute their views to policymaking processes and help to frame sustainable solutions.

In international forums, too, the German Government promotes the participation of young people and other civil society stakeholder groups. For several years in succession, the government has funded the participation of civil society representatives from the Global South in the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Each year this ensures that youth and indigenous representatives can contribute actively to international deliberations. For example, they perform spokesperson roles in the review of annual focal SDGs or in the preparation of commentaries on voluntary national reports. This fosters civil society engagement and accountability. Young people are also represented in the German delegation: each year the two German youth delegates for sustainable development take part in the HLPF within the framework of a German Federal Youth Council participation project funded by the German Government. Beside youth and government representatives, the German delegation to the HLPF regularly includes representatives of civil society, municipalities, business, labour unions, academia and the German Bundestag. Furthermore, in the run-up to the HLPF, the German Government has organised a national HLPF conference since 2019 in order to prepare for the HLPF sessions with broad input from state and non-state actors. Through these activities, Germany pursues the goal of creating closer linkage between the HLPF at United Nations level and policy cycles at national level and boosting the effectiveness and relevance of the HLPF.

Municipalities also foster implementation of the whole-of-society approach. Operating at the interface of state and civil society, they can provide local anchoring and thus create spaces for dialogue, build trust and involve stakeholder groups in shaping solutions.

### Stakeholder contribution

#### An example of municipal implementation: Citizen involvement and digital platforms

“To ensure a participatory sustainability process, several online surveys were conducted. Between September and October 2020, 997 residents took part in an initial survey to identify key needs. In March 2024, a second survey was conducted to assess changes in public perceptions regarding the 2030 Agenda. These citizen surveys have been crucial in further developing the region's sustainability efforts and addressing the population's needs in a targeted manner.

In addition, digital participation formats were created to encourage citizen involvement. The platform “Sustainable in Dialogue” serves as an open forum for collecting innovative ideas for sustainable projects. In addition to the possibility of anonymous participation, registered users can actively engage in decision-making processes and thus contribute to shaping the future of the metropolitan region.

**Good practice:** The digital platform “Sustainable in Dialogue” has enabled the realisation of numerous sustainable initiatives initiated by the public.”

Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region

Strong youth organisations promote acceptance of policy decisions.





### Stakeholder contribution

*“Inclusive, hybrid participation and peer learning formats with national and international stakeholders from academia, politics, society and business would be important to promote international cooperation to reduce negative spillover effects and take into account the heterogeneous perspectives of the stakeholders and countries affected by spillover effects throughout the design of corresponding measures (SDSN Germany, 2024 (in German); Berger et al., 2024).”*

*Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany, Global Policy Forum (GPF), Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*

### 3.8.2 How Germany facilitates international peer learning

Germany facilitates the transfer of knowledge with partners beyond the national level, for instance through international peer learning. The aim is to promote an international exchange of experience on challenges, determinants of success and lessons learned when preparing VNRs.

Germany’s sustainability policy has already been reported on three times by an international team of experts in a peer review process. A key recommendation that emerged from that process and was subsequently acted on was that sustainable development be integrated into all the curricula within the education system and that it be a component of lifelong learning. In addition, numerous procedural recommendations on effective sustainability policy were made in order to further improve the already good basis for sustainable development in Germany. One recommendation was to assign lead responsibility for sustainability to a minister of state in the Federal Chancellery; this was implemented in the last legislative term.

Moreover, Germany has contributed actively in recent years to the Global Forum for National SDG Advisory Bodies, which emerged from a joint initiative of the [German Council for Sustainable Development \(RNE\)](#), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development. The Global Forum strives to accelerate peer learning among national sustainability councils. Members use thematic working groups, for instance, to exchange experience and broaden their knowledge of the role of sustainability councils for the 2030 Agenda.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/  
 social-mobilisation-and-participation](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/social-mobilisation-and-participation)

## 3.9 Finances lever – examples

Germany is committed to a sound financial policy that contributes to intergenerational justice and supports essential investments in the future. To this end, the German Government strives for objective- and impact-oriented budget management, thereby boosting the efficiency and impact of actions taken to attain the SDGs and improve the quality of public finances.



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- Sound financial policy underpins essential investments in the future and contributes to intergenerational justice.
- Germany strives at national level for objective- and impact-oriented budget management aligned more efficiently with SDG attainment, and assists its partners in such efforts.
- Germany lobbies for a needs-based reform of the international financial architecture and for debt treatments for states with unmanageable levels of debt (notably under the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments).

### 3.9.1 How Germany advances sustainable finance

The German Government has taken important steps in sustainable finance. These include the introduction and expansion of [green securities](#). The [Sustainable Finance Advisory Committee](#) constituted in June 2022 assisted the German Government in its 20th legislative term in further developing rules governing sustainable finance and gave specific recommendations on how the financial sector can promote transformation towards the SDGs, the Paris Agreement (notably Art. 2.1.c) and the Global Biodiversity Framework. In 2024 the German Government supported the founding of a German Consultation Group of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). A further contribution to the growth of the knowledge base in the field of sustainable finance is provided by the German Government's [directive on grants for research on the nexus between climate action and the financial sector](#). At international level, the German Government supports the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) in its capacity as a strategic partner in the introduction and implementation of sustainability standards worldwide, including in developing and newly industrialising countries, and the TNFD. Besides cooperation with partner governments, financial institutions in partner countries also receive assistance in introducing sustainability standards.

### 3.9.2 Germany – a reliable partner for international cooperation

OECD calculations show that Germany disbursed [official development assistance \(ODA\)](#) amounting to 35.05 billion euros (0.82 per cent of gross national income) in 2023. Germany thus met for the fifth time the international development financing target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income, following on from 2016, 2020, 2021 and 2022. With a predicted level of 0.67 per cent, the ratio for 2024 falls slightly short of the target. In an international comparison, Germany is thus a leading and reliable player.

Germany is actively working to find solutions for overly indebted states, notably including support for the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments to implement coordinated debt restructuring. Germany is also one of the few countries in the world with a detailed bilateral debt conversion programme (up to 150 million euros per year).

