



SDGS  
FOR  
ALL

# 2030 SERBIA

Readiness for implementation of the 2030 Agenda



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## AUTHORS:

**Center for Democracy Foundation:** Ivan Sekulović, Sarita Bradaš

**Center for Advanced Economic Studies:** Marina Savković, Marko Danon, Nemanja Šormaz

**Belgrade Open School:** Aleksandra Đurović, Goran Sekulić, Ilija Jovančević, Milica Radanović, Nevena Nenadović, Ognjan Pantić, Predrag Momčilović, Sanja Ilić

**Editor:** Aleksandra Đurović

**Translation:** Vijuga M

**Design, layout and prepress:** Mario Marić

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For more information, please contact [info@sdgs4all.rs](mailto:info@sdgs4all.rs)

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# Summary

The United Nations 2030 Agenda forms a global development framework aimed at achieving shared goals, which are particularly important for Serbia as well, including poverty eradication, reducing inequality and taking action to combat climate change and its consequences. The sustainable development goals are universal, they are goals set by all countries, and Serbia has committed itself to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

What is Serbia's capacity to achieve the goals and what is needed to take a step closer to achieving them? These are the questions we sought to answer by analysing documents and relevant data, working in consultation with representatives of stakeholders.

## To what extent is Serbia prepared to implement the 2030 Agenda?

The findings presented in the report indicate that certain processes that are important for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda have been initiated or implemented, including the mapping of sustainable development goals in relation to the existing planning documents, establishment of institutional mechanisms with official competencies to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the progress monitoring and reporting system. However, certain key processes have not yet been realized, such as adoption of the National Sustainable Development Strategy with priority development goals, and having in place the SDG progress monitoring and reporting system at local level. Another issue is the lack of

participation of stakeholders' representatives in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The analysis has shown that public policy framework and the legal framework for its implementation, along with the institutional and coordination mechanisms and progress monitoring and reporting mechanisms, require further improvement for each of the SDGs. (assessment of each of the SDGs are given in Table 1). There are certain differences between the goals, and for some of the goals the framework is now largely in place. However, the framework for the implementation of other goals has been established only partially or not at all.

## What are the next steps?

The key recommendation and a priority at this time is to adopt the National Sustainable Development Strategy with priority SDGs, adapted to the national context, and agreed upon by representatives of stakeholders. This document can provide the context for initiating and implementing other processes important for the 2030 Agenda, and for improving the framework for achieving individual SDGs.

Given the ambition and importance of the sustainable development goals, cooperation between the public sector, private sector, academia, civil society organizations and citizens is crucial for their implementation, especially in the face of a pandemic that is producing significant adverse effects. This Report could provide common ground for further joint activities towards achieving goals that are important for the society we live in.

**Table 1** – Assessment of public policy, legal, institutional, and monitoring and reporting frameworks for each of the SDGs, performed based on the findings of the analysis

	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK	LEGAL FRAMEWORK	INSTITUTIONAL, COORDINATION MECHANISMS	MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS
Goal 1: No poverty	✓	✓	✗	✓
Goal 2: Zero hunger	✓	✓	✗	✓
Goal 3: Good health and well-being	✓	✓	✗	✓
Goal 4: Quality education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 5: Gender equality	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth	✓	✓	✗	✗
Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 10: Reduced inequalities	✗	✓	✗	✓
Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities	✓	✓	✓	✗
Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 13: Climate action	✗	✓	✓	✗
Goal 14: Life below water	✓	✓	✓	✗
Goal 15: Life on land	✓	✓	✓	✓
Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	✓	✓	✓	✓



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# Introduction

Building on the legacy of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, a new global development agenda was launched, the **2030 Agenda**. It was adopted on 25 September 2015 and it rests on three main pillars:

1. Social – Eradicate poverty,
2. Environmental – Protect the planet, and
3. Economic – Ensure prosperity for all

The 2030 Agenda includes **17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets**, resulting from over two years of global public consultations. The gist of the idea behind the 2030 Agenda comes down to a statement "leave no one behind".

At this moment in 2020, one third of the time allocated for the attainment of the SDGs has already gone by. There are ten years left to meet the goals that deal with poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, clean water, decent work, reducing inequality, renewable energy and access to justice for all.

This brings up an important question, addressed globally and to Serbia: where do we stand? How much progress was made so far and what should be done to get closer to achieving the goals set for 2030?

In order to articulate an answer to that question, this Report raised another question that is relevant to the context, and that is how prepared is Serbia for implementation of the 2030 Agenda? Namely, given that Serbia still

hasn't nationalized the SDGs, nor has a development plan in place, it seemed that asking "where do we stand?", in terms of achieving the goals according to the indicators set at the global level, would not serve any purpose at this point. Instead, it was important to first have an overview of ongoing processes at the national level aimed at supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the framework for implementing each of the sustainable development goals.

**The report sought to answer two key questions:**

1. To what degree have the processes of alignment of national planning documents and legal framework with the goals of sustainable development have been initiated, including the establishment of institutional and coordination mechanisms and systems for progress monitoring and reporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?
2. To what degree do the current policy framework, legal framework, institutional and coordination mechanisms, and progress monitoring and reporting mechanisms support the implementation of each of the SDGs?

Data for the report has been collected mostly until the end of September 2020. The report is intended for representatives of the public sector, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and citizens interested to see an



overview of Serbia's current state of readiness for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Before presenting the results of the analysis, it is important to note that the report was written in 2020, a year marked by major changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which significantly affect the implementation of sustainable development goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020, prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with experts and international agencies, contains an assessment of the possible regressive effects of the coronavirus pandemic. This assessment is particularly important in the context of the inadequate pace of progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals. For example, even

before the pandemic, there were delays in tackling poverty eradication, with projections indicating that 6% of the global population would continue to live in extreme poverty in 2030. Predictions indicate that an additional 71 million people will live in extreme poverty due to the pandemic in 2020. The Report argues that as concerns certain goals, the pandemic has led to the loss of what has been achieved over the past few decades, and that vulnerable groups are the hardest hit, which should be borne in mind when considering the findings of this Report. The time ahead is full of challenges and also an opportunity to think further on how to can increase our efforts to achieve the goals, bearing in mind one of the report's conclusions – "Getting back to normal is not feasible – because that 'normal' is what brought us to where we are now."

## Methodology

The report was prepared through a three-stage process:

### 1. Initial analysis of public policy documents and relevant data

Analysis of public policy documents and relevant data available on the Internet was performed using a predefined analytical framework.

The analysis of national-level processes that support the implementation of sustainable development goals were based on guide-

lines and manuals for the implementation of sustainable development goals published by international organizations and research institutions, including research studies that defined the methodology used for this purpose. These publications describe processes that are important to ensure preparedness for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the alignment of national planning documents and legal framework with sustainable development goals, the establishment of institutional and coordination mechanisms, and progress monitoring and reporting systems.

The analytical framework was set up based on the following publications:

- » Reference guides of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on mainstreaming SDGs into national plans, as well as establishing institutional and coordination mechanisms.
- » Publications by INTOSAI Development Initiative (The International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions) – “Are Nations Prepared for Implementation of the 2030 Agenda?” which provides insights and recommendations by INTOSAI that performed audits of SDG preparedness.
- » Publication of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, which is a guide for stakeholders involved in starting work on sustainable development goals.
- » Previous research studies on the preparedness to implement the 2030 Agenda.

The second part of the report was prepared based on the analysis of the implementation framework for each of the sustainable development goals. In this part of the research it was necessary to create a framework for the analysis, with research issues grouped into four areas: 1) public policy framework, 2) legal framework, 3) institutional and coordination mechanisms and 4) mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the sustainable development goals. The starting point for the analysis was the UN RIA methodology (Rapid Integration Assessment), as well as the Guidelines for auditing countries' preparedness to implement the Sustainable

Development Goals. Bearing in mind that not all global targets apply to Serbia (for example, some of them refer to islands or underdeveloped countries), only those that do apply were analysed, given the geographical and economic context.

## 2. Consultations with representatives of stakeholders

The initial report was prepared based on the analysis of frameworks for each of the sustainable development goals, and forwarded for comments to stakeholder representatives. The aim of this part of the report preparation was to give stakeholder representatives an opportunity to share their experiences and, based on their expertise, give suggestions on whether all relevant documents have been analysed, share data sources useful for analysis with researchers, as well as to give their opinion on the findings. Consultations included representatives of the public sector, the private sector, academia and civil society organizations. A particular effort was made to involve civil society organizations working with the most vulnerable groups.

## 3. Preparing the Final report

All reports on the framework for the achievement of individual sustainable development goals have been revised in accordance with the comments and suggestions from stakeholder representatives. The final report contains audited reports as well as the findings of analyses of national-level processes that support the implementation of sustainable development goals.

# Readiness for implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Serbia – where are we now?

The following text presents the research findings and consists of two parts:

1. The first part considers whether certain processes relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda have been initiated and implemented at the national level.
2. The second part contains 16 chapters, each analysing the frameworks for implementation of individual sustainable development goals.

## Assessment of implementation of relevant processes

The following part presents findings of the analysis of the performance of processes that are relevant for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and discusses Serbia's preparedness for the implementation of sustainable development goals. Processes will be considered in relation to the public policy, legal framework, institutional and coordination mechanisms, and progress monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the implementation of SDGs. Recommendations are given at the end of this chapter.

## Alignment of planning documents and legal framework with the 2030 Agenda

A number of policy-related processes are considered important in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Some of the relevant processes include defining national development priorities (nationalization of goals) and defining relevant targets at the national level to reflect identified priorities. In this regard, mapping of the sustainable development goals against the existing planning documents is viewed as significant, in the interest of determining which

goals are not covered by such documents. The involvement of stakeholder representatives in the analysis of planning documents and the adaptation of global goals of sustainable development to the national context is also noted as important. It is crucial to take into account the links between the sustainable development goals in order to ensure policy coherence.

Given the scope and ambition of the 2030 Agenda, it is recommended to have a plan in place with guidelines for the implementation of goals and division of roles and responsibilities. Finally, another guideline is that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda should be linked to the process of accession to the European Union (where applicable) and relevant international agreements. Implementation of these processes often requires alignment of legal framework with the set goals.

As regards the situation in Serbia, **one of the processes performed so far is the analysis of the extent in which the existing planning documents are aligned with the 2030 Agenda.** Namely, in 2018 the Republic Secretariat for Public Policies (PPS) prepared an analysis of areas covered by the SDGs and their current treatment under strategic framework in Serbia. Mapping the Serbia's strategic framework against the SDGs included all strategic documents relevant at that time, using elements of the UN RIA methodology (Rapid Integration Assessment). Conclusions based on the analysis indicate which areas are not adequately covered by the strategic framework.

Given that certain planning documents have expired in the meantime, and some have been adopted only recently, mapping of sustainable development goals against the planning documents must be updated. Perhaps even more important are the steps taken following the mapping, which are also recommend-

„Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each Government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each Government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated in national planning processes, policies and strategies“.

## 2030 Agenda

ed in the PPS analysis, stating that "Serbia must define goal priority agenda that is in line with the strategic framework", and that the analysis should serve as a starting point in the preparation of strategic development documents (p. 56).

**However, at the moment there is no national-level planning document dealing with sustainable development, and no national development priorities or relevant targets at national level have been defined.** This problem is somewhat recognized, given that one of the tasks of the established Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was "to propose the procedure for adopting the development plan and sources of financing."

What is relevant for this process is that the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia provides for the adoption of the Development Plan for a period of at least ten years. The development plan should represent the hierarchically the highest long-term development planning document of the Republic of Serbia, containing priority development goals of Serbia and its regions, as well as guidelines for their achievement. The Law stipulates that guidelines, goals and tasks arising from the undertaken international obligations must be taken into account when drafting the Development Plan. Thus the drafting of this document is an opportunity for the alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The Government should have submitted the draft Development Plan to the National Assembly for consideration and adoption no later than January 1, 2020, but has not done so yet.

National Sustainable Development Strategy (2009 – 2017) was in force in the previous period, with Action Plan that was adopted somewhat later. Although it expired three years ago, the Strategy is mentioned in the Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which describes the national priorities set by that Strategy, and is still listed on the UN platform dedicated to sustainable development goals. It is not clear whether an evaluation was performed upon its completion. This is important to consider when creating a new development planning document, which should also take into account the results of such an evaluation.

### **The importance of synergy between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the EU accession process and other relevant international agreements has been recognized.**

As already mentioned, one of the tasks of the established Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was to propose the procedure for adopting the national strategy for sustainable development, but it was emphasized that this strategy should “unite all individual strategies and align achievement of the goals of the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development until 2030 with the conditions that the Republic of Serbia must meet in order to fulfil its other international obligations and successfully complete the accession negotiations with the European Union.” Another conclusion of the mapping of sustainable development goals against the strategic documents of the PPS is that “the process of prioritization and nationalization of sustainable development goals of the Republic of Serbia allows space to integrate the development agenda and reporting through the existing institutional framework established in the EU accession process, through the European Semester Light,<sup>1</sup> which applies the same principles and reporting standards established in EU States.” In addition to mapping the goals of sustainable development against the national strategic framework, this analysis also mapped the SDGs against the thematic areas of the negotiation chapters in the EU accession process. The Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasized that the implementation of the

<sup>1</sup> European Semester Light was modeled after the European Semester, developed for soft coordination of the EU member states' socio-economic policies.

2030 Agenda is inseparable from the EU accession process.

Regarding the alignment of legal framework with the 2030 Agenda, the fact that global

sustainable development goals have not been nationalized brings the question as to the extent to which the initiatives to change the legal framework can really be linked to the 2030 Agenda.

## Establishing institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the sustainable development goals

With regard to the establishment of institutional and coordination mechanisms, it is recognized that the manner in which the institutional framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda will be established and adjusted depends on the national context. However, there are recommendations in this regard based on the experience of countries in working on sustainable development. This Report refers to three important aspects, which concern the existence of institutional and coordination mechanisms, cooperation with stakeholder representatives, and vertical coordination, that is recognition of responsibility for implementation at the local level.

The very existence of institutional and coordination mechanisms is seen as one of the important issues, given the complexity of the 2030 Agenda. Guidelines and recommendations often emphasize the need for cooperation with civil society actors and other stakeholder representatives, who should be fully involved in the process of defining, implementing and

monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals. With this in mind, it is recommended that representatives of civil society and academia be involved in inter-ministerial bodies dealing with the achievement of sustainable development goals, both to ensure transparency and to provide expert opinions. This is the reason why the assessment of the institutional framework will also include an issue that will be addressed later, and concerns the inclusion of non-state actors in official state structures. Vertical coordination is also seen as extremely important, recognizing that much of the responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda lies at the local level. This adds another important issue of the division of responsibilities at different levels in order to ensure coherent implementation.

What is the current situation regarding these processes? **A working group was established with official competencies related to monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

by a Decision of 30 December 2015. The Government of the Republic of Serbia has formed an Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It counted 27 members, representatives of Government's ministries, offices, coordination bodies, PPS, the Republic Statistical Office (SORS) and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU).

The tasks of the Working Group included proposing the procedure for adopting a National Sustainable Development Strategy, as well as consolidating the views and coordinating activities of all relevant ministries regarding the Agenda. The Working Group also had a number of monitoring tasks: to monitor the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda in cooperation with the relevant ministries and to propose bases for statistical monitoring of goals and targets.

Other tasks also included reporting: preparing periodic reports on the implementation of the Agenda and continuous reporting to the UN Resident coordinator in the Republic of Serbia and the UN system on the results of the Working Group on the achievement of goals and targets. It should be noted here that one of the tasks performed by the Working Group so far was the preparation of the aforementioned Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which was presented at the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2019 at the UN headquarters in New York.

This Working Group is not the only body appointed to work on tasks related to the SDGs. Another body was established with the sup-

port of the Swiss government and the UNDP – Focus Group for the Development of Control Mechanisms for the Process of Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The role of the focus group was to monitor and support the implementation of the SDGs in Serbia, control the work and activities of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide additional funds for the implementation of the SDGs through the Law on Budget, and raise awareness of the significance of the 2030 Agenda among members of the parliament.

In addition to these two bodies, the Voluntary National Review mentions the established independent oversight hub consisting of the Protector of Citizens / Ombudsman of Serbia, Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection and State Audit Institution. We were unable to find more information about activities of this body. However, the role of the State Audit Institution was recognized and discussed in more detail during a working meeting held in November 2019, organized by the German Organization for International Cooperation – GIZ and the State Audit Institution. At that meeting, the President of the State Audit Institution and the Auditor General emphasized that this institution can help to identify challenges and propose solutions for the implementation of sustainable development goals, that is, to improve Serbia's preparedness for their implementation.

**Non-state actors are not directly involved in the work of official state bodies deal-**



### ing with the achievement of the SDGs.

The Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development did not include representatives of civil society or other non-state actors, and establishing cooperation with stakeholders was not listed as a task of the Working Group. It was said, however, at the constitutive session, that the meetings will be open to others.

**It is recognized that the responsibility for a coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda also lies at the local level and that it is necessary to continue activities in that respect.** PPS has prepared guidelines for the preparation of local development plans, recommending to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into those plans.

Several projects have been launched, mostly by civil society, dealing with the localization of sustainable development goals, including holding regional meetings with the aim to bring the goals closer to decision makers and set priorities at the local level, by creating a link with local planning documents. The Voluntary National Review also mentions the contribution by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, and the idea of establishing local community-led hubs. A project was initiated for the preparation of development plans of local government units that would include the sustainable development goals, as well as providing support at the local level in monitoring the achievement of the SDGs in the field of environmental protection, protection of nature, and climate change.

## Establishing progress monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the implementation of sustainable development goals

Recommendations and guidelines often cite as priorities having a system for monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals in place and establishment of a set of indicators to be monitored. A set of 231 indicators was globally adopted, creating the basis for progress monitoring in achieving the sustainable development goals at local, national, regional and global levels. However, the countries themselves have great respon-

sibilities in establishing a system for progress monitoring progress, where one of the important processes is the establishment of competencies in terms of progress monitoring and reporting on the implementation of sustainable development goals. It is important that progress monitoring is performed both at the national and local level, bearing in mind that targets are for the most part realized at the level of municipalities and cities. Given



the wide range of topics covered by the 2030 Agenda, it is recommended to involve different stakeholder representatives in the monitoring and reporting process. In addition to SORS it should also involve representatives of ministries and other government agencies, representatives of the private sector and civil society, and not only in the monitoring process but also in finding solutions to the challenges identified during reporting.

Regarding monitoring mechanisms, the Group for Sustainable Development Goals and Socio-Economic Indicators operates within the SORS, which among other responsibilities organizes, prepares and updates data for DevInfo databases, monitors, prepares and implements methodological recommendations necessary for data download and preparation, and publication of SDG indicators. Various activities have been carried out so far on the assessment of the existing national statistics by a set of global indicators. Several workshops were held aimed at data improvement and increasing the number of indicators, and the quality, availability and disaggregation of data were recognized as important.