The German Government is committed to structural reforms and promotes needs-based reform of the international financial architecture (IFA). Against the backdrop of global challenges (climate crisis, biodiversity loss, SDG attainment), the debate on IFA reform embraces the priorities and governance of international financial institutions, efforts to strengthen multilateral development banks (MDBs), the global debt architecture, international tax cooperation, private-sector mobilisation and financial innovation. Among other things, the German Government has played a key role in initiating World Bank reform. In future, the World Bank Group will focus to a greater extent on the preservation and provision of global public goods such as climate stability and biological



#### Stakeholder contribution

*“The German Government should [...] meet its commitment of keeping official development assistance at a level of at least 0.7 per cent of gross national income (ODA ratio) and providing at least 0.2 per cent of gross national income for the least developed countries (LDCs).”*

*Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Many countries in the Global South are now spending more than 15 per cent of their government revenue on servicing debt to private and institutional creditors. At the same time, their options for increasing tax revenue are limited. They urgently need more support to fight tax evasion and corruption. There is also a lack of international agreements that would help them to take more effective action against tax avoidance and harmful tax competition. Multinational corporations and the ultra-wealthy are avoiding tax or have to pay much lower tax rates than average income earners.”*

*Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*

diversity, and will give systematic consideration to the reduction of inequality. Significant progress on that path has already been achieved, notably through the World Bank's new vision (a world free of poverty on a liveable planet), the adoption of a new [G20-MDB Roadmap](#) and the increased loan volume of the MDBs. In September 2023, Germany was the first shareholder to announce that it would provide the World Bank with hybrid capital in the amount of 305 million euros to expand its financing framework. Finally, the German Government lobbies for stronger multilateralism and supports the reform of the international financial architecture.

Germany stands firmly by the targets of the Paris Agreement on climate change and does justice to its responsibility for global emissions reduction and the protection of marginalised people and particularly vulnerable countries. This is underscored by the German contribution to international climate finance: in both 2022 and 2023 Germany provided and mobilised some 10 billion euros, contributing its fair share to the industrialised countries' collective target of at least 100 billion US dollars annually in climate finance for developing countries from 2020 to 2025. Germany will continue to provide its fair share of international climate finance under the New Quantified Collective Goal (NCQG). Here, a stronger focus will be placed on mobilising private-sector funds and contributions by non-traditional donors. Furthermore, through its International Climate Initiative (ICI), the German Government promotes solutions that implement and ambitiously enhance the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

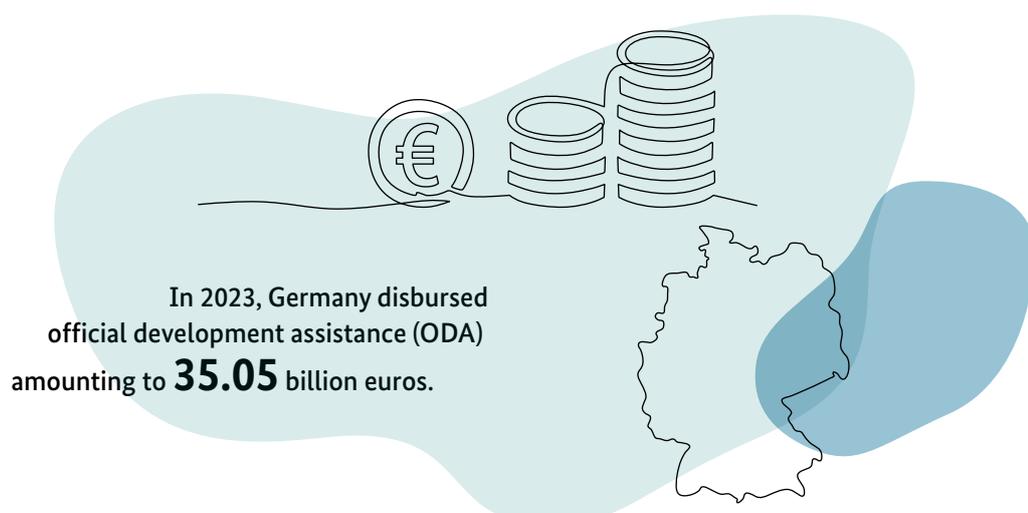
Germany advances worldwide, committed implementation of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#). The German Government has already increased its contribution – to 1.36 billion euros in 2023. Moreover, through payments totalling 90 million euros Germany has made a vital contribution to operationalising the [Global Biodiversity Framework Fund \(GBFF\)](#). The Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) agreed with Indonesia, Senegal, South Africa and Viet Nam are a further centrepiece of Germany's financial commitment to global economic transformation and climate neutrality.

Germany boosts the mobilisation of domestic revenue in partner countries and has one of the largest portfolios in this field worldwide. Since 2020 Germany has consistently fulfilled its voluntary commitment under the Addis Tax Initiative to pledge at least 56.62 million euros annually for the promotion of domestic revenue mobilisation. More than 25 partner countries in three regions (Africa, Caucasus, Latin America) and the African Union receive advice on tax policy and tax administration. The goal here is to increase tax revenue in a

socially equitable and environmentally sound manner. The German Government assists its partner countries, e.g. by introducing emissions pricing systems, to meet international environmental targets such as those established under the Paris Agreement and design fair taxation systems. Germany also promotes fair and transparent international tax cooperation.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/finances](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/finances)



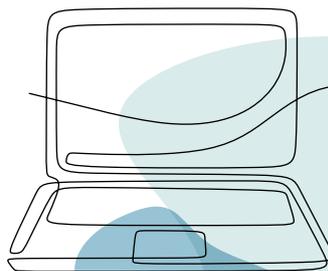
## 3.10 Research, innovation and digitalisation lever – examples

Germany views research, innovation and digitalisation as key levers by which to attain the SDGs. Strategic research funding breaks new ground for solutions for a liveable future in which social, economic and environmental needs are all met.



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- ➔ Research is a key lever by which to attain the goal of a liveable future for all members of society. The transformation towards sustainability presents great opportunities for innovation and progress.
- ➔ Research funding aims for a new culture of innovation that safeguards competitiveness and promotes social justice. Digitalisation is a key driver in this regard.



Germany views research, innovation and digitalisation as key levers.

### 3.10.1 How Germany promotes research for sustainable transformation

Support for research and innovation generates vital impetus in driving the transformation towards a sustainable society. To this end, the potential for innovation and progress needs to be aligned more closely with sustainability aspects. The **FONA research strategy** stands for systemic implementation of such an approach. The strategy is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and formulates pathways by which to attain the SDGs by means of research and innovation. FONA forms the umbrella for research and innovation activities in areas such as hydrogen, the defossilisation of industry, the circular economy, bioeconomy, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, urban development and sustainable use of the oceans. Around a dozen funding measures were launched in 2024. FONA has led to new solutions that help, for example, to configure value chains so that they conserve resources, reconcile biodiversity conservation with land use or strengthen cities as transformation centres and prepare them for climate change.