As mentioned earlier, the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had several responsibilities directly related to progress monitoring and reporting on the SDGs.

In terms of reporting, it is important to note that the Voluntary National Review of the Republic of Serbia provides a Statistical Annex with selected indicators, the DevInfo profile was created, as well as the SDG Indicator Portal (<http://sdg.indikatori.rs/>). According to the SDG Portal data from October 2020, out of 244 global indicators (9 indicators are repeated), data are available for 76 (or 31%). Chart 1 shows that for certain sustainable development goals there are sources available for a number of indicators, while for other goals either there are no sources for indicators or a small number of indicators are available.

It should be noted that not all indicators are statistical, but even those must be under a monitoring and reporting system. There is also confusion as to whether all indicators are applicable to Serbia (e.g. some indicators refer to the categories of countries to which Serbia does not belong, such as the category "underdeveloped countries").

Another significant issue is that without determining the applicability of global targets for Serbia, and establishing target values in line with national circumstances, it is not always clear how to interpret the available data. In terms of reporting on goals, it would be useful to include data relating to the indicators used by the EU to monitor the SDGs, as well as data from other relevant databases.

**Chart 1:** SDG indicators available in the Republic of Serbia are marked in colour, and those not available are marked grey



In addition to reports from official institutions, certain civil society organizations (CSOs) have also reported on sustainable development goals.<sup>2</sup>

couple of initiatives to establish indicators that could be used at the local level, and thus additional resources are required.

As far as the availability of indicators for monitoring implementation of the SDGs at the local level, these must first be established, which requires additional efforts. There are only a

Participation of stakeholder representatives in the progress monitoring and reporting processes must be improved to include their more active involvement. An example in support

<sup>2</sup> Including the following publications: Serbia Sustainable Development Issues: A Baseline Review (<https://ceves.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Serbia-Sustainable-Development-Issues-FINAL-updated.pdf>); Serbia's sustainable development: How we are doing? ([https://ceves.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Brochure\\_Serbias-Sustainable-Development\\_How-are-we-doing.pdf](https://ceves.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Brochure_Serbias-Sustainable-Development_How-are-we-doing.pdf)); The brochure "Living in the European Serbia: Mapping of the SDGs within the EU integrations framework", (<https://ceves.org.rs/living-in-the-european-serbia-mapping-of-the-sdgs-within-the-eu-integration-framework/?lang=SR>); Shadow Report on progress towards implementation of SDGs in Serbia (<https://www.activity4sustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ASRZS-ShadowReport-2019.pdf>).

of this statement would be that CSOs were consulted in the preparation of the Voluntary National Review, but only 21 organizations responded although majority of them deal with the 2030 Agenda, making it necessary to examine how to improve participation. Another example is that CSOs and representatives of academia have not so far participated in SORS workshops dedicated to monitoring and increasing the number of available indicators.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations regarding the alignment of planning documents and legal framework with the 2030 Agenda

- » The Government of Serbia should appoint a new Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- » Adoption of the Development Plan with priority development goals, as envisaged by the Law on the Planning System should be a priority. The Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should exercise its competence to propose the procedure for adopting the development plan and manners of financing.
- » All stakeholder representatives should be involved in the preparation and adoption of the Development Plan.

### Recommendations regarding the establishment of institutional and coordination mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable development goals:

- » Operational plan of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be prepared. The plan should include guidelines for the implementation of goals, division of responsibilities, and guidelines for cooperation with stakeholder representatives to insure better horizontal (between different sectors) and vertical coordination (national and local level). This document could be prepared by the Interdepartmental Working Group for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- » The Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should establish cooperation with stakeholder representatives, including facilitating participation in the Working Group meetings for all interested parties, as well as consultations in monitoring the implementation of the Agenda and preparing periodic reports.
- » Information on the work of the Independent Oversight Hub should be made available.

## **Recommendations regarding the establishment of progress monitoring and reporting mechanisms on the implementation of sustainable development goals**

- » In addition to reporting on statistical indicators, competent institutions should use the SDG Indicator Portal to report on non-statistical indicators for which data are available. It is also necessary to mark the indicators assessed as not applicable to Serbia.
- » A public call for participation of stakeholder representatives in workshops and other activities that involve discussions on indicators should be published.
- » Reporting on progress of the SDG monitoring should include indicators from the Eurostat database, given the recognized synergies between the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the EU accession.

# **Assessment of the implementation framework for each SDG**

The following section gives an overview of the implementation framework for each SDG, with the exception of goal 17, which has not been addressed specifically due to its multidisciplinary aspect. Each chapter dedicated to goals gives an introduction discussing the importance of achievement of goals as relates to Serbia, and an analysis of the public policy framework, legal framework, institutional and coordination mechanisms, and monitoring and reporting framework for all targets. Main recommendations are given based on the findings at the end of analysis for each goal.

Each goal is analysed according to the following four aspects:

<b>PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK</b>	Gives an overview of the objectives and measures in national planning documents that corresponds to the targets (defined by the 2030 Agenda) of the respective goal
<b>LEGAL FRAMEWORK</b>	Reveals whether goals can be achieved through the existing legal framework
<b>INSTITUTIONAL AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS</b>	Shows the institutions responsible for achieving the goal, cooperation mechanisms, agreements between competent institutions, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms
<b>PROGRESS MONITORING AND REPORTING MECHANISMS</b>	An overview of monitoring mechanisms in planning documents, indicators with data available on the SDG Indicator Portal, and additional monitoring indicators

In accordance with the RIA guidelines (Rapid Integration Assessment), public policy framework analysis was performed for each target separately. The introduction of each chapter on the sustainable development goals gives an assessment of the extent to which the policy framework for individual targets has been established, as follows:



Fully or to a great extent established public policy framework for the respective target



Partially established framework for the respective target



No framework established for the respective target



Target not applicable to Serbia (in terms of geographic and economic context)



Goal 1:

# NO POVERTY



## End Poverty in All its Forms Everywhere

According to the Government data, the absolute poverty rate in 2018 was 7.1%. The share of the poorest demographic groups is above the national rate: children under 13 (7.6%), children aged 14-18 (8.2%) and the elderly – 65 and over (7.9%).<sup>3</sup> According to the at-risk-of-poverty rate (which is the national definition of poverty in the EU accession process), Serbia is heading the list of all countries where poverty is measured on the basis of this methodology, with a value of 23.2% in 2018.

Informal employment rate is extremely high – 18.2% in 2019, indicating that many the employed persons cannot exercise the right to sick pay and benefits in case of illness, unemployment, maternity, and disability.

In relation to access to basic services, 12% of residents in informal settlements do not have access to electricity, and 21% of residents in these settlements do not have access to drinking water<sup>4</sup>. Certain settlements in Vojvodina have significant problems with the quality of water

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3 According to independent assessments, the constant levels of absolute poverty indicate that there is a relatively “solid” core of the poor in Serbia, “which is not exposed to the effects of effective policies and measures to reduce poverty” (p. 13).

4 UNDP, *Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country fact sheets – Serbia*. According to the latest data from the Standing Conference of Roma Citizens' Associations (SKRUG) – Roma League, the issue of access to drinking water in 53 informal settlements must urgently addressed. The same data show that about 25,000 Roma in Serbia do not have access to drinking water. Source: Standing conferences of Roma citizens' associations.

supplied to the population, such as Zrenjanin and Kikinda. About one fifth of the population has internet access, and as much as a quarter of the population claims to have never used the internet.

The poor and most vulnerable groups are disproportionately exposed to the effects of natural and social disasters. According to some estimates, the floods of May 2014 pushed an additional 125,000 inhabitants below the relative poverty line. Preliminary assessments of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Serbia show a level of increase in the poverty rate, and especially the difficult position of the Roma population in informal settlements that have not been adequately supported, due to which those living in extreme poverty have been "pushed to the brink of starvation".

Observed by the GDP share, social protection expenditures have dropped 21.6% in 2008 to 19.4% in 2018, which is significantly below the EU average (28.1%), and which in the same period recorded an upward trend (26.1% in 2008).

# Policy framework

**Table 2** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for SDG 1 (according to targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 1.1</b> By 2030 eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	✗
<b>Target 1.2</b> By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions	✓
<b>Target 1.3</b> Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	✓
<b>Target 1.4</b> By 2030 ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	✗
<b>Target 1.5</b> By 2030 build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters	✗



TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 1.a</b> Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions	

**Target 1.b** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.



Despite the fact that about half a million people live in absolute poverty, the target related to extreme poverty (1.1)<sup>5</sup> is not covered by any national-level target or measure<sup>6</sup>. Employment and Social Reform Programme in the European Integration Process (ESRP), adopted in 2016, cites „Reduction of the number of people at risk of poverty” as one of the key targets for 2020 (period of application of ESRP).

However, this goal only covers the so-called relative poverty (related to **target 1.2**<sup>7</sup>), and not other forms of poverty, including absolute poverty. The target value set by the 2030 Agenda (“reduced at least by half”) was not achieved by the stated ESRP goal, since the set target

value was “18% less people at risk of poverty (329,323 people)”. Furthermore, the ESRP goal did use gender-disaggregated data, as envisaged by the sustainable development target.

**Sustainable Development Goal 1 is only partially covered by national goals. No national goal covers absolute poverty reduction**

**Target 1.3**<sup>8</sup> deals with social protection mechanisms, which the International Labour Organization (ILO) defines as „nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, as a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essen-

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- 5 This target is measured by the indicator „Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geographic location (urban/rural)”. According to the World Bank definition, updated in 2015, international poverty line is less than 1,90 USD a day.
  - 6 Based on the analysis of the Target 1.2, it was determined that one of the key targets of the Employment and Social Reform Programme in the European Integration Process (ESRP) is the reduction of the number of people at risk of poverty. On the other hand, the area „Social Inclusion and Social Protection” includes a goal „Improve the coverage and adequacy of social benefits”. This points to a conclusion that this national goal is not relevant for the target 1.1 because it does not concern absolute poverty, but relative poverty (reduction of the number of people at risk of poverty).
  - 7 This target is measured by the indicator „By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions (according to national definitions of poverty)”.
  - 8 This target is measured by the indicator „Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable”.

tial health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level". Given that access to basic healthcare was addressed in the chapter on the SDG 3 of this report, and the issue of poverty within targets 1.1 and 1.2, as well as the fact that data on the poverty rate by age groups indicate inefficiency of social transfers, this section will address the issue of informal employment. It's been noted that a large share of the working population cannot exercise the right to social insurance benefits in case of unemployment, old age, disability, maternity, illness and injuries at work. The main goal of the National Program for Countering Shadow Economy is to reduce the shadow economy by monitoring, among other things, the indicator "Reduced share of informal employment in total employment from 19.5% in 2018 to 17.5 % in 2020". This goal did not include gender-disaggregated data and did not identify all population groups as envisaged by the sustainable development target.

The National Employment Strategy recognizes the reduction of relative poverty as a "central issue" in Serbia's development, along with "increasing formal employment and reducing informal employment", which is coherent with the goals set in the National Program for Countering Shadow Economy. However, considering the lack of an umbrella strategic document related to environment, the target could not be identified in policy documents in that area.

**Target 1.4**<sup>9</sup> concerns access to basic services, ownership and control over land. When it comes to access to basic services – which include, according to EU policies energy, banking, transport, financial market infrastructures, health, drinking water supply and distribution, and digital infrastructure – not all relevant strategies contain adequate goals (access to basic healthcare was discussed with the chapter on the SDG 3 of this report). The Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2025 with projections until 2030 does not include goals and measures to increase the proportion of population living in households with access to electricity, while the Information Society Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia until year 2020, which was adopted in 2010, now expired, predicted that by 2020 all citizens of the Republic of Serbia should have access to high-quality Internet with a speed of at least 100 Mb/s. On the other hand, the Water Management Strategy on the Territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034 includes an operational goal „Increased public water supply coverage from the current 81% to 93% at the end of the planning period", but did not use gender disaggregated data. Regarding ownership and control over land, the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014 – 2024 does not recognize this issue in any goals or measures.

The National Strategy for Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situations adopted in 2011 has expired, so currently the policy

9 This target is measured by indicators „Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services" and „Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure".

framework of the Republic of Serbia does not include goals that correspond to the **Target 1.5**.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the fact that the 2008 National Strategy for Sustainable Development has long expired, and that preparation and adoption of the National Development Plan of Serbia was announced in 2014, Serbia still does not have a development strategy to set goals that meet the **Target 1.b**, „Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions“<sup>11</sup>.

The absence of relevant national goals and measures is not in line with the international obligations of the Republic of Serbia. As a rule, these instruments do not contain objectives and values in the format envisaged by the SDGs, but they do prescribe clear obligations that are relevant to the issue of eradicating extreme poverty:

Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights prescribes signatories' obligations to „recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family“ and to „take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right“;

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of this treaty, expressed concern about the limited effectiveness of existing strategies for tackling extreme poverty in Serbia.

As a member of the ILO, the Republic of Serbia should “adopt, revise and apply national laws and other regulations or measures in order to ensure adequate coverage and protection of all categories of workers and enterprises”.

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, expressed concern that “60,000 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians live in poor living conditions in hundreds of informal settlements, often without access to basic services”, such as drinking water, and appealed to Serbia to eliminate the de facto housing segregation of the Roma population.

Although no poverty reduction targets have been set in the EU accession process, the EU addresses this issue under the European Pillar of Social Rights, which requires all Member States (including those covered by the EU enlargement policy) to ensure that every person without sufficient means of subsistence realizes “the right to adequate minimum income benefits that ensure a life in dignity at

10 This target is measured by indicators „Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population, „Direct economic loss attributed to disasters in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP)“ and „Number of countries that adopt and implement national and local disaster risk reduction strategies“.

11 This target is measured by the indicator „The share of current or capital government expenditure in sectors that to a greater extent benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups“.

all stages". In May 2020 the EU Council called on Serbia to "increase social transfers in order to provide support for adequate income for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion".

The Screening Report for Chapter 19 – Social Policy and employment assessed that there is a high level of informal employment in the Serbian labour market and that "a detailed analysis of the root causes of informal employment is urgently needed". It is also noted that according to Serbian representatives, Serbia will take new measures aimed at reducing informal employment, including "pass amendments to the Labour Law in order to improve inspection capacities of the Labour

Inspectorate". The analysis of informal employment was conducted in 2016 and the following measures were recommended: improving the efficiency of the Labour Inspectorate, formalization of work in agricultural households, improved framework for engagement of seasonal workers and students performing temporary jobs, and tax and social protection benefits for groups with low income.

The Screening Report on Chapter 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights assessed that Roma continue to face difficult living conditions, especially those living in informal settlements without access to basic utilities such as water and electricity.

## Legal framework

According to the Law on Social Protection, beneficiaries of financial social assistance may be individuals and families whose work income, income from property and other sources of income is less than the amount of financial social assistance determined by that law (Article 81, paragraph 1). However, this law also sets a number of restrictive conditions that prevent all persons living in absolute poverty from earning income that would allow them to live above the absolute poverty line (12,286.00 dinars in 2018), such as the condition that they do not own other real estate except the dwelling space that meets their needs / needs of their family, and land up to 0.5 hectares (Article 82, paragraph 1, item 1). The amount of financial social assistance granted

to individuals or families is not sufficient to enable spending above the absolute poverty line, given that it amounts to 8,508.00 dinars for an individual, and 4,254.00 dinars for each adult in the household, or 2,552.00 dinars for a child. As regards relative poverty, this target is even more difficult to achieve because the at-risk-of-poverty threshold is higher compared to the absolute poverty line – in 2018 it amounted to 16,615.00 dinars for a

**The legal framework for the first goal has been partially established. There are legal obstacles to raising the population at risk of poverty above the at-risk-of-poverty threshold and the amount of financial social assistance for this purpose is insufficient.**

one-member household (the nominal amount of financial social assistance for an individual in 2019 amounted to only 8,508.00 dinars).

The Labour Law (LL) envisages several types of employment, the two basic being: employment relationship (based on employment contract) and work outside the employment relationship. Work outside the employment relationship implies that employers can hire unemployed persons through several forms of employment: employment contracts, temporary and periodical employment contracts and professional development and vocational training contracts. On the other hand, the law stipulates that the employer may introduce a minimum wage for employees, the basis of which must be determined by a general act or employment contract. However, this law does not explicitly prescribe the possible reasons for that, which leaves too much room for employers to make decisions at own discretion, which may be a deterring factor for persons engaged in informal employment to switch to formal employment.

The Law on Housing and Building Maintenance stipulates that the competent body of the local self-government on the territory where the person being evicted resides, which issued the eviction notice shall provide adequate accommodation to that person and family household members only, if he/she does not own other real estate for accommodation or means to provide other accommodation (Article 78, paragraph 1). These provisions do not prescribe whether a person owns or can provide accommodation that is appropriate, in terms of the provisions of this article, and according to which that accommodation should

meet, inter alia, adequate basic conditions such as electricity, plumbing and sanitary installations. Serbia therefore violated the obligations from ratified international documents to urgently and at every opportunity solve the problem of inadequate housing conditions for a large number of inhabitants on its territory, especially those in informal settlements who most often face eviction. In addition, NGOs pointed to the problem of application of the Law on Building Legalization to informal sustainable settlements, and provided alternative proposals for resolving this issue.

The Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management stipulates that competent authorities and other entities involved in the implementation of disaster risk management measures and activities are obliged to consistently take into account, inter alia, the protection of the poor and other vulnerable groups (Art. 7 paragraph 2). The law also prescribes the obligation of the Ministry of Interior (MIA) to develop and propose a Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management, and for the Government to adopt it. However, as already mentioned, this strategy has not yet been adopted.

The current legal framework only partially enables the achievement of this goal of sustainable development, and there is no active proposing of initiatives for its alignment with the obligations arising from domestic and international public policies. The following may serve as an illustration of this statement:

- » The Poverty Reduction Strategy paper for Serbia, which was adopted in 2003, has long expired, and the competent ministry, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MLEVSA), has never initiated the process to prepare and adopt a new strategy;
- » despite the fact that the Employment and Social Reform Programme in the Process of Accession to the European Union (ESRP) stipulates that, in terms of financial social assistance, amendments to the Law on Social Protection should be made to increase weightings (benefits) for children and youth with disabilities and to relax property-related requirements, in particular raise the land ownership ceiling, the latest report on the implementation of ESRP for 2018 states that the draft Law on Amendments to the Law on Social Protection has been prepared, but that it does not provide for amendments in terms of the above, "due to inability to allocate the funds from the state budget for these purposes";
- » The Social Protection Development Strategy (adopted in 2005), which expired ten years ago, is the main strategic document aimed at ensuring the exercise of the right to an adequate standard of living under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, the MLEVSA has prepared a draft of the new strategy in the first half of 2019, but it has not yet been adopted, nor does it provide for additional allocations from the budget of the Republic for its implementation;
- » although prepared in July 2018, the proposal for amendments to the Law on Social Protection has not yet been adopted, nor does it envisage solving the issues related to this goal;
- » the amendment to the Labour Law announced in the Screening Report for Chapter 19 has not been fulfilled, including any recommendation from the previously mentioned analysis of informal employment, with the exception of adoption of the Law on Simplified Work Engagement on Seasonal Jobs in Selected Areas. In addition, although the ESRP envisages a measure to develop the concept of tax relief for employees with minimum wages, the report on the implementation of the ESRP for 2018 does not contain information on the status of implementation of this measure;
- » The National Social Housing Strategy has long expired, and the authorized proposer, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure (MCTI), has not yet submitted a proposal for a new Housing Strategy to the Government for adoption.

# Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the SDG

According to the Law on Ministries, the primary competent ministry in relation to this goal is the MLEVSA, considering that it performs state administration tasks related to the social protection system. This responsibility is shared by SORS, responsible for conducting the Household Budget Survey by collecting data used by the SIPRU to calculate and publish data on the absolute poverty rate, and for conducting SILC (Survey on Income and Living Conditions) which determines the at-risk-of-poverty rate. In terms of line ministry or other government institution responsible for the implementation of this goal, or other ministries or institutions sharing this responsibility, according to the National Program for Combating Shadow Economy the competent ministry is the Ministry of Finance

(MFIN) and other bodies that participate in the work of the Coordination Body for Suppression of Shadow Economy. MCTI, the Ministry of Health (MH), the Ministry of Mining and Energy (MME) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWM) are responsible for providing access to basic services to the population and securing land ownership. The Ministry of Interior (MoI) is in charge of emergency situation management.<sup>12</sup>

Human resource capacity for the implementation of this goal, observed by the number of officials (including those in charge of preparation and implementation of regulations and public policies) and the number of beneficiaries, are inadequate. According to the data from the Action Plan for Chapter 19 – Social Policy and employment, adopted by the Government in May 2020, only 11 civil servants will be hired

Existing resources for achieving this goal are inadequate. There are no mechanisms and agreements in place that explicitly address poverty reduction. Public debates are held regularly, in accordance with legal obligations, but sometimes there are no public reports or reviews of comments that have been submitted and accepted.

for the implementation of the new social protection strategy at the national and provincial level, including social protection institutions, in contrast to about 260 thousand registered financial social assistance beneficiaries, according to the 2017 data; this disproportion is particularly striking considering that the number of people living in absolute poverty, who do not exercise the right to financial social assistance, is twice as high. Furthermore,

<sup>12</sup> There are examples of good practice of the involvement of the private sector in addressing access to basic services. The company Elixir Prahovo provided assistance to the local self-government to implement the project "Reconstruction of the sewerage network" on the territory of the municipality Radujevac.



according to an independent research, the lack of human resources is a problem that all inspections face, and the ban on employment in public sector only adds to it.

There are no mechanisms and agreements in place that explicitly address poverty reduction, access to basic services and legal certainty concerning land rights. At the same time, the Government Working group chaired by the MLEVSA is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the ESRP, and there are other bodies that occasionally deal with issues relevant to poverty reduction, such as the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025, as well as SIPRU. In terms of informal employment, the body in charge is the Coordination Body for Countering Shadow Economy, with the authority to "coordinate the work of state administration bodies and direct activities on the preparation and implementation of the National Program for Countering the Shadow Economy." With regard to disaster risk reduction and emergency management, the law stipulates that the main body is the Sector for Emergency Management, headed by the minister of interior, including the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

State and local-government budgets allocate funds on annual level to civil society organizations for the purpose of providing social protection services. According to the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia and the Rules of Procedure of the

Government of the Republic of Serbia, each competent proponent of regulations or public policies is obliged to organize a public debate on each proposed act, supported by the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of the Republic of Serbia. According to the current practice and the law, public debates are typically held regularly, but there are times when no official reports or reviews of the submitted and accepted comments are published. Comments or proposals submitted by civil society organizations were not accepted in a large number of cases, such as the proposal to abolish the restriction on the duration of the right to financial social assistance set for nine months during a calendar year, which was submitted during a public debate on proposals for amendments to the Law on Social Protection. It is important to emphasize that in 2017 the National Convention on the European Union, as a network of civil society organizations in charge of dialogue with institutions of the Republic of Serbia on the EU accession process, established a Platform for Monitoring the Implementation of the Economic Reform Program (ERP) and ESRP. However, it did not receive further support from the Government to continue its work. It should also be noted that the National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED) is the coordinator of the Expert Group of the Government's Coordination Body for Combating Shadow Economy. The law stipulates that representatives of the academic community and civil society organizations also participate in the work of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (Article 14).



# Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**arget 1.1 is not covered by any objective or measure in public policy documents, so there are no indicators to officially monitor it. It should be noted that SORS conducts the Household Budget Survey by collecting data used by the SIPRU to calculate and publish data on the absolute poverty rate. Data are collected annually and disaggregated by gender, age, etc. **Target 1.2** is recognized by the ESRP and is monitored by the indicator *Reduction of the number of persons at risk of poverty*. The data source is the SILC survey conducted annually by the SORS, providing disaggregated data. The ESRP defines the initial value of this indicator: 1,829,570 persons at risk of poverty

in 2014. The SDG database of the SORS contains two indicators relevant to this target: *At-risk-of-poverty rate by gender and age* and *At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate by age and gender*. Progress monitoring of the goal of "Reducing the number of people at risk of poverty" should be performed through the reporting on implementation of the ESRP and through the work of the ESRP working group chaired by the MLEVSA. However, progress reports on the implementation of the ESRP do not report on progress of this goal, but only on the results of the SILC annual survey

performed by the SORS. Progress on this goal is periodically reported by SIPRU through reports on social inclusion and poverty reduction in Serbia and adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

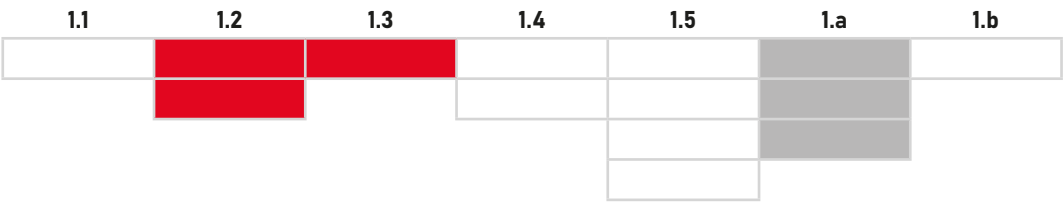
The existing mechanisms allow partial monitoring of implementation of the Goal 1 in Serbia. Only certain planning documents provide indicators to monitor the achievement of objectives related to Goal 1, and systems for progress monitoring and reporting have not been fully established. SORS monitors several indicators related to implementation of this goal, and there are additional indicators that could be relevant.

**Target 1.3** is recognized by the National Program for Combating Shadow Economy through the indicator *Decreased share of informal employment in total employment from 19.5% in 2018 to 17.5% in 2020*. The SORS SDG database contains indicator relevant to the target: *Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable*. MFIN is the competent institution for the Coordination Body for

Combating Shadow Economy, and performs progress monitoring and publishes reports based on data collected by the SORS. Data are collected and published quarterly through the Labour Force Survey, with available data disaggregation. **Target 1.4** is recognized by the Water Management Strategy on the Territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034, and MAFWM is in charge of monitoring the progress for the target "Increased public water supply coverage from the current 81% to 93% at the end

of the planning period". However, the Water Management Strategy does not specify the sources or frequency of data collection or reporting. Progress monitoring reports on this issue are not available on the MAFWM website. The SORS SDG database does not contain indicators relevant to this target. **Targets 1.5** and **1.b** are not recognized by any applicable policy documents, so no official indicators for their monitoring are available, and no relevant indicators exist in the SORS SDG database.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)



It should be noted that reports on monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals include additional indicators, with available data that can be useful for monitoring the SDG 1. For example, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network report also lists indicators: *Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90 a day (%)* and *Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.20 a day (%)*.

The Eurostat database also provides data for indicators: *In-work at-risk-of-poverty rate*, *Total population having neither a bath, nor a shower, nor indoor flushing toilet in their household*, *Total population living in a dwelling with a leaking roof, damp walls, floors or foundation, or rot in window frames or floor, by poverty status*. Taking into account these indicators would be useful for progress monitoring on goal 1.

# Recommendations

- 1. Adopt poverty reduction strategy to cover target 1.1.
- 2. Adopt a new ESRP with target value of the indicator related to the reduction of population at risk of poverty in accordance with target 1.2.

3. Adopt a new social protection strategy and a new National Program to Combat Shadow Economy, with indicators disaggregated by gender and identifying all relevant population groups in accordance with target 1.3.
4. Improve strategic framework to cover target 1.4 by revisiting the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2025 with projections until 2030, the Water Management Strategy on the Territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034 and the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014 – 2024, and adopt a new information society development strategy and a new national strategy for social housing / housing strategy.
5. Adopt a new national strategy for protection and rescue in emergency situations / strategy for disaster risk reduction and emergency management, to include target 1.5.
6. Adopt a new national sustainable development strategy to enable public policies to cover target 1.b.
7. Amend the Law on Social Protection to remove restrictive conditions that prevent people living in poverty from exercising their right to financial social assistance.
8. Amend the Law on Labour in order to prescribe the reasons for the introduction of a minimum wage by the employer.
9. Amend the Law on Housing and Building Maintenance to allow people who own other dwellings and have sufficient funds to provide other accommodation to exercise the right to appropriate accommodation in the eviction procedure.
10. Provide budgetary allocation of the Republic for the implementation of measures envisaged by the ESRP related to better adequacy of financial social assistance, as well as for additional staff in social protection institutions at the national, provincial and local levels.
11. Establish a coordination body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia for poverty reduction, chaired by the Prime Minister.
12. Resume the Platform for Monitoring the Implementation of the ERA and ESRP in cooperation with the National Convention on the European Union.
13. Revise all strategic documents to ensure measurability of objectives by indicators with initial and target values, disaggregated in accordance with relevant targets.

- 14. Competent institutions to publish reports on the implementation of strategic documents.

Goal 2:

# ZERO HUNGER



## End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture






Child malnutrition in Serbia was reported at almost two percent, but it comes to nearly seven percent among children living in informal (Roma) settlements. When it comes to food deprivation, 18.8% of people live in households that cannot afford meat or fish in a meal every other day (or alternatives).

The national prevalence of under-five stunting is close to seven percent. Serbia's under-five wasting prevalence is at four percent.

The child allowance coverage rate has decreased in the period from 2014-2017 from 23.6% to 21%, at a time when the absolute poverty rate among children was above the national average. Another cause for concern is the fact that this allowance is completely inadequate, since the amount allotted for children under 14 comes to a half of the consumption for children in families with total consumption close to the poverty line, and for older children only to a third of the total consumption.

# Public policy framework

**Table 3:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 2 (by targets)

TARGET	POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 2.1</b> By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	
<b>Target 2.2</b> By 2030 end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons	
<b>Target 2.3</b> By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment	
<b>Target 2.4</b> By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality	
<b>Target 2.5</b> By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.	
<b>Target 2.a</b> Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.	

TARGET	POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 2.b</b> Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.	
<b>Target 2.c</b> Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.	

Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence for the period 2020-2023 includes activity 1.4.9. „Set up mobile units for vulnerable families with children, particularly in isolated and rural communities" as part of measure 1.4. „Early intervention and support for children and families at risk", covered under a separate goal 1 „Prevention and systematic work

on changing attitudes, values and awareness related to violence against children". The Strategy to Improve Birth-rates includes a specific goal "Reducing the cost of raising a child", which, among other things, aims at measures to increase the adequacy of child allowance. **Target 2.1**<sup>13</sup> is therefore only partially covered by national public policies.

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in the Republic of Serbia for the

period 2016-2025, under specific objective 4 in the "Health" section, contains Operational objective 2 "Drafting a program for the im-

**Sustainable Development Goal 2 is only partially covered by national goals. No national targets cover the functioning of the food market.**

provement of nutrition of Roma children which should monitor the nutritional status of Roma children through preventive examinations (at the health centre and in the field, in the Roma community), encouraging and protecting breast-feeding, providing education for parents on nutrition, feeding and how to help the development particularly of small children as well as providing the necessary micronutrients (vitamin D, fluorine, if necessary, iron, etc.)", which is relevant for **target 2.2**<sup>14</sup>.

13 This target is measured by indicators „Prevalence of underweight among adults" i „Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population (FIES)"

14 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age" and "Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)"

Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia (2014-2024) does not include goals or measures that cover **target 2.3**<sup>15</sup>. Although this strategy contains an operational goal related to "increasing productivity and production efficiency at all levels in the food production chain", it does not stipulate that the productivity and income of small-scale food producers should be doubled, as envisaged by this target. The Strategy only partially recognizes **target 2.4**<sup>16</sup> under the goal "raising awareness of climate change, its consequences and the need to address them". The Strategy recognizes **target 2.5**<sup>17</sup>, under the operational objective "conservation and sustainable management of plant and animal genetic resources".

Consumer Protection Strategy for the Period 2019-2024 does not contain relevant objectives or measures covering **target 2.c**<sup>18</sup>.

The absence of relevant national goals and measures is not in line with the following international obligations:

The main international instrument ratified by Serbia in the field of social rights is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which in Article 11 prescribes the obligation to "recognize the right of every person to a standard of living adequate for himself and his family", including sufficient

food, as well as to take "appropriate measures to ensure the exercise of this right";

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out the obligation to take appropriate measures to combat malnutrition;

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, called on Member States to take appropriate measures to provide material assistance and support programs, "especially in relation to nutrition". The Committee also expressed concern about high rate of malnutrition affecting the Roma community in Serbia;

The revised European Social Charter obliges States to "encourage regular class attendance" (Article 17, paragraph 1, point 2).

No goals that explicitly refer to this target have been established under the EU accession process.

15 This target is measured by indicators: „Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size" and „Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status".

16 This target is measured by the indicator „Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture".

17 This target is measured by indicators „Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium or long term conservation facilities" i „Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not at risk, extinct or of unknown".

18 This target is measured by the indicator „The indicator of food price anomalies".



## Legal framework

Several obstacles in the legal framework prevent the achievement of targets under this SDG. The Law on Financial Support to Families with Children stipulates that the payment of parental assistance is suspended if it is determined that children of primary school age do not attend school classes regularly (Article 24, paragraph 9) and conditions the right to allowance by regular class attendance (Article 26, paragraph 8.).

The current legal framework only partially supports the achievement of this SDG, and no initiatives have been proposed to align the obligations arising from domestic and international public policies. The following can serve as an illustration:

The legal framework for the second goal has been partially established. There are legal obstacles related to exercising the right to child allowance.

- » The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (adopted in 2003) has long expired, and the competent ministry (MLEVSA) has never initiated the procedure for preparing and adopting a new strategy;
- » National action plan for children, the main strategic document concerning children's rights, has expired in 2015 and a new one has not been adopted;
- » despite years of announcements, the Law on Rights of the Child and the Protector of the Rights of the Child has not yet been adopted.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the SDG

Pursuant to the Law on Ministries, competent ministries or other government institutions responsible for the implementation of this target are the MLEVSA, given that it performs state administration tasks concerning

family and children (Art. 16), MH, responsible for preserving and improving citizens' health (Art. 15), and MAFWM, responsible for the protection and use of agricultural land and for the preservation and sustainable use of plant

and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture (Article 5). SORS also participates and is responsible for conducting the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

Human resource capacity for the implementation of this goal, observed by the number of officials (including those in charge of preparation and implementation of regulations and public policies) and the number of beneficiaries, are inadequate. For example, the hiring 90 health mediators has not been realized by the end of 2017, and according to the latest data 85 mediators have been hired.

There are no mechanisms and agreements in place that explicitly address the goal to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition. However, certain mechanisms deal with this issue, such as the Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025 and the Children's Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

Regarding mechanisms for involving stakeholders (including the private sector and civil society) in the implementation of this target and organizing public debates on draft regulations and public policies and incorporat-

ing provided comments, funds are allocated annually to civil society organizations from the state and local-government budgets for the purpose of providing social protection services (such as the Serbian Red Cross for soup kitchens), which indirectly contributes to the achievement of this SDG. Representatives of civil society also participate in the Council

**The available resources for achievement of this goal are inadequate. There are no mechanisms or agreements in place that explicitly refer to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition.**

for Child Rights of the Government of Serbia. According to the current practice, public debates hearings are usually held regularly in accordance with legal obligations, but sometimes there are no public reports or reviews of comments that have been submitted and accepted. In a number of cases, the comments submitted by civil society organizations were not taken into account, such as the comment by the Child Rights Centre directed to the MLEVSA during the public debate on the draft Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence for the period 2020-2023, stating that the document does not provide a clear plan for the implementation management, monitoring or reporting.

# Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**arget 2.1 is only partially recognized by policy documents, but objectives are not measurable. The SORS SDG database does contain indicator for this target: *Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population (FIES)*. **Target 2.2** is recognized by the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016–2025, monitored by indicators *Number of children whose nutritional status is registered in health medi-*

*ators' records* and the *Number of meals distributed on a monthly / annual basis*. The source of data is the MH, and the responsible institution for progress monitoring is the Coordination Body for monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy for Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in Republic of Serbia for the Period 2016–2025. There are no data available and initial values for indicators have not been de-

*finied, and even though reporting should be done annually, so far only one report on the implementation of the mentioned strategy has been adopted. SORS SDG database contains the following indicators relevant to this target: "Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth*

*Standards) among children under 5 years of age" and "Prevalence of malnutrition (weight for height >+2 or <-2 standard deviation from the median of the WHO Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age, by type (wasting and overweight)". Target 2.3 is not recognized by any public policy document. SORS SDG database does not contain relevant indicators for this target. Target 2.4 is partially recognized by the Strategy for Agriculture and*

Existing mechanisms enable partial monitoring of the implementation of the Goal 2 in Serbia. Only certain planning documents include indicators for monitoring the targets related to Goal 2, but no systems for progress measuring and reporting have been established. SORS monitors several indicators related to the implementation of this goal, and there are additional indicators that could be relevant.

Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014 – 2024 and is monitored by the indicator *Proportion of registered agricultural producers covered by advisory work in agriculture* (the initial value is set at "> 10%", and the target value is defined as "By the end of the period the proportion of agricultural producers covered by advisory work in ag-

riculture increased up to 30 %". Designated competent body is the MAFWM, but there is no defined frequency of data collection and disaggregation or the reporting dynamics on the monitoring of indicators. The SORS SDG database does not contain relevant indicators for this target. **Target 2.5** is recognized by the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014 – 2024 and is monitored by the indicator *Number of plant genetic resources in the national collection* (the initial value is set

at "4,200", while the target value is defined as "The number of plant genetic resources in the national collection increased by one-fifth"). Designated competent body is the MAFWM, but there is no defined frequency of data collection and disaggregation or the reporting dynamics on the monitoring of indicators. The SORS SDG database does not contain relevant indicators for this target. **Target 2.c** is not recognized in public policy documents. The SORS SDG database does not contain relevant indicators for this target.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.c

Reports on monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals include additional indicators, with available data that can be useful for monitoring the SDG 2. For example, the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network report also lists indicators: *Prevalence of stunting (low*

*height-for-age) in children under 5 years of age (%)*, *Prevalence of malnutrition in children under 5 years of age (%)* and *Index of sustainable nitrate management (worst 0-1, 41 best)*. The Eurostat database also provides data for the indicator *Government support to agricultural research and development*.