Similarly, within the context of the Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI), the German Government is promoting innovative and integrated projects throughout the hydrogen value chain: from the production of green hydrogen to infrastructure and the use of hydrogen in industry and for mobility. The goal is to establish a sustainable hydrogen economy and reduce dependence upon fossil fuels, thus contributing to attainment of the European Union's climate goals.

The German Government also assists energy-intensive industry by means of targeted research funding activities such as the “Decarbonisation in Industry” programme and the KlimProIndustrie funding measure. The goal is to advance the development of and investment in innovative climate-friendly technologies for the avoidance of process-related greenhouse gas emissions – above all by means of novel and innovative production processes.

### 3.10.2 Digital product passports for informed purchasing decisions as a contribution to sustainable consumption

Advancing the circular economy demands not only research and technological innovation but also accessible and reliable information for consumer groups. It is a particular challenge to ensure that information provision is low-threshold in order to take account of people lacking digital access. Ensuring high-quality data collection is a further challenge. Digital product passports are an example of how more transparency can make it easier for consumers to make informed, sustainable purchasing decisions. The passport contains detailed information on the materials, origin, production, transportation, use and final disposal of a product. When consumers can better understand where a product comes from, what it consists of and how it was produced, they can opt for more durable and repairable products, thus reducing their environmental footprint. Digital product passports also boost the circular economy by providing access to information that facilitates repair, second life and more targeted recycling.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/research-innovation-and-digitalisation](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/research-innovation-and-digitalisation)

## 3.11 International responsibility and cooperation lever – examples

With the “International responsibility and cooperation” lever, Germany maintains awareness of the global effects of its actions and commits to strengthening multilateral processes, thereby accelerating SDG implementation. The German Government shapes international settings such that multilateralism is reinforced and takes account of the spillover effects of national actions.



### What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- Many of the current challenges such as climate change or intensifying violent conflict do not stop at national borders. Germany strives in the international arena for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and lobbies for greater multilateralism.
- Germany takes action in all areas of transformation to minimise negative interlinkages and cross-border spillover effects.
- Germany assumes responsibility for the effects of its actions in other regions of the world and fosters sustainable development worldwide in concert with its partner countries.



### Stakeholder contribution: EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

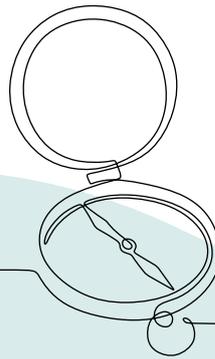
*“In relation to liability under civil law, in particular, the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) [...] goes far beyond the present German act: In the event of infringements of human rights that are evidently caused by companies, those affected have in future the option of suing for damages in EU courts. Furthermore, the catalogue of legal interests has been expanded and now covers the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – which means that the specific rights of children are now also an object of due diligence obligations. [...] However, it only applies to companies if they have more than 1000 employees and an annual turnover of more than 450 million euros – a threshold not envisaged in the German act. Moreover, the core business activities of financial institutions are explicitly exempted.”*

*CorA corporate accountability network, Initiative Lieferkettengesetz – supply chain act initiative, Treaty Alliance Deutschland, Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*

### 3.11.1 Germany assumes responsibility for spillover effects

With the national [Supply Chain Due Diligence Act \(LkSG\)](#), which entered into force in 2023, the German Government aimed to address the global impacts of national-level actions, notably the negative spillover effects that arise in connection with production, consumption and trade and through financial markets. This Supply Chain Act is now to be replaced by an act on international corporate responsibility that will transpose into national law the European Union’s Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) with a minimum of bureaucracy and in a manner conducive to enforcement. The new act is intended to contribute to the observance of human rights and environmental standards throughout supply chains in partner countries, thus improving quality of life for local people there while also promoting sustainability in Germany and worldwide.

In order to maximise the positive contributions of industry to economic, environmental and social progress and minimise potential negative impacts, the German Government also supported the 2023 update to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. The OECD Guidelines are recommendations by the 52 states participating in the Guidelines process, addressed to multinational corporations. The German Government has made it clear that it expects all multinational corporations operating in or from Germany to apply the Guidelines and to take part, in a constructive spirit, in any grievance proceedings concerning them that are filed to the German National Contact Point.



The OECD Guidelines are recommendations on responsible business conduct addressed to multinational corporations, drawn up by the **52** states participating in the Guidelines process.

In its [Human Rights Strategy for German Development Policy](#) adopted in 2023, the German Government sets out how it protects, observes and promotes universal human rights in its development policy. The Strategy contains rules designed to ensure that Germany's development cooperation activities have no negative impacts on human rights in partner countries (for instance, human rights assessments and child safeguards). If negative impacts should nonetheless unintentionally occur, recourse can be sought via grievance mechanisms.

### **3.11.2 Position on feminist foreign and development policy in the period covered by this report**

The Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) presented their Guidelines for Feminist Foreign Policy and Feminist Development Policy, respectively, in March 2023. Both aim to eliminate structural inequalities and are therefore based around the “three Rs”: equal rights, equal access to resources, and increased representation in decision-making processes. By the end of 2025,



#### **Stakeholder contribution**

*“Reciprocal partnerships worldwide built on trust are becoming increasingly important due to uncertain supply chains, the need for raw materials and geopolitical changes. With its circular economy strategy and the innovative capacity of its businesses (Cradle to Cradle programmes, for example), Germany has made important progress. This needs to be expanded through fair and equitable global trade and development partnerships for investment in sustainable economic structures.”*

*German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany and German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU)*



### Stakeholder contribution

*“Participation is a basic tenet of human rights. The German Government, as a duty bearer for the observance of human rights, must also ensure participation in its development cooperation. This means shaping policies and strategies with and not just for rights holders. Whether it is a matter of protecting the environment and nature, reducing hunger and poverty, or creating decent work: identifying and including rights holders like Indigenous Peoples, small farmers or factory workers is both a key basis and a challenge when it comes to making headway on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The rights of women, elderly people and other discriminated groups are also to be strengthened. The partner approach, which dominates in German and in international development cooperation, is often not sufficient to ensure mutual learning and the participation of rights holders.”*

*German NGO Forum on Environment and Development, German National Association of Senior Citizens' Organisations (BAGSO), Gender CC – Women for Climate Justice e.V., Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) Germany*

the BMZ aims to use 93% of newly committed project funds in development cooperation to support gender equality. For the German Government as a whole, the share of project funds in German development cooperation that foster gender equality is to increase to at least 85% by 2030 ([German Sustainable Development Strategy](#), Indicator 5.1.g). This target is based on the [EU Gender Action Plan III](#), which entered into force in 2020 during Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In addition, in the Generation Equality Forum coordinated by UN Women, Germany has taken on a lead role in the Economic Justice and Rights Action Coalition and also participates in the Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Action Coalition and the Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence.



**For further examples, go to**  
[www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/responsibility-and-cooperation](http://www.vnr-germany.de/vnr-en/responsibility-and-cooperation)

# 4.

## Lessons learned for current and future fields of action

Germany faces major challenges such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transforming agricultural and food systems. To accelerate the uptake of solutions throughout society Germany employs integrated approaches.



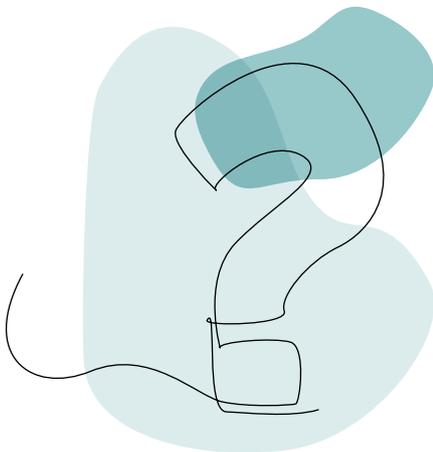
## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

Germany sees itself in a process of continuous learning, the aspiration being to face challenges and identify solutions. To cope with the major challenges and boost potential, Germany plans to:

- ➔ continue to promote carbon pricing as an effective and efficient instrument by which to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reliably while at the same time advancing innovations in climate change mitigation;
- ➔ continue to implement the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); actions relating to environmental and food policy are based on the mutual dependencies between people, animals and the environment and Germany's global responsibility and commitments.
- ➔ reduce the consumption of primary resources as far as possible and foster the circular economy;
- ➔ detect and avoid negative spillover effects of domestic policies and shape policy measures such that positive linkages are taken into account, not only at national level but also in transboundary contexts;
- ➔ attain a circular land economy by 2050, i.e. net zero land take, in order to maintain natural soil functions' contribution to climate protection for biodiversity and agriculture;
- ➔ continue to refine its sustainability governance so that it is increasingly results-driven.

Progress in implementing the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda is measured in Germany by means of a national system of targets and indicators. The Federal Statistical Office assesses the development of the indicators based on the current trend. This provides a basis for specific adjustments to ensure the targets are reached. In the latest [German Off-Track Indicator Report](#) published in July

2023, 33 of the 75 GSDS indicators tracked at the time were rated as jeopardised in their target attainment due to a slow or negative trend. Shortcomings were identified mainly in the following fields: pollutant-free environment; greenhouse gas emissions reduction; agricultural and food system; obesity rate; gender pay gap; early leavers from education and training.



Key question:

**What are the characteristic challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda and where is there particular potential for improvement?**

## 4.1 Socially equitable and economically sound greenhouse gas emissions reduction

Germany faces enormous challenges in terms of greenhouse gas emissions reduction, especially in the transport, energy and industrial sectors. Carbon pricing is a success story in view of its effectiveness and efficiency: an emissions trading system with fixed quantities (cap and trade) guarantees fixed emissions reduction at lowest macroeconomic cost. Furthermore, it creates incentives for companies to invest in technological progress in order to avoid carbon costs they would otherwise incur. Revenue from carbon pricing goes to the [Special Climate and Transformation Fund \(CTF\)](#) and is returned to the public via numerous grant programmes and the abolition of the former *EEG-Umlage* scheme. Both the energy crisis in 2022 and the coronavirus pandemic led to extraordinary energy price hikes that burden some groups of the population more than others. Burdens are to be expected in the future as well – for instance, in particular crisis situations and through increases in carbon prices. Therefore, the revenue from

carbon pricing will continue to be returned to the public and to industry: through tangible electricity price relief and through grants for investment in climate neutrality, as well as through unbureaucratic, socially graduated relief and support in housing and mobility.

In construction and housing, the transformation of the building stock will crucially determine whether or not the goal of achieving climate neutrality in the buildings sector by 2045 is attained. The controversy surrounding the [amendment of Germany's Building Energy Performance Act](#) has highlighted the great relevance of communication activities when introducing and implementing transformation measures.

In transport, the German Government proposes measures to strengthen rail transport and improve local public transport services. The goal is to improve air quality and reduce pollutant emissions.

## 4.2 Transformation towards sustainable agricultural and food systems

Germany's Off-Track Indicators Report shows that successful implementation of the [Fertiliser Ordinance](#) is key to attainment of an array of targets established in the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#) (Nitrate in groundwater [[Indicator 6.1.b](#)], Nutrient input in coastal and marine waters [[Indicator 14.1.aa](#)], Eutrophication of ecosystems [[Indicator 15.2](#)]). Achievement of these targets would above all have a positive effect on water quality. Moreover, in the "Pollutant-free environment" area of transformation, the German

Government is launching further measures designed to improve air and water quality. Continued implementation of the [National Water Strategy](#) is an example of a cross-sectoral approach. It explores challenges, strategies and measures for all water users, including agriculture, with a view to sustainable long-term solutions for climate change adaptation and the protection and use of inland waters and groundwater.

The multiple changes and crises – wars and conflicts, climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, changes in global supply chains, to name but a few – make their mark on agricultural and food systems as well. Implementing measures calls for negotiation processes at European level and acceptance by farmers and consumers alike. Neither is fully in the hands of the German Government. In response, a policy mix has been pursued to date that promises an integrated approach comprising actions to promote plant-based nutrition, expand organic farming, convert animal husbandry and improve animal welfare. All these measures have been initiated, but there is a time lag before results become apparent.