# Recommendations

1. Revise the strategic framework in order to establish public policies to end hunger and cover target 2.1.
2. Adopt a new national action plan for children and expand the scope of the strategic framework to define measures to end all forms of malnutrition in children under 5 years of age in accordance with target 2.2.
3. Revise the Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2024 to adequately cover targets 2.3 and 2.4.
4. Revise the Consumer Protection Strategy for the Period 2019-2024 to cover target 2.c.
5. Amend the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children in order to remove restrictive conditions that prevent the exercise of the right to parental and child benefits.
6. Adopt a Law on Rights of the Child and the Protector of the Rights of the Child.
7. Engage additional health mediators.
8. Revise all strategic documents to ensure measurability of their objectives through indicators, including initial and target values and data disaggregation in accordance with the relevant targets.
9. Publish reports on the implementation of strategic documents by the competent institutions.



Goal 3:

# GOOD HEALTH



## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

According to official data, maternal mortality rate in Serbia in 2018 was 14,1 per 100.000 live births, which is an increase compared to 2017 (10,8). Infant mortality rate in 2018 was 4,9 per 1,000 live births, which was higher compared to 2017 (4,7).

Concerning AIDS, there were 62 new cases registered in 2018 (an increase compared to 2017 when 55 new cases). In the same year the tuberculosis case detection rate was 10 per 100,000 inhabitants (which is a decrease compared to the previous year when it was 11 per 100,000 inhabitants).

As of 2018, the leading cause of death were diseases of cardiovascular system with 52,663 (51.8%) deaths, tumours with 22,084 (21.7%) deaths, diseases of respiratory system with 5,250 (5.2%) deaths, group of endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases with 3,324 (3.3%) deaths. There was a decrease in certain causes in the total number of causes of death compared to 2017 – diseases of cardiovascular system (53,5% in 2017) and endocrine, nutrition and metabolic disease (3,6%), but there was an increase in other causes – tumours (18,8%) and diseases of the respiratory system (4,8%).

There was a decline in the number of suicides, from 1005 in 2017 to 949 in 2018.

According to the 2018 data, 53,9% of the population in Serbia consumed alcohol, and 4,7% did so on a daily basis, an increase compared to 2006 (3,4%).

The number of people killed in road accidents per million inhabitants in Serbia in 2018 was 78, a decrease compared to 82 in 2017.





Adolescent fertility rate (number of births per 1,000 women ages under 15) in 2018, was 28, and the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19 was 1,867; compared to 2017, this was an increase in the number of births among women under 15 (17), and a decrease among women ages 15-19 (2,080).

According to the Government data, the coverage of the population with compulsory health insurance was 97.2% in 2016, which is an increase compared to 2012 when it was 95.8%.

According to the 2013 data, 34.7% of the population in Serbia smoked every day, which is an increase compared to 2006 (33%), and the proportion of smokers in the age group of 18-64 is higher compared to the rest of the population (41.2%).

# Public policy framework

**Table 4** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 3 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 3.1</b> By 2030 reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	
<b>Target 3.2</b> By 2030 end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births	
<b>Target 3.3</b> By 2030 end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases	
<b>Target 3.4</b> By 2030 reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	



TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 3.5</b> Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol	✓
<b>Target 3.6</b> By 2020 halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents	✓
<b>Target 3.7</b> By 2030 ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes	✗
<b>Target 3.8</b> Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	✗
<b>Target 3.9</b> By 2030 substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals, and air, water and soil pollution and contamination	✗
<b>Target 3.a</b> Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate	✓
<b>Target 3.b</b> Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all	○
<b>Target 3.c</b> Substantially increase health financing, and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States	○
<b>Target 3.d</b> Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks	✗

A specific objective of the Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018–2026 is the "Prevention and control of diseases and leading risks to the population health", which includes the measure "Improving prevention and control of chronic

non-communicable diseases and injuries", which partially covers **target 3.4**<sup>19</sup>. However, this measure did not perform quantification in line with the stated target. This target is partially covered by the Program for Improving Cancer Control in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020-2022, which includes the overall objective "Improvement of prevention, early detection and modern therapies of malignant diseases and preservation of the quality of life during and after the therapy", which is coherent with the measure under the Public Health Strategy. The National Programme for the Protection of Mental Health in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2026 does contain relevant general objective in accordance with this target – "Reform of the mental health care system in the Republic of Serbia and improvement of human rights of persons with mental disorders in accordance with international standards and best practice", but does not cover the relevant indicator under this target (suicide rate). In relation to **target 3.5**<sup>20</sup>, the Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 contains the operational objective "Prevention and control of smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke, harmful use of alcohol and drug abuse (to reduce by 10% the proportion of adults and

persons under 18 who smoke daily or occasionally, who are exposed to tobacco smoke in workplace and in public places, and abuse alcohol and drugs), which adequately covers this target. In relation to **target 3.8**<sup>21</sup>, the

**Sustainable Development Goal 3 is only partially covered by national goals. The goal of universal health care coverage is not recognized by any national goals.**

Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 includes several general objectives, among which "promoting health and reducing inequalities in health" and "support the development of affordable, quality and efficient health care", but these do not adequately cover this target of sustainable development since it does not recognize the universal health care coverage or public expenditure on health. The ESRP also contains a relevant objective in that respect: „Better financial and physical accessibility of health care to all vulnerable social groups", but the objective has not been quantified either. **Target 3.9**<sup>22</sup> is not adequately covered by the Public Health Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026, since the objectives only partially cover this

19 This target is measured by indicators „Mortality attributable to cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (CRD)" and „Suicide rate".

20 This target is measured by indicators „Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders" and „Alcohol consumption per capita (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year (litres of pure alcohol)".

21 This target is measured by indicators „Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)" and „Proportion of population with large household expenditures on health as a share of total household expenditure or income".

22 This target is measured by indicators „Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution", „Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene (exposure to unsafe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All (WASH) services)" and „Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning".

target, most relevant being "provision of safe and sustainable drinking-water supply" and "Establishing inter-ministerial expert body to assess the impact of environmental risks on health and develop strategic documents for an integrated system of monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the environment (air quality, safety of drinking water and items of general use, noise management, municipal and medical waste)". The National Environmental Approximation Strategy for the Republic of Serbia is relevant for this target, but it does not cover it adequately. In terms of **target 3.a**<sup>23</sup>, the Public Health Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 contains the operational objective „Prevention and control of smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke, harmful use of alcohol and drug abuse (to decrease by 10% the proportion of adults and persons under 18 who smoke daily or occasionally, who are exposed to tobacco smoke in workplace and in public places, and abuse alcohol and drugs), which adequately covers this target. In relation to **target 3.d**<sup>24</sup>, this strategy includes the operational objective "Improvement of surveillance of diseases, injuries and risk factors", covers this target only partially (strengthening of early warning capacity has not been identified).

Strategy for Traffic Safety 2015-2020 includes objectives, such as "no children killed in traffic by 2020" and "to halve the number of killed, the number of seriously injured children, the

number of severely injured persons in 2020, compared to 2011", which adequately covers **target 3.6**.<sup>25</sup>

The Birth Promotion Strategy includes a specific goal "Preservation and improvement of reproductive health", which recognizes **target 3.7**<sup>26</sup>. However, this goal has not been quantified in line with the target. Similarly, the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period from 2016 to 2020 does not adequately cover this target, as it sets as a target value "increased proportion of women aged 15 to 49 who have had gynaecological examination".

Relevant national objectives and measures partially cover the targets within this SDG, which is contrary to Serbia's international obligations. As a rule, these instruments do not contain objectives and values in the format envisaged by the SDGs, but they do prescribe clear obligations that are relevant to the issue of eradicating extreme poverty:

» the main international instrument ratified by Serbia in the field of social rights is the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which specifies under Article 12 that States Parties recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;

23 This target is measured by indicators „Age-standardized prevalence of current tobacco use among persons aged 15 years and older“.

24 This target is measured by indicators „International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness“.

25 This target is measured by indicators „Death rate due to road traffic injuries“.

26 This target is measured by indicators „Percentage of women of reproductive age (15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods“ and „Adolescent birth rate (per 1000 women aged 10-14 years / 15-19 years“.

- » The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Covenant, expressed concern regarding inadequate health care financing budget; vulnerable individuals without health insurance cards and those living in rural areas have limited access to health care; thousands of Roma living in informal settlements do not have access to drinking water, sanitation and health care;
- » The Committee on the Rights of the Child, the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, expressed concern regarding the fact that a large proportion of the rural population and vulnerable groups, especially mothers and young Roma children, do not have access basic health care services; health mediators are still engaged based on projects and are not integrated into the health care system;
- » The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, expressed concern regarding low modern contraceptive prevalence, the prevalence of adolescent pregnancies among Roma girls, and continued practice of abortion as a contraceptive method.

Although no poverty reduction targets have been set in the EU accession process, the EU addresses this issue under the European Pillar of Social Rights, which requires all Member States (including those covered by the EU enlargement policy) to ensure that each person is afforded the right to "timely access to affordable, preventive and curative health care of good quality".

The Screening Report for Chapter 28 – Consumer and Health Protection assessed that the overall financial sustainability of the health sector remains "seriously endangered", and that a shortage of medical and administrative staff in primary healthcare centres poses difficulties especially in rural areas. With regard to serious cross-border health threats, including communicable diseases, it was emphasized that surveillance and response capacity remains limited and requires modernisation. It was also assessed that community services in the field of mental health require further support, and that it is necessary to continue activities to improve the health of vulnerable groups, such as the Roma.

# Legal framework

The Law on Health Care does not regulate the position of health mediators as employees in the health care system (in the manner the Law on the Education System Foundations regulates the position of pedagogical assistants), despite the fact that Serbia has committed itself under the Action Plan for Chapter 23 – Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (adopted in 2016) to introduce health mediators as health care assistants in the nomenclature of occupations. Moreover, the role of civil society organizations in the field of health care is not defined.

Law on the Protection of the Population from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke is not aligned with Directive 2014/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products and repealing Directive 2001/37/EC, in particular as regards the labelling and packaging of tobacco products.

The current legal framework only partially enables the achievement of this sustainable development goal, and there is no active proposing of initiatives for its alignment with the obligations arising from domestic and international public policies. The following may serve as an illustration of this statement:

The Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare has not yet been transposed into national legislation;

In terms of the Action Plan for Chapter 23, Serbia has committed itself to resolve the employment status of health mediators, by finding a financially viable solution for their systematization, which will include an appropriate form of employment and adequate salaries, but MH did not report any progress on this issue;

**The legal framework for the third objective has been partially established. Effective implementation of obligations under the EU accession process has been delayed for several years, including: regulation of the position of health mediators, adoption of laws and strategies necessary to protect people from exposure to tobacco smoke, and adoption of the Medical Staff Development Plan.**

A draft law amending the Law on the Protection of the Population from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke should have been adopted in 2016, according to the screening report on Chapter 28; the Tobacco Control Strategy (adopted in 2007) has long expired, and the MH has never initiated the procedure for preparing and adopting a new strategy, despite the statement given by the Serbian delegation at a bilateral screening on Chapter 28 that the new strategy would be adopted after 2016;

Medical Staff Development Plan envisaged by the ESRP was supposed to be adopted by the end 2017, and according to the 2018

report on the implementation of the ESRP it has not yet been adopted, and most likely it will be adopted during 2020.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the SDG

According to the Law on Ministries, the competent ministry for this goal is the MH, considering that it performs state administration tasks related to the health care system and preservation and improvement of citizens' health. Institute of Public Health of Serbia Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut shares this responsibility with the Ministry of Health, since it also performs activities in the field of public health. Other institutions relevant for this goal are the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure (MCTI), Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), and the Cabinet of Minister without Portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policies.

There are no inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms and agreements that explicitly address public health promotion. There are inter-ministerial bodies that occasionally deal with issues relevant for improving public health of the general population or certain vulnerable groups, such as: Coordination Body for Monitoring the Implementation of

**The available resources for achievement of this goal are inadequate. There are no mechanisms or agreements in place that explicitly refer to the promotion of public health, and public debates on relevant legislation in this area are rarely held.**

Observed by the number of beneficiaries, human resources for the implementation of this SDG are adequate. According to the World Health Organization, there are on average 31,25 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants in Serbia, which puts it in the category of countries with the best coverage in the world, while the number of nurses and midwives per 10,000 inhabitants is 60,86, ranked 55th in the world (out of 194).

the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025, Gender Equality Coordination Body and the Joint Body for the Support to Social inclusion, Performance and Coordination of Monitoring the Performance of Inter-Sectorial Committees (ISC) for the assessment of the need for additional educational, medical and social support for children and students.

State budget and LSG budgets provide annual funding allocations for the program "Support to Associations and Organizations" to support citizens' associations for activities in the field of health care. According to current practice,

public debates in this area are rarely held. For example, according to the 2014 data, no public debates were held for any of the 23 pieces of legislation related to the MH.

## Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

The Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 includes indicators that monitor **targets 3.4<sup>27</sup>, 3.5<sup>28</sup>, 3.a<sup>29</sup> and 3.d<sup>30</sup>**. The strategy does not set the initial values for indicators or data collection frequency, and data disaggregation is not available. The MH is the institution designated for annual progress monitoring and reporting. In relation to target 3.d, the MH is assisted by the Republic Health Insurance Fund.

Existing mechanisms allow partial monitoring of the implementation of the Goal 3 in Serbia. Planning documents generally set indicators for monitoring the achievement of Goal 3, but the systems for progress monitoring and reporting have not been fully established. The SORs monitors only indicators related to the three applicable targets, but there are additional indicators that could be relevant.

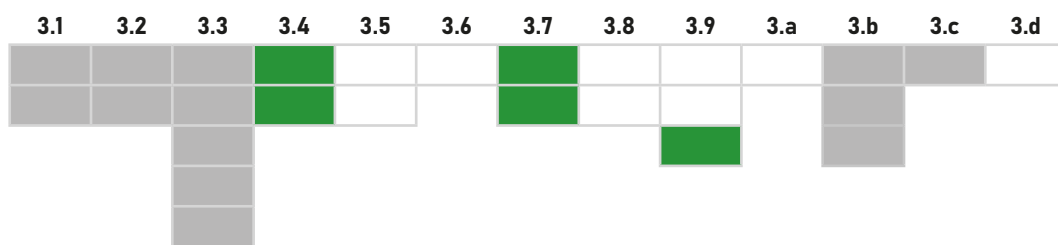
- 
- 27 Reduced premature death rate from cardiovascular disease by 30%; Improved screening coverage for early detection of type 2 diabetes by 40%; Reduced premature death from type 2 diabetes by 20%; Improved screening coverage for early detection of colorectal cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer for 40%.
  - 28 Smoking ban imposed in all public places without exceptions; Having in place more rigorous regulation of hours and locations of the availability of alcoholic beverages in restaurants and retail compared to 2015.
  - 29 Reduce by 10% the proportion of adults and persons under 18 who smoke daily or occasionally, who are exposed to tobacco smoke in workplace and in public places, and abuse alcohol and drugs.
  - 30 Availability of data on incidence, prevalence and lethality for 17 diseases or conditions defined in Art. 31 of the Law on Medical Documentation and Records; Having in place the procedure for sentinel surveillance and its application on the territory of the Republic of Serbia; Having in place procedures for monitoring vector and blood-borne viral infectious diseases; Defined cases of infectious diseases in accordance with EU, Established electronic immunization register based on existing national and global experiences, Number and type of amended regulations with the aim to improve the systems and procedures for rapid risk assessment, emergency response and threats to public health, Number and type of amended regulations with the aim to develop public health safety systems for mass meetings with possible severe consequences for the population, Strategy for the development of infectious disease prevention and control systems in the Republic of Serbia, Procedure for standardization of laboratory procedures carried out in line with recommendations of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization and Standardized management of infectious diseases, risk assessments, increasing the scope and effectiveness of testing etc., in accordance with ECDC guidelines.

The SORS SDG database does not contain indicators relevant to these targets, except for **target 3.4**: *Mortality attributable to cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease (CRD) and Suicide rate*. **Targets 3.8** and **3.9** are not adequately recognized by the Public Health Strategy in the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026, and the SORS SDG database does not contain indicators relevant to these targets, except for **target 3.9**: *Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning*.

**Target 3.6** is covered by the National Road Safety Strategy for the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2015 to 2025<sup>31</sup>, with no

disaggregated data available. The MCTI and the Coordination Body for Road Traffic Safety have been designated as institutions responsible for progress monitoring, but the SORS SDG database does not contain indicators relevant to this target. **Target 3.7** is covered by the Birth Promotion Strategy, but the corresponding objectives and measures are not measurable because there are no indicators. The SORS SDG database contains indicators relevant to this target: *Percentage of women of reproductive age (15-49) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods*" and *„Adolescent birth rate (per 1000 women aged 10-14 years / 15-19 years)"*.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)



The Eurostat database provides data for the following indicators: *Life expectancy at birth by sex, Standardised death rates from treatable diseases/conditions, Standardised death rate due to tuberculosis, HIV and hepatitis by type*

of disease, Proportion of people with good or very good perceived health by sex, Self-reported unmet need for medical examination and care by sex and Exposure to air pollution by particulate matter.

31 „No children killed in traffic by 2020“ and „to halve the number of killed, the number of seriously injured children, the number of severely injured persons in 2020, compared to 2011“.



# Recommendations

1. Revise The Strategy of the Public Health of the Republic of Serbia 2018-2026 to adequately cover targets 3.4, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.d.
2. Revise the Birth Promotion Strategy and adopt a new national strategy for gender equality to adequately cover target 3.7.
3. Amend the Law on Health Care to regulate the position of health mediators to incorporate them into the national health care system.
4. Amend the Law on Protection of the Population from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke in order to comply with Directive 2014/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products and repealing Directive 2001/37/EC, in particular as regards the labelling and packaging of tobacco products.
5. Transpose the directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare into national legislation.
6. Adopt a Medical Staff Development Plan.
7. Secure state budget allocations to employ additional number of nurses and midwives.
8. Regularly hold public debates on draft regulations and public policy documents, in accordance with legal obligations of the competent proponents.
9. Revise all strategic documents to ensure measurability of their objectives through indicators, including initial and target values and data disaggregation in accordance with the relevant targets.
10. Publish reports on the implementation of strategic documents by the competent institutions.