In some instances, measures encounter little acceptance in broader society or among those who are to implement them. To address this, two commissions were appointed in order to formulate solutions that take the whole of society on board and create a foundation for acceptance of pathways adopted jointly. The [Commission on the Future of Agriculture](#) and the [Borchert Commission](#), which deals with animal welfare, advised the German Government and formulated, in multi-year processes, non-binding recommendations providing solutions to complex agricultural policy challenges. Each commission consisted of experts drawn from civil society, academia and agricultural practice. The commissions identified key challenges (such as climate change, biodiversity loss, competitiveness, geopolitical and geo-economic changes) and responses (such as structural and bureaucratic changes). Proceeding from visions for sustainable agricultural and food policy and for high-welfare animal husbandry, the two commissions succeeded in elaborating recommendations showing how the conflicting interests of the various stakeholders can be reconciled and which measures this requires.

In negotiations at European Union level, the German Government contributes proposals designed to align the [Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)](#) more firmly with environmental and nature conservation. The German Government lobbies for environmentally sound and climate-neutral agriculture in Europe in order to safeguard the supply of food and replenishable resources in the EU while simultaneously preserving or restoring its agro-ecosystems for the long term.

## Stakeholder contribution

### Promotion of communal catering

“The transformation area of sustainable agricultural and food systems represents a key challenge for implementing the 2030 Agenda in, with and by Germany. There is great potential here, as all SDGs are directly or indirectly linked to the agricultural and food systems. However, there are significant implementation deficits.

Communal catering plays a key role in this, as a central interface between agriculture and consumers that can significantly influence sustainable diets. Although the German Government has recognised the importance of this area – highlighted in the expert opinion of the Scientific Advisory Board on Agricultural Policy, Food and Consumer Health Protection (WBAE) (2020) and in the citizens’ report by the German Bundestag’s first citizens’ assembly – in its Food and Nutrition Strategy, there is still a lack of concrete indicators to measure progress.

In addition, there are already numerous parallel initiatives to promote more sustainable communal catering. However, these are often time-limited and funded on a project basis, such as the model regions competition ‘Ernährungswende in der Region’ (‘Regional Food Transition’) or the IN FORM initiative.

Sustainable choices in the agricultural and food system must become more accessible and attractive. A strategy for sustainability-oriented food taxation could make a significant contribution here.”

Science Platform Sustainability 2030 (wpm2030),  
Technische Universität Berlin and Osnabrück  
University of Applied Sciences

## 4.3 Resource productivity and circular economy

Germany has succeeded in recent years in decoupling resource consumption from economic value creation. This is demonstrated by the development of [Indicator 8.1: Total raw materials productivity](#). The average annual increase in total raw materials productivity in the period 2000–2010 of around 1.6% is to be continued up until 2030. The increase from 2010 to 2018 was about 1.0% per year. This shows a relative decoupling of economic growth from raw materials input, but was below the level of ambition. Palpable changes can be seen in the raw materials group “ores” in particular. Germany has launched numerous initiatives at national, European and international level to strengthen the circular economy. They are

programmatic and regulatory in nature and relate to specific source streams, sectors and product groups.

Here the [National Circular Economy Strategy \(NCES\)](#) and the [National Bioeconomy Strategy \(NBÖS\)](#) build the foundation for an improved overall resource strategy. The German Government works towards improved market conditions for secondary resources and promotes resource-conserving and durable product design. These measures are designed to strengthen the circular economy while reducing both Germany's dependence upon primary resources and the external effects of German actions in other regions of the world.

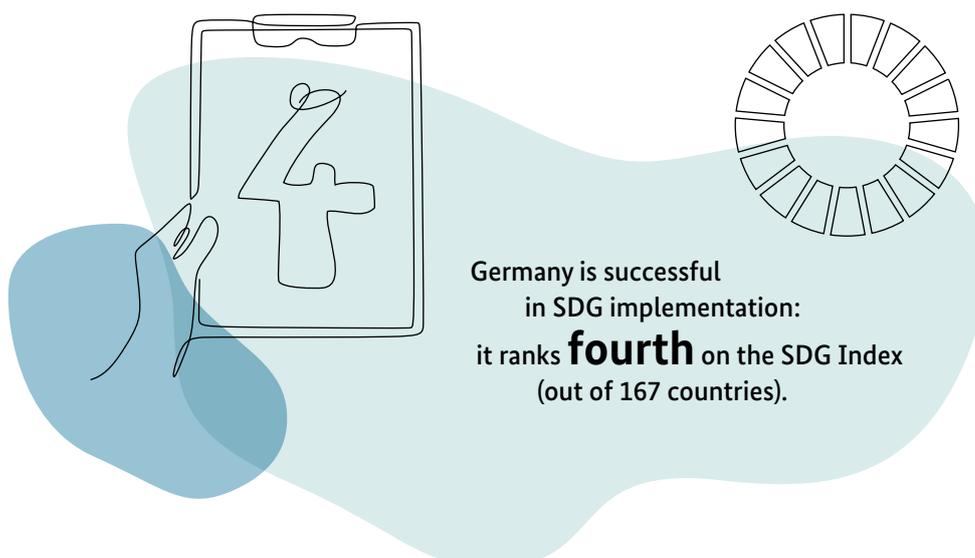
## 4.4 Responsibility for spillover effects

The German Government pays systematic attention to the effects upon other countries of our patterns of consumption, production and finance – spillover effects. As a result, Germany strives to reduce negative spillover effects and amplify positive ones.

Efforts to record spillover effects systematically are still nascent. The [Spillover Index](#) published in the Sustainable Development Report beside a general SDG Index is a first step. Germany is successful in general SDG implementation: it ranks fourth on the SDG Index (out of 167 countries). Yet despite this achievement in terms of overall goal attainment and its ODA contributions, on the pure Spillover Index Germany only ranks 146th. This is due to Germany's high economic productivity and international integration, causing, for instance, high greenhouse gas emissions in Germany itself until climate neutrality is achieved in 2045. These emissions are joined by the embodied emissions associated with the import of energy- and transport-intensive products from other countries. This is why it is important that Germany shoulders responsibility here as well. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is an example. Putting a price tag on

emissions attributable to imports into the European Union from third countries creates an effective global incentive to produce goods in such a way that the associated emissions are low. Closer methodological analysis and refinement of this ranking will be needed to do justice to the 2030 Agenda's principles of universality and “leave no one behind”. In that endeavour it will be important to involve the countries concerned appropriately in order to reduce spillover effects.