Goal 4:

# QUALITY EDUCATION



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

The strategic framework for education in Serbia fully covers most applicable SDG 4 targets (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4a), and is in line with the European strategic framework, but most indicators show that by the end of application of the current Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020 (SEDS), the target values were not achieved. Data on education financing, which is one of the most important instruments for implementing the strategy indicate that Serbia has taken a step back – the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia in 2020 allocated 206,38 billion dinars or 3.54% of GDP for expenditures on education, which is far from the planned 6% of GDP or 4.5% (allocated for at the time of drafting the SEDS). The coverage of children with pre-school upbringing and education (children under three years and children aged 4 to 5.5 years) is significantly below the EU-27 average and the values projected by SEDS. The net coverage rate of children with primary education in 2019 was 93%, lower by 6 percentage points compared to 2012 and below the target set in the SEDS for 2020. The coverage with secondary education in 2019 was 87.4% (in 2012 it was 88.5%) and corresponds to the target value of 88% set in the SEDS. However, almost nothing has been done to achieve the strategic goal of increasing the coverage by general and artistic education to 39% of the generation, since in 2019/20 out of the total number of students enrolled in high

schools, 25,7% enrolled in grammar/comprehensive high schools. The portion of residents with higher education in 2019 was 33,5%, which is significantly lower than the EU-27 average (40,3%), and the value targeted by SEDS was 38,5%. The coverage of adults in education and training in 2019 was 4,3%, significantly lower than the EU-27 average (10, 8%) and the value targeted by SEDS was 7%. Another cause for concern is data on the quality of educational achievements of students from Serbia. As in previous cycles of PISA testing, 15-year-olds in Serbia score very poorly in reading and mathematical literacy: 37,7% of students do not achieve the minimum requirement for reading, and 39,7% do not achieve the minimum requirement for mathematics. The data also show indicate a significantly lower achievement of students of lower socioeconomic status in reading and mathematics. Injustice and discrimination in the education system are also noted in the reports by the UN treaty bodies – The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, primarily in relation to vulnerable groups (Roma, people with disabilities, asylum seekers, rural population, the poor).

# Public policy framework

**Table 5** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 4 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 4.1.</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	✓
<b>Target 4.2.</b> By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education	✓
<b>Target 4.3.</b> By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university	✓
<b>Target 4.4.</b> By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship	✓
<b>Target 4.5.</b> By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	✓

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 4.6</b> By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	✓
<b>Target 4.7</b> By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	✗
<b>Target 4.a</b> Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all	✓
<b>Target 4.b</b> By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	○
<b>Target 4.c</b> By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States	○

The Strategy for Education Development in Serbia by 2020 (SEDS) is the main strategic document for the achievement of the SDG 4 and provides the framework for education development in Serbia. There are also several other public policy documents that in some way deal with education, in which education is related to certain population groups (National Youth Strategy 2015-2025; Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2016–2025; Strategy on Improvement of the Status of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 – 2024; National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period from 2016 to 2020, and other documents for

specific topics (ESRP, Smart Specialization Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 to 2027; The Strategy of Digital Skills Development in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020 – 2024).

The SEDS establishes goals, objectives, directions, tools and mechanisms for development of the education system in the Republic of Serbia and defines individual and specific strategies for nine educational subsystems: System of Early-Childhood Care and Pre-School Upbringing and Education; Primary Education; General and Artistic Secondary Education; Secondary Vocational Education; Basic and Master Academic Studies; Doctoral

Studies; Vocational Studies; Teacher Education; Adult Education. Each education subsystem has defined strategic goals related to increasing the quality of the process and outcomes of education to the highest attainable level, increasing the coverage of the population on all levels of education, reaching and maintaining the relevance of education, and increasing the efficiency of the use of all educational resources. The structure and content of the SEDS fully corresponds to SDG 4, providing specific strategic policies, actions and measures to set the quality of education as a primary development goal for each part of the education system, and ensures inclusiveness and equity of education by increasing the scope, relevance and efficiency of education.

In terms of **target 4.1**<sup>32</sup> By 2030 ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, the SEDS sets out policies and measures in the part related to educational subsystems of primary and secondary education (general and artistic secondary education and secondary vocational education). The SEDS strategic direction and measures "cover" the target 4.1. SROS defines measures for full coverage of children in primary education, and the key policy in this regard is increasing the coverage of children from rural areas, Roma children and children with disabilities and special needs and reducing their primary school (PS) dropout rate. Strategic directions in secondary education are formulated for

two subsystems – secondary general and artistic education and training (GASE) and secondary vocational education and training (VET). The GASE should prepare students for the continuation of their education at higher levels and create the basis for the formation

**Sustainable Development Goal 4 is fully covered by national goals seven targets, and partially for target 4.7.**

of future intellectual and cultural elite of the country. In order to achieve this, priority tasks include increasing student coverage primarily by enabling education to children from poorest classes of society and children from rural areas, and increasing the quality of education (conditions and requirements for teaching and learning, educational programs, teaching and learning processes, teachers, educational achievements of students at school level). By increasing coverage, quality, efficiency and relevance, the VET should provide every individual with the opportunities and conditions to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes – professional competences for effective integration into the world of labour or further education. The SEDS sets the following quantitative indicators by 2020 for primary and secondary education: at least 95% of primary school graduates will choose to go to a secondary school (88% of the age group); Four-year secondary vocational schools are attended by 39% of the age group, other VET are attended by 10% of the age group; 39% of the age group attends general secondary

32 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.

and art school; a minimum of 95% of enrolled (37% of the age group) will complete a four-year vocational high school; the same applies to comprehensive schools (37%). The SEDS emphasizes the need to perform all necessary analyses to determine the possibility and justification to make secondary education mandatory after 2020, after completing primary school and attending secondary education (if not completed) until reaching adulthood. The set target values fully correspond to all aspects of the target 4.1.

The main strategic measures within the system of early childhood care and pre-school upbringing and education (ECCPUE) are directly related to the **target 4.2**<sup>33</sup> – By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. Increasing the preschool coverage, ensuring quality, improving system efficiency, and ensuring relevance should benefit the children from birth to the beginning of school, support their overall development, upbringing and socialisation, and create the necessary conditions for early learning depending on the needs of families and children. The SEDS envisages that every child from the age of six months have access to some kind of diversified system of preschool programme that meets their needs. The plan is to double the general coverage for compulsory preparatory preschool program (PPP) for

children four years of age; children aged four years until the start of PPP are provided with a free use of abridged (half-day) programs to encourage development and preschool education; full coverage of children 5,5 to 6,5 years by mandatory PPP. It is emphasized that it is necessary to establish much fairer system that will allow significantly greater coverage of all children, especially children from marginalised groups who will have priority in admission. To increase the coverage, relevance and efficiency of preschool education training, the following quantitative indicators have been defined by 2020: for children from six months to three years of age, the access to diversified programmes and services is increased and a 30%-coverage of children of that age is provided; all children from 4 to 5.5 years of age are provided with free use of abridged (half-day) high-quality educational programmes during the school year; for children aged 5.5 to 6.5, a full coverage is achieved through full-day and half-day forms of pre-school preparatory programmes. Since the target values set in the SEDS are set for 2020, we believe that they are in line with the target 4.2. and the set indicators allow target monitoring.

**Target 4.3**<sup>34</sup> – By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. The SEDS is operational for this target through strategic objectives and measures defined in the secondary vo-

33 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.2.1 Proportion of children aged 24–59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex and 4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex.

34 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex.

cational education subsystem and higher education subsystem. Strategic goals for the development of secondary vocational education in Serbia, specified through the planned implementation measures, are directly related to the target 4.3. – ensuring relevance and availability of qualifications, improving the quality and efficiency of VET, ensuring VET comprehensiveness, establishment of a sustainable system of social partnership in secondary vocational education, as well as the establishment of efficient management system in VET at all levels. The following are development commitments in the system of higher education system, crucial for the realization of the target 4.3.: openness of the higher education system to all who wish to prepare themselves for employment and further development, introduction of a funding system intended for those who wish to study, regardless of social, economic or other status.

Objectives of long-term development of education defined by SEDS include reaching and maintaining the relevance of education by harmonising the structure of the education system with the immediate and developmental needs of individuals, economic, social, cultural, research, education, public, administrative and other systems. The planned goals and measures related to increasing the quality, coverage and relevance in all education subsystems enable the realization of the **target 4.4**<sup>35</sup> – substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. The

essence of the education reform set in SEDS is aimed at adapting the education system to the needs of the overall development of the Republic of Serbia through reindustrialization, which should take place through the processes of revitalization and modernization of the processing industry and related services and development of knowledge-based industries, especially creative industries. In accordance with the said development concept, *the role of education in Serbia, as a lever for economic growth and social progress, is to develop the ability of understanding and critical thinking, as well as to encourage initiative, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, with teamwork and positive social values. Free, open and high-quality education, accessible to all as a basic democratic right, one that covers the entire lifespan and that includes ethical and aesthetic relationship to the world, should be a framework for developing our potential and moving our society on the scale of competence and active participation in the global market.* Career guidance and counselling is recognized in the SEDS at various educational levels as an instrument for personal development of students, researching learning and employment opportunities, as well as developing a realistic attitude about career opportunities after graduation.

The National Youth Strategy 2015 – 2025 includes Special goal 1 – Provided conditions for the development of creativity, innovation and youth initiatives and the acquisition of competencies within the lifelong learning, which aims to affirm the system of lifelong

35 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill.



learning and recognition of prior learning, while recognizing the specifics of non-formal education programs for youth.

The Employment and Social Reform Programme considers measures to harmonize the outcomes of the education system with the needs of the labour market by increasing the quality and relevance of education and training: measures to develop relevant education and training programs corresponding to the labour market needs and society as a whole; education, professional development and professional cooperation of teachers at all education levels and measures to establish a system of quality assurance in education and training at all levels.

In terms of **target 4.5** – by end 2030 eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations <sup>36</sup>, SEDS recognizes the importance of inclusion of children from vulnerable groups in the education system and defines measures to increase the coverage at all education levels. Increasing the coverage of preschool children, among other things, envisages the introduction of a much fairer system that will allow significantly greater coverage of all children, especially children from marginalised groups who will have priority in admission (children with disabilities and special needs, children who show emotional problems or behavioural problems and learn-

ing difficulties, children whose problems stem primarily from the socio-economic reasons or facts that they do not attend programmes in their mother tongue, especially Roma children, children from the poorest classes of society and from families with a low education level, children from rural areas). SEDS provides a series of measures to increase the coverage of rural children, Roma children and children with disabilities and special needs, and reduce their dropout rate during primary education by developing corrective mechanisms. The key policy in the GASE subsystem is to enable schooling to poor and children from rural areas under GASE. This includes support measures for these children and affirmative support measures for specific groups (Roma children, some categories of children with disability and special needs). Regarding academic studies, the SEDS stresses the need for special support to students from socially vulnerable groups or people with disabilities, and anyone who meets the enrolment requirements and wishes to study should be entitled to some kind of state financial support. Concerning the adult education subsystem development, the SEDS emphasizes the need to make this type of education accessible to all categories of adults, regardless of their socio-economic status, age, intellectual, regional, national, linguistic, ethnic, religious and other characteristics. The SEDS also deals with the education and training of special categories of students and provides a list of special measures that refer to the education and training of members of national minorities and persons with disabilities,

36 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.5.1 – parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.

persons with learning disabilities and people from socially underprivileged backgrounds.

The Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia 2020 – 2024 includes the special objective 3 – Systematic introduction of the disability perspective in the adoption, implementation and monitoring of public policies, aimed at improving inclusive education and lifelong learning for persons with disabilities. It also includes a measure to strengthen the competencies of experts, raise public awareness and constantly monitor the implementation of inclusive education, in order to provide adequate response to the needs of children with disabilities and ensure consistent application of principles of inclusive education.

The Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the Period 2016– 2025 includes specific objective 1, which provides for measures to ensure full inclusion of children and youth from the Roma community in quality preschool, primary and secondary education, better coverage of Roma men and women in higher education subsystem and to provide support to the education of young people and adults who did not attend school or who dropped out of school. It also introduces effective and efficient mechanisms to combat discrimination and enable Roma men and women to exercise all minority rights in the education system.

The achievement of the **target 4.6** – by 2030 ensure that all youth and a substantial

proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy<sup>37</sup> is contingent on increasing the quality of education processes and outcomes, which is a long-term education development goal under the SEDS. There are four strategic commitments aimed at increasing the quality of the education system as a whole: quality is the primary development goal at all educational levels; a key factor in the quality of education is the quality of teachers, and a specific teacher education strategy has been developed under the SEDS; regular, objective and transparent accreditation and quality control of all educational institutions and programs; providing and improving resources and conditions for better education quality by increasing the share of total public expenditures related to the education (from current 4,5% to 6,0% of the GDP). Measures to increase all components of education quality are presented in detail for each education level.

The basic requirement for further economic and other development is a radical increase in the education level of the entire population in Serbia, by including environmental education and training aimed at achieving sustainable development.

**Target 4.7** – by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship,

37 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.6.1 – Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development<sup>38</sup>, is only partially covered by the SEDS since it does not set objectives related to the promotion of sustainable development. The initial condition for taking this direction in the further economic development through modernization of production, product and process innovation, as well as development of emerging production sectors, is to radically raise the level of education of the entire population, including environmental education in order to achieve sustainable development.

The National Gender Equality Strategy 2016 – 2020 includes specific objective 1.2 – Gender-sensitive formal education, which entails introduction of mandatory gender-sensitive and anti-discrimination educational programs and curricula at all levels of education, review of curricula and textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes, discriminatory content and discriminatory language, introduction of education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, including gender relations, gender roles, gender communication and responsible sexual behaviour in primary and secondary education curricula, improvement of the competencies of education staff through compulsory educational programs on gender equality, introduction of gender-sensitive language in all curricula and the inclusion of women's contribution to science, culture and art in the curriculum.

Inclusion of educational institutions as a precondition for the realization of the **target 4.a** – build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all<sup>39</sup> is recognized in the SEDS through measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning conditions. Improving conditions in primary schools requires infrastructure, appropriate hygiene and safety level, work equipment, teaching aids, assistive technologies, internet connection. The SEDS specifies that the introduction of the model of inclusive education and transition of certain special education model into a model of inclusive education model requires the following: *additional funding, specific assistance to institutions with students in special education, staff training, providing adapted spatial and other conditions, development of appropriate programs (including individual educational plans), learning resources and technical aids, provision of special support systems (including personal / pedagogical assistants)*. As noted in the SEDS, inclusive approach in education allows the exercise of the right to education for all, increases social inclusion and reduces poverty, creates a basis for cooperation, solidarity and mutual respect, tolerance of diversity, openness to others, and prevents prejudices and stereotypes.

SEDS is fully in line with the European strategic framework as well as with the international commitments set out in:

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- 38 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.7.1 – Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment.
- 39 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) Internet for educational purposes; (c) PC for educational purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) drinking water; (f) basic sanitation facilities, divided by gender; and (g) hygiene-related capabilities (hand-washing) (according to definitions of indicators for WASH)

- » Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- » Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- » Articles 23 (paragraphs 3 and 4), 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- » Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

## Legal framework

**T**he legislative framework should enable the implementation of the SEDS, and the achievement of most targets under the SDG 4. Applicable laws in the Republic of Serbia include the Law on Education System Foundations, the Law on Preschool Education, the Law on Primary Education, the Law on Secondary Education, the Law on Adult Education, the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Students' Standard, the Law on Dual Education, the Law on Dual Model of Studies in Higher Education, and the Law on the National Qualifications Framework. The financing of education is regulated by the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia.

resources, do not enable elimination of discrimination and injustice in education (targets 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4a).

Over the last few years most laws pertaining to education have been amended, and three new laws have been passed, specifically the Law on Dual Education, the Law on Dual Model

**A comprehensive legal framework for the fourth goal has been established. The legal framework is not fully in line with the strategic commitments, and unlike the strategic framework, it does not provide for the full achievement of all targets under the SDG 4.**

The legal framework is comprehensive, but it does not allow for the full achievement of all targets under the SDG 4 – secondary education is not compulsory (target 4.1), pre-school education, other than PPP, is not free and lacks capacities to enable children access to quality early childhood development (target 4.2.). Despite the advocacy for an inclusive approach, the envisaged affirmative action measures for supporting students from vulnerable groups, coupled with limited financial

of Studies in Higher Education, and the Law on the National Qualifications Framework. The adoption of amendments to the existing and the adoption of new laws was done by urgent procedure, disregarding the objections made in public debates. The professional public warned that certain legal solutions are contrary to the SEDS: centralization of school management (amendments to the Law on Education System Foundations stipulate that directors

of institutions are appointed and dismissed by the line minister), adoption of the Law on Dual Education, which stipulates that students may spend 80% of schooling actively working with the employer for a 70% of the minimum

wage, and evaluation of the work quality of an institution based on student achievement in national tests, which puts schools with students of lower socio-economic status in a disadvantaged position.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the SDG

According to SEDS, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD), the Institute for the Improvement of Education, The Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, and the National Education Council are responsible for monitoring the implementation of general policies and measures in the field of education. Teams consisting of representatives of these institutions should monitor the implementation, and place a special emphasis on the importance of introducing continuous research in education and all areas of cooperation (education and culture, education and science, education and finance, education and work and social protection etc.). Also, there are different coordination and cooperation mechanisms listed for each education subsystem.

SEDS also cites as necessary the interdepartmental coordination and cooperation as part of the process of achievement of strategic goals and measures of preschool education.

It proposes having a mechanism in place at the national and local level aimed at coordinated implementation of strategic policies and measures, interdisciplinary approaches and practices in child care and preschool education (health and social protection), es-

**Although the strategic framework clearly defines the institutional and coordination and cooperation mechanisms, it is not possible to assess the functionality of the planned mechanisms based on the available data. Human resource capacity required for the implementation of this SDG are appropriate for the primary and secondary education and training subsystem.**

tablishment of national and local sustainability mechanisms through interdepartmental agreements on cooperation, development of integrated programs and services, support sports and culture in early childhood development and preschool education.

Establishing cooperation with cultural, educational, scientific, sports, environmental and

other institutions and organizations and local self-government units, along with systemic support to international and especially regional cooperation projects, are cited as vital for the primary education subsystem development.

Regarding secondary education and training, MESTD should engage a person/s in charge of monitoring the education of children from rural areas and vulnerable groups and a person/s in charge of the implementation of art education. Comprehensive and secondary art schools should establish cooperation with various cultural, scientific, sports, health, environmental, technical and technological events. As for the secondary vocational education, the plan is to involve employers in the programming, development and implementation of VET, through sectoral councils.

In the area of higher education, it is necessary to establish links between academic studies and secondary education, vocational studies, research system and economy, promote exchange of students and employees be-

tween higher education institutions, economic, cultural and other sectors, as well as build links between vocational studies and other educational subsystems and industry.

Whether the planned mechanisms have been established in the educational system and how they operate cannot be ascertained based on annual reports on the implementation of the Action plan for the implementation of SEDS.

Human resource capacity for the implementation of this goal, expressed by the student – teacher ratio at different levels of education, is adequate, with the exception of higher education: 11,64 in preschool institutions; 14,29 in primary schools, (I-IV grade); 7,8 in primary schools (grades V-VIII); 8, 12 in higher education. It should be borne in mind that the number of teachers also includes part-time teachers who have a significant share in the total number of the teaching staff. According to the SORS Statistical Calendar, 2020 (p. 67,) 44% of primary education teachers and 46% of secondary education teachers worked part-time in 2017.<sup>40</sup>

## Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

SORS recognizes the importance of monitoring educational statistics. There are

two key systems for this process – data collection and processing system at SORS and

40 Author's calculation.

data collection and processing system at the MESTD. These two systems have been and still are misaligned. Most measures planned in SORS for the improvement of educational statistics<sup>41</sup> have not been implemented to this day.

MESTD reports annually on the implementation of the Action Plan for the implementation of SEDS, and the last available report is for 2018. SEDS defines nine quantitative indicators that measure the achievement of established goals. The initial values for most indicators are provided in sections related to the analysis of the existing situation (coverage and efficiency). The data in annual implementation reports for each of the indicators are not disaggregated in relation to gender, ethnicity, rural / urban or disability. For most indicators, the data source is SORS, which provides data disaggregated by gender.

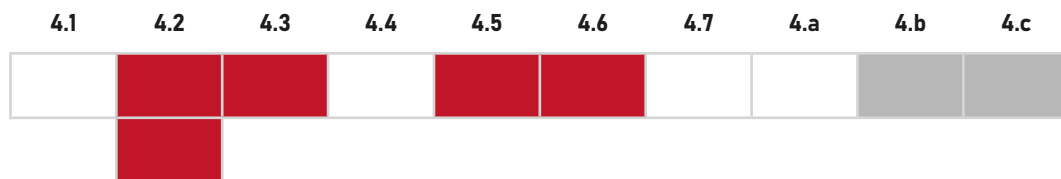
In addition to indicators related to monitoring the implementation of strategic goals in edu-

cation, which indicate the level of achievement of SDG 4, the SORS portal provides data for five out of eleven indicators: proportion of children under 5 who are developing properly in terms

Existing mechanisms enable partial monitoring of the implementation of Goal 4 in Serbia. The strategic framework contains indicators that can be used to monitor the targets related to Goal 4, but progress monitoring and reporting systems are not fully established.

of health, education and psycho-social welfare; rate of participation in organized learning (one year before the official age for primary school enrolment); adult participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training during the previous 12 months; parity indices at education levels; proportion of students age 15 years who did not reach the minimum level of achievement on the PISA scale. Updated data are available for only two indicators (for 2019).

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)



41 Establishment of a unique information system; Monitoring generations (age groups) in moving through education system; data disaggregation; adequate number of qualified people who are in the business of managing education statistics; defining mutual relationships of institutions dealing with education statistics and harmonisation of methodology of calculation and monitoring of selected indicators with international standards; defining the system of statistical indicators that are essential for monitoring the implementation of strategic documents and education policy in the country; developing a system of indicators in education in a way that allows international comparisons; adjustment of information systems in education and reference state authorities.

The Eurostat database provides updated data for the following indicators: early leavers from education and training; share of people with tertiary education; participation in the early

childhood education; underachievement in reading, maths or science; employment rates of recent graduates; participation in adult education and training.

## Recommendations

1. The existing SEDS should be used when developing a new education strategy, as a good model for establishing national education goals that correspond to the targets of SDG 4.
2. Provide resources (financial, material and human) to enable the implementation of strategic commitments in all education subsystems, as well as effective functioning of coordination mechanisms.
3. Amend the Law on Preschool Education and Training in order to provide free preschool education and allow all children access to quality development in early childhood.
4. Amend the Law on Secondary Education and Training and related law to make the secondary education compulsory, which will enable the achievement of target 4.1 that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
5. Amend the Law on Secondary Education by abolishing the discriminatory provision in Article 63a which prevents students of three-year secondary schools from taking vocational matriculation exams or general matriculation exams for a period of two years, preventing them from passing to higher education. This also prevents the achievement of the target 4.3 on equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
6. Review the criteria for supporting students from vulnerable groups and provide adequate financial resources to eliminate discrimination and injustice in education.
7. Regularly hold public debates on draft regulations and public policy documents, in accordance with the legal obligations of the competent proponents.
8. Align the data collection and processing systems (data on education) of SORS and MESTD



Goal 5:

# GENDER EQUALITY



## Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

In the year when the National Gender Equality Strategy 2016 – 2020 (NGES) expires, a new Action Plan for its implementation has not been adopted yet. The situation in the field of gender equality in Serbia is far from advertised, as evidenced by the data from the assessment of the Action Plan for the implementation of NGES, the Gender Equality Index, reports by independent institutions, international organizations and NGOs.






The gender equality index in Serbia in 2016 was 55,8, while for the EU-28 in 2015 the index value was 66,2. Compared to the EU-28, Serbia has a lower index value in all observed domains (health, money, knowledge, work, time and power.). The lowest index values are recorded in the domains of power (37,3) and time (48,7). The index of the main domains of gender equality shows that the largest gender equality gap is in the area of money, where the index value is lower by 19,4 points compared to the EU-28 average, while the smallest gap in Serbia compared to the EU-28 average is recorded in the domain of work (the index value is lower by 3,3 points compared to the EU 28 average). The main indicators of the prevalence of various forms of violence against women indicate that slightly more than a fifth of all women over the age of 15 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence either by a partner or other persons, 44% of women have experienced psychological violence by a partner, while 42% of women were exposed to sexual harassment from the age of 15, and every one in ten women was a victim of persecution. One third of all women reported experiencing some form of violence in childhood.

The assessment of the Action Plan for the implementation of NGES showed, among other things, that expected results in 2018 were not achieved in many areas, that the action plan is unevenly applied across various priority areas, and that implementation is only partially successful primarily due to the lack of comprehensive financial planning.

The GREVIO report on the status of implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence states: "Patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes prevail in Serbia regarding the roles, responsibilities and the expected behaviour of women and men in society and the family. There is a great need to increase efforts to raise awareness of gender stereotypes and the causes and consequences of violence against women." The latest report of the European Commission on Serbia's progress points to the need to establish a division of responsibilities between the anti-discrimination policy sector and gender equality sector within the MLEVSA and the Gender Equality Coordination Body, and to ensure efficient institutional structure with adequate resources.

# Public policy framework

**Table 6** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 5 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 5.1.</b> End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	
<b>Target 5.2.</b> Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	
<b>Target 5.3.</b> Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation	
<b>Target 5.4</b> Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	
<b>Target 5.5</b> Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 5.6</b> Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	
<b>Target 5.a</b> Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	
<b>Target 5.b</b> Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	
<b>Target 5.c</b> Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels	

The National Gender Equality Strategy (NGES) is the principal strategic document for achieving gender equality. Other public policies that define goals relevant to gender equality include: Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2025; Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia 2020 – 2024; National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020, Birth Promotion Strategy, ESRP, Action Plan for Negotiating Chapter 23 – Judiciary and fundamental rights and Action Plan for Negotiating Chapter 19 – Social policy and employment.

NGES defines general strategic and specific goals and measures aimed at achieving **target 5.1** – End all forms of discrimination against all

Sustainable Development Goal 5 is partially covered by the strategic framework on seven targets. Target 5b, which refers to enhancing the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women is not covered by any strategic goal.

women and girls everywhere<sup>42</sup>. Strategic goal 1, which refers to changing gender patterns and improving gender equality culture, aims to eliminate negative gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices towards women and

42 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 5.1.1 Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex

practices that enable and reproduce the unequal power relations between women and men. Strategic goal 2 – *Increase equality of men and women by implementing equal opportunities policy and measures* is aimed at the adoption and implementation of a set of complementary gender sensitive policies in all spheres of public life, including the improvement of the gender equality normative and political framework. Strategic goal 3 – *System-wide gender mainstreaming in the policy adoption, implementation and monitoring processes*, focuses on the prevention of gender-based discrimination and the elimination of structural discrimination. Target values have not been quantified for most specific objectives within strategic goals, so it is not possible to assess whether they will contribute to the complete elimination of all forms of discrimination. In some cases, the quantified target values are set below a standard that ensures full equality<sup>43</sup>.

Regarding **target 5.2**. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation<sup>44</sup>, NGES and related action plan under specific objective 1.5. – *Increased safety of women from gender-based violence in the family and intimate partner relations*, sets out measures related to changes in the normative and strategic framework, the establishment of unified and

standardized system for collecting, registering and exchanging data on all forms of violence against women, providing conditions for services of women's and feminist associations specialized in providing support to women in situations of violence, and decreasing sensationalist media reporting on violence. The planned measures are not sufficient to achieve specific objective 1.5, nor to achieve the outcome of this goal – “zero tolerance for violence and femicide down to zero”. Target 5.2 is only partially covered by specific objective 1.5 as outcome indicators refer only to physical violence and not to other widespread forms of violence – economic and psychological.

One of the measures for achieving the specific objective 2.1 – *Equal participation of women and men in parenting and economy of care*, measure 2.1.5. – *Prevent early, teenage marriage, particularly within the Roma community*, is directly related to **target 5.3** – Eliminate all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation<sup>45</sup>. The outcome indicator for this measure has not been quantified, and the implementation of the proposed activities does not lead to the elimination of the causes of this phenomenon, so it only partially covers this target.

The NGES specific objective 2.1. – *Equal participation of women and men in parenting and the*

43 Target value for specific objective 3.5. was set as follows: „Gender equality mainstreamed in the national and provincial budgets, as well as the budgets of at least 30% of local self-government units.“

44 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by indicators 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age and 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence.

45 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by indicators 5.3.1 Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18 and 5.3.2 Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting, by age (not applicable for Serbia)

*care economy* only partially covers the **target 5.4** Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate<sup>46</sup>. The outcome indicator for specific objective 2.1., defined as „improved quality of life of men and women" is not related to the goal, and outcome indicators of the planned measures show that the indicator is quantified for only one measure under the action plan (2.1.1.).

**Target 5.5** Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life<sup>47</sup> is partially covered in the NGES under the specific objective 2.2. – *Equal participation of women and men in public and political decision-making*. The action plan defines the expected result for 2018 as an increase in the representation of women by 5% at all levels, and as an outcome for 2020 – Women and men equally participating in decision-making at all public administration levels and in all phases of drafting and adopting decisions. Low set target values of only 30% of women will certainly not contribute to the achievement of the set goal.

Regarding **target 5.6** Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and repro-

ductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences<sup>48</sup>, NGES defines specific objective 2.7, which corresponds to the specific objective 2.6 of the action plan – *Improved health of women and equal access to healthcare services*. Two measures are foreseen under the specific objective 2.6. related to sexual and reproductive health, 2.6.3. – *Raise awareness and knowledge of young women and men about sexual education and protection of reproductive health*, and 2.6.5. – *Improve the availability of health services for women with disabilities to preserve their reproductive health and support to motherhood*. These measures only partially cover target 5.6. and outcome indicators for these measures have not been quantified.

**Target 5.a** Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws<sup>49</sup> is only partially covered by the NGES, specifically within the specific objective 2.5 – *Women and men in rural areas actively and equally contribute to development and have equal access to development results*, which is aimed at ensuring equal access to

46 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

47 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by indicators 5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments and 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions.

48 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.

49 According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

agricultural production resources. The outcome indicator for this measure has not been quantified. It is worth noting that the target value for the activity related to increasing the availability of incentives for women in rural areas is set at only 30%, which will certainly not lead to equal access to agricultural production resources.

NGES does not contain any goal or measure to contribute to the achievement of **target 5.b** Enhance the use of enabling technology,

in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women<sup>50</sup>.

Target **5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels is not applicable to the Republic of Serbia since the indicator for this target is measured at the global level.

## Legal framework

**T**he Law on Prohibition of Discrimination and the Law on Gender Equality are two key laws that should enable the achievement of targets under SDG 5. The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination regulates the general prohibition of discrimination, forms and cases of discrimination and protection mechanisms. Gender discrimination is defined as acting contrary to the principle of gender equality, or the principle of respect for equal rights and freedoms of women and men in political, economic, cultural and other aspects of public, professional, private and family life. The law prescribes special measures introduced in order to achieve full equality, protection and progress of people, or groups of people who are in an unequal position. The Law on Gender Equality obliges public authorities to develop active policy of equal opportunities in all areas of social life and to monitor the achievement

of gender equality in all areas of social life (employment, health care, family relations, education, culture and sports), political and public life, and judicial protection, and to apply international standards and constitutionally guaranteed rights in this area.

In the EU accession process, under the ne-

**The legal framework for the Goal 5 has been partially established. There is a multi-year delay in aligning legislation with the EU acquis in the areas of non-discrimination and gender equality.**

gotiating Chapter 23, Serbia has committed itself to the harmonization of legislation with the EU Acquis, including the areas of discrimination prevention and gender equality. The latest report by the coalition of civil

<sup>50</sup> According to the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals this target is monitored by the indicator 5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.

society organizations on Serbia's progress under Chapters 23 and 24 states that there has been no progress in preventing discrimination. (Transitional measure 40 related to the activity under 3.4.1: *Serbia is implementing the Strategy and Action Plan in the fight against discrimination and is adopting amendments to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in line with the EU acquis. Serbia is providing adequate institutional capacity for their implementation*). The same report states that the required level of gender equality and the status of women in Serbia (Transitional measure 41 related to the activity under 3.4.2: *Serbia is adopting new Law on Gender Equality and new National Strategy and Action plan for Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationship. Serbia provides adequate institutional capacity for the implementation of the plan, as well as for the implementation of the National Strategy and Action plan for Improving the Status of Women and Promoting Gender Equality. Serbia carefully monitors their influence and takes preventive measures where necessary*) "has not been achieved due to the turn towards traditionalist

and patriarchal national policies". Adoption of the Law on Gender Equality has been pending since 2017, and women's CSOs oppose the adoption of the latest version of the Draft Law on Gender Equality due to reduction of the achieved level of women's rights. Women's organizations are warning about a number of controversial provisions of the Draft Law on Gender Equality, such as: gender-neutral definition of violence that excludes the definition of violence against women and lowers the achieved level of rights related to sexual and reproductive rights and women's health; the obligation of systematic education and counselling services is omitted, and sexual and reproductive rights are reduced to informing about childbirth within the framework of marriage and family life.

Public debates on anti-discrimination and gender equality laws are held, but in the case of the disputed Draft Law on Gender Equality, the civil sector has stated that the report on public debates does not provide precise or accurate information on the reasons for accepting or rejecting comments.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the SDG

**T**he Coordination Body for Gender Equality was established by decision of the Government of 30 October, 2014, in charge of coordination of state administration affairs in the field of gender equality. Three years

later, the MLEVSA amended the act on internal organization and job systematization to establish the Sector for Anti-Discrimination Policy and Improvement of Gender Equality, which is responsible for drafting laws and other reg-

ulations in the field of anti-discrimination and promotion of gender equality, giving opinions and proposing measures, preparing analysis, reports and information on the state and application of regulations, monitoring the development of the EU acquis, preparing reports on the implementation of international conventions, as well as monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Sector assumed a significant part of competencies, previously held by the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, but the work coordination mechanism in the field of gender equality has not been established. Sector for Anti-Discrimination Policy and Improvement of Gender Equality has only five systematized job positions<sup>51</sup>, which is insufficient to perform the tasks within their competence. This results from the lack of efficiency and quality in law drafting and amending, as well as preparation, implementation and monitoring of strategic documents in these areas. Relevant bodies at the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina include: The Committee on Gender Equality of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, the Provincial Secretariat for Economy, Employment and Gender Equality, the Council for Gender Equality and the Institute for Gender Equality. The institution of the Provincial Ombudsman includes the Gender Equality Deputy Provincial Ombudsman and the Law on Gender Equality

prescribes the obligation to establish local mechanisms for gender equality. The Protector of Citizens and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality are independent institutions dealing with gender equality issues, within their respective competences.

**Institutional and coordination mechanisms for gender equality have been established at the national level, but the work coordination mechanism has not been established. National and local mechanisms for gender equality do not have sufficient capacity.**

The results of evaluation of the Action Plan show that national mechanisms for gender equality lack capacities, and that implementation of the Action Plan at the local level is not satisfactory, primarily due to limited coordination between national and local mechanisms for gender equality and unclear competencies of coordination mechanisms.

The findings of the non-governmental sector are similar. Despite a large number of mechanisms for gender equality in place, the situation in this area has not been improved, nor any contribution has been made to the efficiency and quality of amendments to the laws or strategic documents. Mechanisms for gender equality at the local level, where they exist, are inadequately defined.

51 Five positions within the Department requiring a university degree are reserved for officials responsible for gender equality issues and the implementation of anti-discrimination policies. Capacities were strengthened with the recruitment of one staff member with academic degree, following a recruitment process in April 2019, tasked with supervising and monitoring the new Law on Gender Equality. The provisions of this Law are to be harmonised with the relevant EU legislation, i.e. the Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation, Directive 2010/41/EU of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity". (p.35)



# Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**N**GES specifies that the Coordination Body for Gender Equality is responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan and that it reports annually on implemented activities, but such reports are not available on the website. External evaluation of the Action plan for the NGES was performed with donor assistance. This evaluation has indicated the presence of limitations in the monitoring framework defined by the action plan, which arise from definitions of indicators for measuring results achieved by the end of 2018. Indicators are often defined as indicators of processes rather than results. In some cases, indicators are not precisely defined and measurement data are not available.

General objectives under the NGSE specify the initial and target values for effect indicators, and for specific objectives, the initial and target values are defined for final outcome indicators and sources of verification. No initial or target values are provided for the gender equality index (specific objectives 2.1 and 2.3). In some cases, the target and initial values do not have the same indicator, i.e. the indicator

is formulated as a goal (special goal 2.1) or the indicator is a source of verification (specific objectives 1.5 and 2.4), and there are indicators that show incorrect initial values.<sup>52</sup>

Out of 14 indicators for monitoring the implementation of SDG 5, only ten are available

**Deficiencies in the development of indicators for measuring strategic goals produce limitations in monitoring the achievement of targets under the Goal 5.**

at the SORS Portal: having in place the legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination based on sex; proportion of ever-partnered women and girls over 15 years subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months; number of women aged 20-24 who were first married or in union before age 15; proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work; percentage of women MPs in the National Assembly; the unmet need for contraception; proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone.

52 In the initial indicator for the specific objective 3.1. it is stated that institutional mechanisms for gender equality have been established at the national and provincial level in 90% of municipalities, which is not true since the report by the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality from 2017 states in section Gender Equality in Local Self-Government Units – Review of the implementation of recommendations to the local self-government units for achieving gender equality that out of a total of 169 local self-governments that have submitted data, 81 local self-government bodies have organized a permanent working body for gender equality, in 82 LSGs such a body does not exist, and for 6 LSGs no data is available (p. 14). According to the statement of Gender Equality Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister from December 2019, mechanisms for gender equality have been established in 146 local governments, which is three quarters of the total number of local governments in Serbia..

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.a	5.b	5.c

The Eurostat database provides data for the following indicators: gender pay gap; gender gap in employment rates; inactive population due to caring responsibilities; seats held by women in national parliaments and govern-

ments; positions held by women in senior management positions; early leavers from education and training; proportion of population with tertiary education; employment rates of recent graduates.