With its indicators on resource consumption attributable to private households ([12.1.ba-c](#)) and total raw material productivity ([8.1](#)), the GSDS already contains four indicators drawn from environmental economic accounting that are concerned with reducing the resource consumption of raw materials, emissions and energy at home and abroad. Further indicators ([8.6](#) and [12.3.c](#)) capture human-rights due diligence along global supply chains.



Germany is successful  
in SDG implementation:  
it ranks **fourth** on the SDG Index  
(out of 167 countries).

### Stakeholder contribution

#### Involvement of affected countries in reducing spillover effects

“Inclusive, hybrid participation and peer learning formats with national and international stakeholders from academia, politics, society and business are important to promote international cooperation to reduce negative spillover effects and take into account the diverse perspectives of the stakeholders and countries affected by spillover effects throughout the design of corresponding measures. [...] It would be particularly expedient to incorporate the knowledge held by stakeholders from countries that are affected by Germany’s negative spillover effects. Diversity could be further strengthened by increasing the involvement of actors from grassroots movements, the cultural and creative industries and traditional import- and export-oriented economic sectors, in addition to international stakeholders. Participation processes should be characterised by openness and a willingness to experiment.”

Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany, Global Policy Forum (GPF), Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)

## 4.5 Land take

Achieving the land take target in Germany remains a major challenge. The increase in land used for settlement and transport infrastructure (new land use – land take) is to be limited to below 30 hectares per day by 2030. The goal is to attain a circular land economy, i.e. net zero land take, by 2050 (GSDS 2025 [Indicator 11.1a](#)). Land take currently stands at an average of 52 hectares per day. A fair distribution of land quotas consistent with the reduction trajectory of the GSDS is required for the future development of settlements in all municipalities. Sustainable action therefore requires new approaches and smart management of land.

The goal of limiting the increase in land used for settlements and transport infrastructure is among the oldest in the [German Sustainable Development Strategy](#). However, with regard to the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems, it does not go far enough. To remedy this, it has been complemented in the 2025 update to the GSDS with an indicator ([15.3](#)) drawn from environmental economic accounting that specifically captures the level of soil sealing.

## 4.6 Adjustments made to sustainability governance to date

Since the [German Voluntary National Review in 2021](#), sustainability governance in Germany has been refined continuously, for instance by setting up limited-term interministerial transformation teams. These teams have concentrated on the areas of transformation and the “International responsibility and cooperation” lever. The GSDS 2025 underscores the need for continued development of sustainability governance in order to increase its orientation to results. The overarching objective is that Germany attains the SDGs.

To enable policy decisions to promote sustainable development in a fact-, knowledge- and data-based manner, a suitable information base is essential. Measurement of the level of attainment of the SDGs contributes to this and requires, in turn, an objective and neutral foundation drawn from official statistics. Sustainability indicators open selected windows on the state and development of a society and its environment. To prevent excessive burdens being placed on individuals and companies, it is important to

determine well ahead of actual data collection the data requirements for statistical purposes and for integrated sustainability reporting.

In public discourse there is now intensified debate on the burdens of transformation and the acceptance of individual measures. In its elaboration of phases of transformation, the 2023 [Global Sustainable Development Report](#) makes clear that such conflicts are an anticipated element of transformation processes. This understanding – and a systematic exploration of the issues that follow from it – is vital to the success of such processes. It is essential to continue to give due consideration to the acceptance of transformation processes in society and to handle dialogue and participation processes with a high level of expertise.



### Stakeholder contribution

*“The development of reform strategies with clear, common goals and visions (that go beyond the duration of legislative periods) and their anchoring in law are vital for a public policy and administration sector that is based on a long-term perspective and is characterised by continuity. Better mutual understanding should be formed through more dialogue and cooperation across ministries, sectors and stakeholder groups. Conflict management and the combining of social forces are key competencies for dealing with veto players in transformation processes and responding to the declining political commitment to sustainability.*

*Continuous communication from policymakers to society throughout the entire transformation process is key to its success. For instance, guiding visions and shared positive narratives of liveable futures should be formed and communicated from the outset. To create a “new normal” in which sustainability is seen as an everyday practice and guidance in all sectors, society must also develop new values, rituals and traditions that integrate sustainability into everyday life and policymaking processes.”*

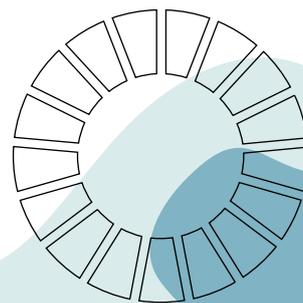
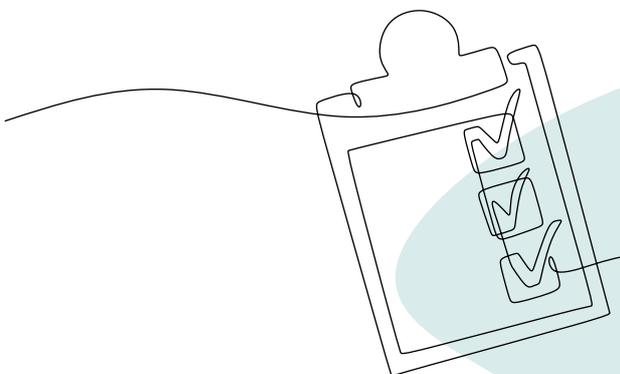
*Science Platform Sustainability 2030 (wpn2030)*

## Stakeholder contribution

### Youth participation is vital to SDG attainment

“To speed up implementation of the SDGs, there need to be strategies, methods and resources in place for effective youth participation. There is also a need to showcase examples from other countries and regions showing how young people there are actively contributing to their country’s VNR efforts. To answer this question, the international views of young people from countries such as Uganda and Kenya were sought. They emphasised that more South-North partnerships were needed that focus on innovation, technology transfer and capacity building for youth-led initiatives. The international dialogue between youth organisations is fuelling progress. One good example of this is the Children and Youth Group associated with the UN Environment Programme. It brings together young people from the Global North and Global South to work together on various aspects of sustainable development. Young people are drivers of change and upholders of peace. Youth participation also strengthens implementation of Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) resolutions and Women, Peace and Security (WPS) resolutions. These resolutions must be strengthened and funding made available for their global implementation.”