# Recommendations

- 1. Improve the strategic planning process in the field of gender equality, taking into account the recommendations of the evaluation of the Action Plan for the implementation of NGES in order to ensure full coverage of targets under SDG 5.
- 2. Align legislation in the field of prevention of discrimination and gender equality with the acquis adopted under the Negotiating chapter 23.
- 3. Determine the manner of coordination of mechanisms for gender equality at the national level.
- 4. Remove restrictions on coordination between national and local gender equality mechanisms by establishing clear competencies for coordination mechanisms.
- 5. When drafting a new strategic document, ensure the measurability of goals through indicators that will contain the initial and target value and be disaggregated in accordance with the relevant targets and in relation to individual vulnerable groups.
- 6. Regularly publish reports on the implementation of strategic documents by the competent institutions.

Goal 6:

# CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

As the name suggests, the importance of Goal 6 is reflected in the efforts to ensure strategic direction of the state towards achieving universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all, as well as the rational use, recycling and reuse of water resources, and improve cooperation at the local and international level concerning the use of this vital resource. According to SORS data, in 2017, 84,8 percent of households were connected to water supply system, and 60,6 percent of households were connected to the sewage system. Concerning water use, in 2017, total amount of available water was 5,142 million m<sup>3</sup>. In the same year, about 236 million m<sup>3</sup> were lost through water leakage in the distribution network. 74,5 percent of water from public water supply system was used in households, and 25,5 percent in the industry sections. According to 2017 data, a total of 165,919,596 thousand m<sup>3</sup> of water was used in industrial processes, of which 97,6 percent was flowing water in hydro power plants. Data on the volume of discharged wastewater, as well as treated wastewater are not available on the SORS website.

# Policy framework

**Table 7:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 6 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 6.1</b> By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.	
<b>Target 6.2</b> By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.	
<b>Target 6.3</b> By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.	
<b>Target 6.4</b> By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.	
<b>Target 6.5</b> By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.	
<b>Target 6.6</b> By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.	
<b>Target 6.a</b> By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water – and sanitation-related activities and programs, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.	
<b>Target 6.b</b> Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.	

National planning framework which enables the implementation of SDG 6 in Serbia is defined in the Water Management Strategy of the Territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034, the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020 and the Implementation Program of the Spatial

Plan for the period from 2016 to 2020. In addition, the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, adopted in 2012, defines the use of water resources. However, this strategy has not been implemented because an action plan for its implementation is still missing. A complementary action plan to

support effective implementation of the Water Management Strategy is also not yet in place.

The strategic goal of increasing access to drinking water, along with steady water supply, is set in the Water Management Strategy and the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, and its complementary implementation program, supports the achievement of **Target 6.1**. These planning documents have recognized the need for steady water supply and compliant water quality, along with a reduced risk of interruptions in extreme or emergency situations, including increased public water supply coverage between 93 and 97 percent at the end of the planning period. These national targets are less ambitious than the target values specified in the 2030 Agenda, requiring universal access to drinking water to be achieved for all.

**Target 6.2** is supported by planning documents in terms of provision of sanitation and hygiene conditions, through increase in coverage of settlements with water infrastructure (measured by the size of infrastructure), which has been recognized in the Program of Implementation of Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia. Development of wastewater infrastructure has been recognized and elaborated in the Water Management Strategy. General conclusion is that it is not realistic to expect wastewater coverage to be equal to water coverage. One of the goals set in the Water Management Strategy is development of municipal infrastructures and wastewater treatment plants in agglomerations greater

than 2,000 PE (85 percent population coverage) by 2034. The planning framework in place does not fully correspond to Target 6.2, since the target values do not reach the whole population, while the needs of women and girls are not specially recognized.

**The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 in Serbia has largely been enabled by existing planning framework. However, national goals do not target universal access to drinking water, nor adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, while the issues of recycling and reuse have not been recognized in the national-level public policies.**

The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia sets a framework for the implementation of **Target 6.3** aimed at improving water quality through: construction of wastewater treatment plants in accordance with the principle of eliminating pollution at the source, increase in small water bodies by intentional discharge of clean water from reservoirs, development of the regulatory framework to prevent and use economic instruments to discourage and prevent water pollution and market placement of hazardous pollutants, particularly when pollutant substitution is possible. The Water Management Strategy sets additional goal for achieving good ecological and chemical status of surface water and good chemical and quantitative status of ground waters. Thus, the strategic framework almost fully supports the achievement of Target 6.3, in all aspects, except water recycling and water reuse which remain unsupported.

Water-use efficiency addressed in **Target 6.4** has been addressed through several goals in the Water Management Strategy related to water-use efficiency in households, industrial production and irrigated agriculture. The Spatial Plan also defines efficient water use and decrease in specific water consumption across all sectors as an important goal in the field of water management. It may be assumed that Serbia has developed a planning framework that supports full implementation of Target 6.4.

The implementation of **Target 6.5** is grounded in the Water Management Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2034, establishing integrated water management as one of the two main goals, along with achievement of comprehensive and harmonized water regime system. Integrated water management concept is a commitment and major strategic goal of the Strategy.

**Target 6.5** as the most comprehensive step towards SDG, addresses the integrated water resources management (IWRM) and the objective to implement IWRM at all levels, including the transboundary cooperation as suitable in transboundary river basins or groundwater basins.

The implementation of **Target 6.6** is based on the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources. The Strategy establishes the conservation and enhancement of the state of forests and forest ecosystems, and development of forestry as one of its goals (6.2.2 – Goals of the Strategy). One of the goals of the Water Management Strategy is the protection against erosion and flash flood, as

a "prerequisite for steady and sustainable use of land and protection from frequent occurrence of destructive flash floods". However, Serbian public policies do not provide a comprehensive planning framework and targeted measures for the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems.

**Target 6.a** is partially covered by the planning documents, primarily by the Water Management Strategy. Enhancing international cooperation, especially with neighbouring and other countries in order to achieve integrated water management in river basins is one of its goals. The Strategy also highlights the need for interstate cooperation in water management on specific international water courses and ground water systems. Despite emphasizing the need for international cooperation, the Strategy does not specifically address cooperation with developing countries and other aspects of Target 6.a.

The participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation (**Target 6.b**) is not recognized in the strategic documents. On the other hand, the Water Management Strategy envisages, in accordance with law, the responsibility of local authorities for second-order water management, issuance of water permits for facilities of importance for the community, issuance of permits for wastewater discharge into public sewerage system, provision and development of utility services (drinking water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and treatment, etc.), and performance of administrative and other water-related activities at the local level. Accordingly, the implementation of significant number of goals takes place at the local level.

# Legal framework

**T**he Water Law is the main legal document governing the protection of water against pollution. It directly regulates the protection of water against pollution, including the environmental quality standards, emission limit values, planning documents for water protection, prohibitions and obligations of polluters, requirements for water quality testing and water quality monitoring, and other matters, thus providing a framework for **Target 6.1** and **Target**

**6.3.** The Water Law prescribes rational and prudent use of water (**corresponds to Target 6.4**) and regulates in a precise way the concept of integrated water management, including competen-

cies, basic principles of water management policy grounded on territorial integrity, planning documents and water activities. It introduces the principle of the unity of the water system, which points to international cooperation in terms of international waters (**Target 6.a**). The Water Law defines international river basins in Serbia and introduces the principle of public participation: the right of access to information on the state of water and activities of competent authorities in the field of water, and involvement of the public in preparation and adoption of water management and in overseeing their implementation (**Target 6.b**).

The Environmental Protection Law further regulates water resources management, in the part that corresponds to **Target 6.5**. Article 23 of the law stipulates "Protection and utilization of waters shall be implemented within the integrated water management through

undertaking and implementing measures for the preservation of surface and ground waters and their reserves, quality and quantity, as well as through protection in accordance with special law." Bilateral international agreements that have been recently signed with Hungary and Romania in the field of water management are important for cross-border cooperation (The Law on Ratification of Agreement on

The legal framework for Goal 6 has been fully established through the legal framework for water protection.

Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of Hungary in the area of Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters and Basins of Common Interest, and the Law on Ratification of Agreement of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of Romania in the area of Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters.

Another relevant law for the implementation of Goal 6 is the Law on Communal Utility Activities, which defines supply of drinking water (**Target 6.1**), and wastewater and rain water collection and treatment (**Target 6.2**) as utility activities.

In addition to the Water Law and the Environmental Protection Law, legal framework for the implementation of **Target 6.6** is

supplemented by the Nature Protection Law, the Forest Law and the Regulation on the Ecological Network.

The Law on Ratification of the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River, stating that the "Contracting Parties shall strive at achieving the goals of a sustainable and equitable water management, including the conservation, improvement and the rational use of surface waters and ground water in the catchment

area as far as possible", provides a framework for achieving **Target 6a**.

Serbia is in the process of harmonizing its legal framework in the water management sector with EU legislative requirements. Transposition is almost completed, but some fine-tuning is required to ensure full compliance with the Framework Water Directive (FWD) in the area of water management planning and flood risk management planning, as well as water quality monitoring.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of the DCG

Considering that integrated water management<sup>53</sup> is one of the fundamental principles set out in the Water Law, cross-sectoral cooperation is of vital importance.

The main responsible institution for the implementation of Goal 6 is MAFWM. This ministry covers several relevant sectors and institutions relevant for Goal 6. The most relevant among them is the Republic Water Directorate. According to the Law on Ministries, the Republic Water Directorate, as an administrative body within the MAFWM, carries out tasks related to: water manage-

Existing capacity of public institutions for water management is insufficient to support efficient implementation of Goal 6. Enhancement of cross-sectoral cooperation in this area, particularly between the water management and environmental protection sectors, is required

ment policy; multipurpose use of water; water supply, except for the distribution of water; protection against water; implementation of measures for water protection and planned rationalization of water consumption; regulation of water regimes; monitoring and maintaining

53 Integrated water management in Serbia is regulated by Water Law, which gives a set of measures and activities aimed at maintaining and improving the water regime, providing the required quantities of water of the required quality for different purposes, protecting waters against pollution and protecting against harmful effects of water (Article 24).



the regime of waters that make and cross the border of the Republic of Serbia; inspection supervision in the field of water management, and other tasks determined by law.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection is also responsible for some aspects of water management. It performs state administration tasks related to transboundary pollution of water, protection of waters against pollution to prevent deterioration of groundwater and surface water quality. The Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), as an administrative body within the Ministry of Environmental Protection, carries out state administration tasks related to: implementation of national

monitoring of water quality, including the implementation of established programs for the control of surface waters and underground waters (Article 5a). Other institutions responsible for the achievement of Goal 6 are water management companies, local authorities and public utilities.

According to civil sector organizations<sup>54</sup> and state bodies involved in monitoring the transposition and implementation of EU *acquis* in Serbia<sup>55</sup>, public institutions responsible for water management evidently lack capacity to implement the *acquis* in the water management sector.

## Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**R**eviewed planning documents establish a set of indicators to monitor the achievement of targets for Goal 6. The indicator used for monitoring **Target 6.1** is the “*Proportion of settlements covered by the public water supply*

(% households). The indicator used for monitoring **Target 6.2** is the “*Proportion of population using settlements covered by the wastewater sewer (% households)*. Both indicators are defined in the Program of Implementation

54 One of the recommendations related to water quality in the Coalition 27 Shadow Report 2019 reads: “Capacity development and consolidation of public institutions for water management, especially at a local level – the complexity of water management issues demands much stronger personnel and technical capacities. Responsible institutions should analyze existing capacities and develop a plan to strengthen them as soon as possible. To succeed in this, expert institutions as well as CSOs should advocate for better political and financial support for the water management sector”.

55 Third revision of the National Program for the Adoption of the *acquis* (NPAA), specifies the following: “Nevertheless, strengthening the capacities of institutions in the water sector is a prerequisite for the successful transposition and implementation of directives, as well as the capacities of public water management companies, local self-governments, public utility companies, as well as institutions responsible for monitoring and other institutions responsible for transposing and implementation of directives

of the Spatial Plan, stipulating that data to measure the achievement of indicators are collected by local authorities on an annual basis. The data-source for both indicators is SORS. Progress towards **Target 6.3** can be monitored by two indicators "*Water-quality of watercourses*" (data collection is performed on an annual basis), and "*Water-quality of ground-water* (data collection interval is not defined). The data-sources for these indicators are SEPA, the ministry responsible for water and the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia. Two indicators that have been defined to monitor rationalization of water use contribute to partial monitoring the implementation of **Target 6.4** "*Specific water consumption in settlements*" (L/cm/day) and "*Water losses in the network*", (%). Data are collected by local authorities periodically during the year, and the data-sources are SEPA, MAFWM and the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia, SORS and the Republic Water Directorate. Indicators for monitoring integrated water management, one of the main goals set in the primary sector strategy, have not been defined. Consequently, the indicators for **Target 6.5** have not been defined. Planning documents do not provide indicators for monitoring the goals which support the implementation of **Target 6.6**, **Target 6.a**, and **Target 6.b**.

Measuring overall progress towards the goal based on defined indicators has been proven to be quite difficult due to the lack of initial values of most indicators that can be used as reference points to assess progress against

the goal. The only exception to this is the *Proportion of settlements covered by the public water supply*. It is noted for this indicator that in 2012, over 80 percent of the population was connected to the public water supply systems. Insight into the planning documents shows that reporting on progress against the indicators is performed only for the Spatial Plan

Monitoring the implementation of Goal 6 is only partially enabled by existing mechanisms. Planning documents provide indicators to monitor the achievement of targets related to Goal 1, but systems for progress monitoring and reporting have not been fully established. SORS monitors some indicators related to implementation of this goal, while there are additional indicators that could be relevant.

of the Republic of Serbia on an annual basis.

SORS collects and publishes data on several indicators which enable the monitoring of progress towards Goal 6 in Serbia, in accordance with the methodology defined at the international level:

- » 6.3 – Population connected to wastewater treatment with at least secondary treatment
- » 6.4.1 – Change in water-use efficiency (WUE) over time (WUE)
- » 6.4.2 – Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources

- » 6.a – Amount of water and sanitation related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
- » 6.b – Proportion of local administrative units with established ad operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour)

6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.a	6.b

In addition to the above indicators, the Institute of Public Health of Serbia Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut and SORS provide data for the indicator 6.1.1 – Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, and 6.2.1 – Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water. The Institute of Public Health collects data on behalf of the World Health Organization through the Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene. The calculation of indicators is done by the World Health Organization, and data for Serbia are available in the UN database.

It is worth noting that some reports on monitoring the implementation of SDGs provide some other indicators. Data on these indicators could be useful for monitoring progress towards Goal 6 in Serbia. For example, the Report of Bertlsmann Stiftug&Sustainable Development Solutions Network refers to the following indicators: Population using at least basic drinking water services (%) and Population using at least basic sanitation services (%), relevant for monitoring progress on Target 6.1 and Target 6.2. It would be useful to have these indicators

desegregated to see which groups of the population use basic drinking water and sanitation services. Similarly, the Eurostat database provides data on the indicator: People living in households without basic sanitary facilities (such as bath, shower, indoor flushing toilet), which is also relevant for Target 6.2.

The Eurostat database also contains data on: Population connected at least secondary wastewater treatment, Water exploitation index, Nitrate in groundwater and Phosphate in rivers. The last available data for some of these indicators (Nitrate in groundwater and Water exploitation index) are in the 2015 Report. The indicators mentioned above would allow a better understanding of challenges in monitoring Goal 6, particularly those related to pollution.

The report of Bertlsmann Stiftug&Sustainable Development Solutions Network also provides the indicator on Anthropogenic wastewater that receives treatment, as well as two indicators for which the latest available data were published in 2015 and 2013, Freshwater withdrawal as % total renewable water resources and Imported groundwater depletion (m³/capita).

# Recommendations

1. Define goals related to access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all population in the national planning documents, that are equally ambitious as the target values specified in the 2030 Agenda, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
2. Ensure, through the public policy framework, that water-related ecosystems are protected and restored, and define goals related to water recycling and reuse that ensure participation of local communities in water and sanitation management.
3. Improve the legal framework in the area of water management planning, flood risk management planning, as well as water quality monitoring, to ensure compliance with the EU *acquis*.
4. Develop capacity and consolidate public institutions for water management. Enhance cross-sectoral cooperation in this area, particularly between the water management and environmental protection sectors.
5. Define indicators to monitor integrated water resource management, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, achieve international cooperation in water management and sanitation-related activities, along with the participation of local communities in water management and sanitation, and ensure appropriate data collection.
6. Improve the framework of monitoring water management indicators in the national planning documents, through clearly defined initial values of indicators and reporting progress against indicators, on a regular basis.

Goal 7:

# AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY







## Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 7 envisages that universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services should be ensured. This goal contains a number of energy-related concepts accompanied by targets, as shown below (Table 8).

Energy sector is a prerequisite for the functioning of any society and economy. Access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services is primarily monitored through the availability of electricity. In this regard, Serbia has achieved significant results. As many as 99 percent of the population have access to electricity. However, the method used to generate almost all of Serbia's electricity is becoming a matter of great concern, especially concerning sustainability. Total electricity generation in 2019 was 34.83 TWh, of which almost 70 percent was generated by coal-fired thermal power plants. The share of coal, which is dominantly used as the main fuel in thermal power plants is high, making up 49 percent of the total primary energy. Primary energy consumption in Serbia without the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija in 2018 amounted to around 15.4 million tons of oil equivalent. Ineffective and obsolete technologies and low-quality coal cause higher emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>, CO<sub>2</sub> and suspended particles. In terms of sustainability, it is particularly worrying that the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption has not significantly increased for nearly ten years despite Serbia's international obligations under the Energy Community Treaty. Official data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) show the high energy intensity in Serbia of 6.09 MJ/USD. Energy intensity is a measure of the energy inefficiency of an economy. According to the estimation of the Energy Agency, energy intensity of the Serbian economy is up to 1.85 times higher than the European average.

# Policy framework

**Table 8:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 7 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 7.1</b> By the end of 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.	
<b>Target 7.2</b> By the end of 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.	
<b>Target 7.3</b> By the end of 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.	
<b>Target 7.a</b> By the end of 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology.	
<b>Target 7.b</b> By the end of 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States.	

A basic planning document in the field of energy is the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia until 2025 with projections until 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the "Energy Strategy"), adopted in 2015, and accompanied by the Regulation on Establishing the Program for Implementation of the Energy Sector Development Strategy, for the period 2017-2023 (hereinafter referred to as the "SIP") adopted in 2016. The Energy Strategy sets the strategic priorities of energy sector development and strategic goals of individual sectors. On

The implementation of Goal 7 in Serbia has largely been enabled by existing planning framework which recognizes all elements of the targets for Goal 7 including those that are not ambitious enough to reach the targets, for example in the field of energy efficiency. The concepts for enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technologies that are covered by Target 7.a are an exception in the sense that they are not formulated as separate SDG.

the other hand, the SIP elaborates goals and indicators used to monitor progress towards their achievement. The SIP also specifies activities and projects that will contribute to the achievement of each goal. The Energy Strategy priorities are contained and further elaborated in the Energy Balance and in the Law on Spatial Planning of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020, within their respective purviews. The National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources contains several SDG targets. However, this strategy is adopted but not implemented because its action plan has not been adopted. Finally, the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (hereinafter referred to as the "NREAP") is a document setting the goals of use of energy from renewable sources until 2020, as well as the manner of their achievement. The chapters below show the extent to which each target is covered by the relevant planning documents.