German Federal Youth Council, UN Youth Delegates for Sustainable Development, Greenpeace Germany



The GSDS 2025 underscores the need for continued development of sustainability governance in order to increase its orientation to results. The overarching objective is that Germany attains the SDGs.

# 5.

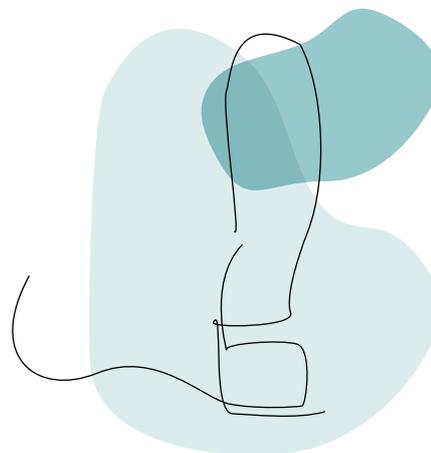
## Statement for the future

The German Government is committed to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Germany and with partners worldwide. Germany supports more partnerships and strong multilateralism – also in response to attacks on the 2030 Agenda. The German Government is firmly in favour of a systematic consideration of the SDGs, of upholding the basic principles underlying the 2030 Agenda and of instituting an ambitious post-2030 Agenda framework for accelerated implementation and goal attainment.



## What Germany has done in the period covered by this report:

- The 2030 Agenda is our compass and offers answers to current challenges and crises. This requires strong multilateralism.
- Germany stands resolutely by the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals and strives for its accelerated implementation in Germany and with partners worldwide.
- Germany underscores the centrality of the basic principles of the 2030 Agenda and lobbies for an ambitious post-2030-Agenda framework for accelerated implementation and goal attainment.
- Germany remains a committed and reliable partner in international cooperation.



The adoption of the universally valid 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a milestone in multilateralism. Alignment of the Agenda with human rights principles is and will remain the right approach. Achieving the defined goals is and will remain relevant for all countries. As often noted, it will only be possible to achieve the goals of the Agenda if the current decade becomes the decade of transformation, the decade of action for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Sustainability needs to become more firmly established as a principle guiding all fields of policy and ongoing policy action. Germany therefore continues to promote accelerated implementation to 2030 and further development of the Agenda and the SDGs beyond 2030.

The international community needs the 2030 Agenda as a global framework for sustainable development. This is the only way to ensure that all member states, regional and local levels, organisations, institutions, companies, social groups and individuals jointly shoulder responsibility for global development and for preserving the natural resource base on which life depends and that in this process no one is left behind. Particularly against the backdrop of worldwide trends towards autocracy and the related rejection of the 2030 Agenda, the participatory, egalitarian concepts underlying the

Agenda uphold the values of democracy and human rights and offer a vision of a just world in the future. Education for sustainable development presents an opportunity to instil these values in all societies and coming generations.

The principles of the 2030 Agenda continue to provide ambitious and helpful guidance for global policy action. In the future, too, these principles should form the foundation of global sustainability policy: leave no one behind, universality and common responsibility, integrated approaches, accountability. With a view to current geopolitical dynamics the following two principles are particularly noteworthy:

The “leave no one behind” principle means that policies and measures should deliver improvements for the most disadvantaged groups. This principle remains valid to this day. The impacts of human-induced climate change are felt most severely by disadvantaged people and groups. This concerns the poor, indigenous peoples, refugees, people with disabilities, women in all their diversity, children, the elderly and LGBTQIA+ people. If global policymaking fails to jointly solve global challenges, it is the disadvantaged who have the least resources to cope with the consequences.

Boosting their resilience and overcoming the structural causes of inequality must therefore be the focus of a socially just transformation of economic, social and environmental systems.

### Stakeholder contribution

#### Trade unions for the implementation of social and environmental standards

“Trade unions, in particular, stand for international solidarity and play a key role in enforcing social and environmental standards. Only strong labour organisations are able to negotiate on an equal footing with governments and employers in social dialogue. It is therefore essential to expand and support democratic trade unions worldwide. To achieve and sustain the goals of the 2030 Agenda in the long term, democratic structures must be strengthened, international cooperation must be promoted and social justice must be ensured.”

German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)

Similarly, the principle of universality of the 2030 Agenda is more relevant than ever – for the Agenda places responsibility for sustainable development intentionally in the hands of all countries, regardless of their GNP. The formation of geopolitical blocs or attempts by individual countries to go it alone – two developments occurring increasingly today – run counter to universality. It will only be possible to tackle complex, interlinked challenges such as climate change and social justice if all countries shoulder responsibility, put narrow national interests aside and work together. Common, accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda offers cooperation gains for all.

Swifter implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires that the solution to a problem does not in turn open up gaps or create challenges elsewhere. The systemic approach of the 2030 Agenda means keeping sight of both positive and negative linkages between SDGs. This also applies to the transboundary effects of national actions on other countries' capacity to attain the global SDGs.

Furthermore, wealth encompasses more than pure economic growth. With a view to the “beyond GDP” debate, Germany has long welcomed the development



#### Stakeholder contribution

*“Germany should see enabling all citizens to live sustainably as a duty. To achieve this, sustainability needs to be a guiding principle of public service delivery. It must be the task of state regulation to ensure that acting sustainably is the most obvious choice for citizens and companies and therefore the default option. Germany is under pressure to change in order to maintain its competitive edge, firstly due to the comparatively high costs of energy, raw materials and labour, but also due to the inequality of educational opportunities, high levels of red tape and its outdated infrastructure (including digitalisation bottlenecks). Greater efforts and investment are therefore needed in order to ensure future viability. Innovative, socially just and climate-stabilising – in other words sustainable! – policies are the solution here. Addressing this challenge must be made a priority in the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Germany.”*

*German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany, German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU), German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU)*



### Stakeholder contribution

*“We recommend that the German Government advocate worldwide for legally binding regulations and long-term financing for the realisation of human rights and gender equality. This includes enforcing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, girls and LGBTQIA+ persons and swiftly ending harmful cultural practices.”*

*Umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany (VENRO)*

of alternative indicators of well-being and sustainability by an independent group within the United Nations system. Indicators of a comprehensive measure of wealth that take externalities into account could contribute to the realignment of policies and the reduction of trade-offs between the various dimensions of sustainability.

Germany works within international organisations towards a stronger multilateral system, particularly in view of the mounting threats to the international order posed by a number of states. Germany places all the more emphasis on alliances and partnerships in a spirit of trust, global dialogue and cooperation, respect and reconciliation of interests.

This recognises that Germany and Europe need stable partnerships to be economically successful. They need partnerships to be able to live in future in peace, freedom and security. The sobering mid-term review of the 2030 Agenda has shown that implementation is stagnating and is even being rolled back in some regions of the world. Strong partnerships and efforts to build trust among states and in multilateral forums will now be crucial to accelerated implementation.

Civil society is an important driver of 2030 Agenda implementation and also a player that calls for implementation to move higher on the political list of priorities. Germany involves civil society in policy-making processes, thus seeking actively to prevent civil society’s spaces from shrinking. In the same vein, Germany lobbies in international forums and partner countries for a strong civil society. Municipalities, too, are vital to SDG attainment, for sustainability is grounded at the local level.

### Stakeholder contribution

#### Municipalities’ involvement in the implementation of Agenda 2030

“‘Community tasks’ are best tackled together. Right now, effective interlinking on many topics between the national, sub-national and municipal levels does not always occur. Being allocated tasks without resources leaves municipalities facing structural imbalances, with individual municipalities not always managing to find sustainable solutions in a worst-case scenario. A fresh start is what is needed here! Public investment at the municipal level is the key to efficient and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Municipalities need to receive the appropriate level of financial resources so that they are able to act. Municipal involvement is also necessary, because there are goal conflicts in the 2030 Agenda which are inherent in the system and must hence be balanced out at the municipal level. Goal conflicts result in contradictory actions being taken. Achieving one goal jeopardises progress on another goal. How can the infrastructure for mobility be improved or affordable housing be created with the least possible encroachment on available land? How can the share of renewables in the energy mix be increased without jeopardising the goal of affordable energy? These conflicts of goals must be ironed out at the municipal level. Municipalities must therefore be included in the **2030 Agenda beyond** process comprehensively and at an early stage.”

Federation of German Local Authority Associations

In their [Pact for the Future](#) adopted in 2024, the United Nations member states agreed to discuss the future of the 2030 Agenda at the upcoming SDG Summit in 2027. Germany supports the ambition that the Global South assumes a leading role in these discussions. The German Government will lobby for an ambitious post-2030-Agenda framework.

## Stakeholder contribution

### Priorities of the Beyond 2030 Agenda

“Amid multiple crises and upheavals, the 2030 Agenda is more important than ever as a global guiding framework and mandate. It commits all countries to the SDGs and emphasises their cooperation. It is grounded in human rights and worldwide development in a global consultation process, which lends it legitimacy. Current analyses show that efforts need to be stepped up considerably to ensure that the goals, which are further defined in the Pact for the Future, are achieved by 2030. In light of technical, social and geopolitical developments, a number of additional challenges must also be factored in and considered. With regard to the content, an Beyond 2030 Agenda should continue to pursue the Sustainable Development Goals intensively so as to ensure that the goals that have been achieved are secured in the long term and still meet those that have so far been missed. Beyond 2030, we propose that the SDGs be further developed to include the following points as part of a transformation agenda:

### 1. Digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI)

It is important to harness the disruptive power of digitalisation for the sustainability transformation. AI offers the potential to solve global challenges such as the optimisation of resources or early warning systems for natural disasters. To minimise misuse, the risks for individuals and democratic societies, inequality and discrimination, the concentration of power, and the surveillance and manipulation of the media and public opinion, there is a need for global governance structures, transparency, ethical guidelines, clear legislation and the expansion of public digital infrastructures.

### 2. Sustainable financing of sustainable development

In addition to public funding, mobilising private investment is crucial. Innovative financing instruments, such as green loans, tax incentives and public-private partnerships, can free up capital for sustainable projects. Low- and middle-income countries need targeted support from international funds and guarantee schemes. Fundamental reform of the international financial architecture is needed, including reform of the debt system and the development of a sovereign default system and solidarity tax systems.

### 3. Fighting global and domestic inequality

Reducing economic, social and health disparities and the unjust consequences of environmental damage, including climate damage, requires tax reform, the promotion of education and equal opportunities, and the removal of trade barriers for poorer countries. Strengthening women's rights and minorities and access to international markets are essential.

#### 4. Pandemic prevention and planetary health

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Cumulative causes of environmental, social and health problems and potential synergies in resolving them, as well as the role of healthy living conditions, should be given greater consideration. Global monitoring systems, investment in research and research partnerships, and fair access to medical resources are necessary to prevent health crises. Local health infrastructure needs to be strengthened and international cooperation expanded.

#### 5. Integrated approaches for water use and land use

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Sustainable management of natural resources on land and at sea creates positive interactions with all other SDGs. Use and protection aspects should be integrated on all land surfaces and in all parts of the water cycle. In particular, soil moisture needs to be integrated into water legislation as a protected good, and transboundary, climate-resilient water management is required.

#### 6. Circular economies:

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Circular economy models should be promoted through various instruments. Companies and consumers must be supported in establishing resource-efficient practices. Developing global standards for the circular economy would promote international trade and cooperation. In public procurement, in particular, recyclates and recyclables need to become standard.”

German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE), Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Germany, German Advisory Council on the Environment (SRU), German Advisory Council on Global Change (WBGU)

## Annex: Data sources

The data sources for this report are provided below.

In preparing the Third German National Report, numerous websites of the Federal Government were consulted for the preparation and validation of the report. These are linked in the respective programs and policy measures within the report.

The basis for this Third German Voluntary National Review (VNR) is the German Sustainability Strategy, which was revised and coordinated between ministries in January 2025: [Transformation gemeinsam gerecht gestalten](#).

All indicators of the German Sustainability Strategy are presented on the online platform of the Federal Statistical Office. These include current data on Germany's sustainable development in a prepared and interactive form. There, the development of the indicators and their degree of target achievement over time can be viewed: [Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie](#).

Germany's Third Voluntary National Review (VNR)  
to the HLPF 2025

**PUBLISHED BY THE**

German Federal Government

**AS AT**

June 2025

**DESIGN AND LAYOUT**

Atelier Hauer + Dörfler GmbH, 10117 Berlin

**PHOTO CREDITS**

Graphic elements: shutterstock.com

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