**Target 7.1** is quite broad in scope and addresses a number of aspects covered by the national strategic framework, although in varying degree. One of the Energy Strategy priorities is the energy market development through "competitiveness on electricity market based on non-discrimination, publicity and transparency, and protection of energy and energy products customers", which refers to the principle of universality stipulated by Target 7.1. With nearly the entire population of Serbia having access to electricity, the aspect relating to universal access to modern energy services is ensured. However, the Energy Strategy goes one step further by envisaging the development of innovative mechanisms of financing sector of energy services (ESCO concept and other). Affordable energy

services are not specified as such, but the Energy Strategy recognizes the importance of establishing market price of energy and energy products, which include ecological and other external costs in the retail price. In the case of Serbia, this implies elimination of "social" component and increase in prices of energy services. On the other hand, this should stimulate the implementation of energy-efficiency measures and use of alternative energy sources, or generation of electricity for own needs. The reliability related aspect of energy supply is most thoroughly covered by the Energy Strategy. Provision of energy security is imposed as key priority of energy sector development, achieved through "reliable, safe, efficient and quality supply of energy and energy products". The Energy Strategy also defines a set of strategic goals relating to security of supply, which are further specified in the SIP. These strategic goals envisage the provision of secure supply of electricity, natural gas, oil and petroleum products and heating energy. In addition to the above, reduction of import dependency and provision of new directions of supply of crude oil are defined as relevant strategic goals for the oil derivatives sector. In the natural gas sector, it is necessary to ensure diversification of the directions and sources of supply for these energy products. Finally, the relevant goals for the coal sector are to ensure the security of coal supply for thermal power plants and necessary quantities of coal to satisfy final consumption and heat production.

The **Target 7.2** of the sustainable development goals requires that Serbia substantially increases the share of energy from renewable sources. The Energy Strategy does not set out a clear

and consistent vision of the energy sector development. Thus, in addition to more intense use of energy from renewable sources imposed as a key priority, the Energy Strategy envisages that coal could play important role in electricity generation in the Republic of Serbia even after 2050. Relevant strategic goals in this regard include increased use of energy from renewable sources for district heating and increase of overall energy production from renewable sources for the purpose of reducing dependence of imported energy and improving energy security. In accordance with the *Directive 2009/28/EC* and the *Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Energy Community D/2012/04/MC-EnC*, a very ambitious binding target was set for the Republic of Serbia, amounting to 27 percent renewable energy sources in gross final energy consumption in 2020, with mandatory 10 percent target for energy from renewable sources in the transport sector. Serbia's binding national targets have been integrated into the NREAP, and later into the Energy Strategy and SIP. In addition, the NREAP envisages a number of specific activities that contribute to increased use of energy from renewable sources. It is indicative that Serbia is far below its national target for 2020 and projected trajectory of energy from renewable sources. Thus, according to the latest Progress Report on Implementation of the NREAP, in 2017 Serbia reached a share of just 20.6 percent of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption, which is below the 21.2 percent share of renewable energy in the base year, 2009. New energy and climate targets within the Energy Community are expected to be adopted by mid-2021. Just to remind that, in accordance with Target 7.b, 2030 is the year by which a significant increase in the share of energy from renewable sources

is meant to be achieved. Increasing the use of energy from renewable sources is set out in the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources as the strategic goal. A whole chapter is devoted to establishing a framework for sustainable use of energy.

While recognizing the importance and calling for improvement in energy efficiency, Serbia's strategic documents do not share the ambition of Target 7.3 of doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. After the expiry of the Third National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (2015–2018), Serbia was left without a valid strategic document in the field of energy efficiency. However, the Energy Strategy and the SIP recognize the importance of efficient energy use and pay greater attention to this energy sector. The Energy Strategy stipulates that overall transition towards sustainable energy sector should be developed through "provision of conditions for energy efficiency improvement in energy and energy consumption". It also defines energy efficiency improvement in all sectors of consumption as the strategic goal. The Energy Strategy goes one step further by proposing the provision of conditions for energy efficiency improvement based on raising capacities of financial organizations for financing measures of energy efficiency. The strategic goals set by the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources relating to the sustainable use of mineral resources and renewable energy can be connected to Target 7.3. It encourages the management of natural resources, technological improvements of the facilities used for exploitation, preparation and processing of mineral raw materials, higher efficiency of mineral processing and reduced loss. The National Strategy for Sustainable Use



of Natural Resources also calls for increasing the production and consumption efficiency of renewable energy. The NREAP is another relevant document which proposes the activities for increasing energy efficiency in the building sector and the use and production of equipment and technologies that will enable more efficient use of energy from renewable sources.

Within **Target 7.a** there are two aspects: 1) enhancing international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, and 2) promoting investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology. In regards to the first aspect, the Energy Strategy underlines the importance of foreign partners, especially in the field of renewable energy sources. Several projects of constructing large hydro power plants and wind farms have been foreseen to enable higher generation and export of "green" energy. The second aspect of Target 7.a is much more covered through the strategic priority: overall transition towards sustainable energy sector. The Energy Strategy provides for the creation of economic, doing business and financial conditions for increasing the share of energy from renewable energy sources, as well as for combined generation of electric and heat energy; institutional, financial and technical assumptions for the use of new energy sources, and; more favorable legal, institutional and logistic conditions for more intensive investment. Despite the fact that both aspects are covered by the national planning documents, Target 7.a is an exception because none of the strategic goals set out in the Energy Strategy cannot be connected to it. The NREAP is also relevant especially with regard to enhancing investments. It proposes a set of measures, such as the adoption and enhancement of the

legal framework to stimulate more extensive use of energy from renewable sources and economic incentive measures for electricity generation from renewable energy sources. In this regard, the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources is also relevant. The Strategy outlines measures aimed at improving investment, such as development of adequate legal framework in the field of renewable energy sources in order to eliminate administrative barriers to investment, and emphasizes specific problems in energy production sectors which prevent investment.

**Target 7.b** promotes expanding infrastructure and upgrading technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services. The priority envisaged by the Energy Strategy is the creation of "energy market", through development of electricity and gas market, and its integration into the framework of EU energy market. Another priority is the transition towards sustainable energy sector, through creation of technical assumptions for using new energy sources. The Strategy envisages the following activities: "the construction of new and revitalization of existing energy capacities", and measures to "promote development of domestic industry so that it follows foreseen development of energy sector". The strategic goals related to Target 7.b are:

- » Development of national and regional electricity market;
- » Increasing transmission capacity/corridors in the Republic of Serbia that have regional and Pan European importance;
- » Establishing national and regional natural gas market.

The NREAP is also a relevant planning document for this target. It promotes the following activities concerning greater use of energy from renewable sources, which are connected to Target 7.b:

- » Development of distribution network for the connection of smaller electricity producers;

- » The use and production of equipment and technologies that will enable a more efficient use of energy from renewable sources.

Finally, the renewal of infrastructure and construction of new facilities using energy from renewable sources and introduction of new technologies for energy generation are the strategic goals in the field of renewable energy sources envisaged by the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources.

## Legal framework

The Energy Law is a fundamental legal document regulating issues in the energy sector. The Energy Law defines long-term goals of the country's energy policy, as well as measures and activities for achieving long-term goals. All SDG 7 targets are recognized by long-term goals and the basis for their further elaboration through national legislation is established. Another document of major importance is the Law on Ratification of the Treaty Establishing Energy Community, as the basis of establishing legal and policy framework in the energy sector of Serbia, which includes all targets for Goal 7. The Treaty is the core legal instrument used in the process of aligning the Serbian national legislation with the EU *acquis*, at the institutional level. Another relevant legal document in the context of EU accession is the Law on Ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement. It recognizes the importance of energy sector and provides a legal basis for cooperation in several areas

within this sector, which is especially important with in view of Target 7.a.

Different dimensions of Target 7.1 are encompassed by the following regulations: The Regulation on Energy Vulnerable Customers,

**The legal framework for SDG 7 has been fully established through the legal framework in the field of energy.**

regulating the access to affordable and reliable energy services (electricity and natural gas) for the most vulnerable groups. This regulation fully covers all dimensions of Target 7.1, while the other two regulations do it only partially, focusing only on the aspect of reliability of supply (natural gas). These are the Regulation Establishing the Emergency Plan for Safeguarding the Security of Natural Gas Supply and the Regulation Establishing the Preventive Action Plan for Safeguarding the

Security of Natural Gas Supply. The latter outlines the plans for developing national gas pipeline system and new infrastructure, thus contributing in part to Target 7.b. The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination regulates general prohibition of discrimination including, among other things, universal access to energy. The Law on Social Protection, which regulates matters related to social protection, is also relevant. Although the last two laws do not apply to the energy sector directly, there is an indirect connection with Target 7.1, providing the basis for other rights, such as the rights of energy vulnerable customers.

With respect to Target 7.2, the Law on Planning and Construction is relevant. In accordance with its scope, this Law stipulates that the planning, development and use of space is based on rational and sustainable use of non-renewable resources and optimal use of renewable resources. The Law on Efficient Use of Energy provides for financial incentives for construction of facilities for combined heat and power production and use of renewable energy sources for heat and electricity production solely for own needs. The last relevant document is the Regulation on the Share of Biofuels on the Market, which regulates among other things mandatory percentage of biofuels placed on the market.

The legal framework related to Target 7.3 is slightly broader. The Law on Planning and Construction acknowledges the importance of energy efficiency and emphasizes the need for improvement of energy efficiency in building operations. The Law specifies that measures of energy efficiency in construction should be included in the spatial plan of a special-pur-

pose area, spatial plan of a local government unit and urban plans. The most important legal document in this area is the Law on Efficient Use of Energy, which prescribes "conditions and manner of efficient use of energy and energy carriers in the energy production, transmission, distribution and consumption sectors; policy of efficient use of energy; energy management system; labeling of energy efficiency level of products affecting consumption of energy; minimum requirements of energy efficiency in production, transmission and distribution of heat and electricity and delivery of natural gas; financing, incentives and other measures in this field, as well as other issues of importance for rights and obligations of natural and legal persons regarding efficient use of energy". The legal framework related to energy efficiency consists of a set of regulations, which define designated organizations of the energy management system, conditions for electricity and natural gas delivery, and minimum energy efficiency requirements for new and revitalized facilities.

In order to create favorable conditions for investment into the renewable energy sector relevant to the achievement of Target 7.a, the Law on Energy introduces incentive measures for privileged electricity producers, temporary privileged producers and producers from renewable sources. At the same time relevant regulations have been enacted that prescribe in more detail the conditions and types of incentives. Among other things, procedure for acquiring the status of a privileged producer, i.e. the status of a producer from renewable sources, feed-in tariff at which privileged producer is entitled to sell energy, feed-in tariff rates per years, and more.

# Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

According to the scope of the Ministry of Mining and Energy, defined by the Law on Ministries, this ministry is primarily responsible for achieving SDG7. The Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure is responsible for the development of infrastructure for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all which is a component of Target 7.b. The Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Finance are also responsible, in accordance with

their scopes. The SIP envisages a number of different projects and activities in several energy sector fields. Consequently, a range of other institutions have been involved in the achievement of SDG 7. Among them are the Energy Agency of the Republic of Serbia, local government units, public enterprises ("Elektroprivreda Srbije" Serbian power company, "Elektromreža Srbije" transmission system operator, "Naftna industrija Srbije" oil and gas company, "Beogradske elektrane" public utility company, municipal district heating companies) and others. Such division of responsibilities certainly hinders effective implementation of planning documents and achievement of their goals. The energy sector is at the same time very complex and finan-

cially challenging, and will face a number of reforms in the process of accession to the EU, especially in the electricity sector.

**For achieving Goal 7, it is necessary to clearly define roles of institutions and improve cooperation among them. It is also necessary to increase the number of employees responsible for implementing regulations, and build their capacity.**

A lack of human resource capacity is discussed in the 2019 Progress Report of the European Commission and the 2020 Implementation Report of the Energy Community. The number of employees in the Energy Agency of the Republic of Serbia should be increased from 41 to 53 by 2010, to be able to implement the requirements of the Third Energy Package and other *acquis*. Human resource capacity in the Ministry of Mining and Energy's Department for Energy Efficiency has slightly increased but remains insufficient, which is the cause for a slow implementation of the sector reforms. The SIP, on the other hand, envisages 5 new experts employed in the Department of Energy Efficiency.

# Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on the implementation of SDG

Although a set of indicators defined in the SIP (planning document) is suitable to monitor progress towards achieving the strategic goals of the Energy Strategy, there are numerous flaws in the SIP resulting from the way it is developed, which hinders the effective monitoring of their progress. Some strategic goals do not have clearly defined indicators that can be used to monitor them, while in some cases the indicators are not clearly related to strategic goals. The institutions responsible for monitoring are often not specified, as well as timeframes for data collection and progress reporting. SORS as the key national statistical institution in charge of monitoring the implementation of Goal 7, monitors only two targets. The following indicators are used to measure progress towards **Target 7.1** – *Proportion of population with access to electricity and Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology*. In both cases, data are disaggregated, both nationally, but also for the

population living in Roma settlements, i.e. for the urban and other population. However, 2010 and 2014 are the only years for which data are available. Data for the year 2019 are expected by the end of 2020. SORS also provides data for **Target 7.3** using the following indicator: *Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy and GDP*. The data for this indicator

Monitoring the achievement of Goal 7 in Serbia is enabled only partially through mechanisms in place. A basic planning document, the Energy Development Strategy, does not map out ways of monitoring progress on the SDGs. SORS does not collect or publish updated data for any other indicators, except those for Target 7.1.

are published annually and are available for the period from 2010 to 2017. There is no data disaggregation. Indicator values are calculated by the UN using the input data for calculation of indicators provided by the SORS.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour)

7.1	7.2	7.3	7.a	7.b

In addition to SORS, data used to monitor the implementation of Goal 7 in Serbia can be gathered from other sources. The Bertelsmann Stiftung provides data for the following indicators: *Access to electricity (% population)*; *Access to clean fuels and technology for cooking (% population)* and; *CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel combustion for electricity and heat (MtCO<sub>2</sub>) over electricity output (TWh)*. Data is available for the following indicators in the Eurostat database: *Share of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption of energy*; *Energy Efficiency*; *Final energy consumption in*

*household per capita* and; *Population unable to keep home adequately warm*. Apparently, there is a large overlap in the kinds of indicators used by respective institutions. However, it is indicative that SORS does not publish data on the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption of energy, while the data for this indicator available at Eurostat are obtained from the Ministry of Mining and Energy. The ministry claims that the data in the UN database are based on approximation, and the method used for approximation is not known.

## Recommendations

1. Make unified political decisions on decarbonizing the economy and increasing the share of renewable energy in the country's energy mix; Initiate the process of developing planning documents in order to adequately address these decisions and related international obligations assumed by the Republic of Serbia.
2. Adopt a new National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and set ambitious goals to reduce energy intensity of the economy.
3. Define strategic goals to promote investment in clean energy research and development and production of energy from renewable sources.
4. Improve the contents of the Energy Sector Development Strategy to ensure effective system of monitoring progress towards strategic goals in the field of energy.
5. Enhance existing mechanisms for monitoring progress towards strategic goals defined in the national planning documents.

Goal 8:

# DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



## **Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

The purpose of Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) is to stimulate economic growth by increasing the number and productivity of decent jobs, primarily by encouraging entrepreneurship and technological innovation. With these set results in mind, the goal is to achieve full and productive employment for both men and women, as well as decent work for a human being.

SDG 8 is extremely relevant in the context of Serbia – whose human development is far below that achieved in most comparable European countries and below its own potential, which has been caused primarily by the low level of economic development and (decent) employment.

According to the Human Development Index for 2019, Serbia ranked only 63rd in the world in terms of human development – which is lower than any EU Member State and Montenegro, and better than Northern Macedonia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). There is no doubt that this is significantly lower performance than such comparisons would have shown thirty years ago. Human development in Serbia collapsed during the 1990s and has not fully recovered since then due to the very gradual recovery and transformation of the economy.

With regard to the three dimensions of the Human Development Index, Serbia ranked lowest (78th) in the economic dimension – in terms of the decent standard of living, measured by the GDP per capita. The GDP per capita in Serbia today, almost three decades since its turbulent transition began, still has not reached the 1989 level. Serbia's GDP per capita (EUR 6,590) is among the lowest in Europe and almost 25% below Bulgaria's, which is the least developed EU Member State.

The key development challenge for Serbia is that only a small part of the economy built during socialism has really been transformed into a new, modern economy, and it employs a very small portion of the total population. The employment rate of the working age population (15-64) in Serbia is only 61% on average, compared to 69% in the EU28 and new Member States. In addition, too many jobs in Serbia are of low quality (according to ILO estimates, almost a quarter – 700,000, of the total number of employees – 2,900,000) and quantity (for example, low-intensity work).

According to the assessments of the Center for Advanced Economic Studies from 2018, to reach the European average in terms of activities and having decent employment, Serbia would have to double the current number of formal jobs in the private sector (which means that all formal jobs in Serbia are "decent", and they are not).

Increasing the employment rate to normal levels would have a great effect on reducing inequality and poverty probably to a slightly better value than the European average, where they should be, given the Serbian past. At the moment, poverty and inequality rates in Serbia are among the highest in Europe. Serbia is also one of the countries with the highest rate of population decline in the country.

The above summarised analysis of the situation clearly indicates that SDG 8 is one of the most important goals for Serbia – not only in the context of improving the standard of living – it is also important for making progress in regard to many other sustainable development goals – primarily those related to inequality (10), poverty (1) and gender equality (5).



# Public policy framework

**Table 9:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 8 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 8.1</b> Sustain per capita economic growth according to national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.	✓
<b>Target 8.2</b> Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.	✗
<b>Target 8.3</b> Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small – and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.	✓
<b>Target 8.4</b> Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead.	✗
<b>Target 8.5</b> By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.	✗
<b>Target 8.6</b> By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.	✓
<b>Target 8.7</b> Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.	○
<b>Target 8.8</b> Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.	✗
<b>Target 8.9</b> By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.	✗
<b>Target 8.10</b> Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.	✓

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 8.a</b> Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.	
<b>Target 8.b</b> By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.	

**T**arget 8.1. is covered by the ERP for the period 2020-2022, which predicts the cumulative and annual rate of economic growth (12.5% and 4%, respectively), which should be a consequence of domestic demand and investment growth. The Fiscal Strategy for 2020 uses economic growth as a pre-condition for achieving other objectives, however, economic growth is not in itself an objective, nor is an objective set to be a presumed rate of economic growth.

**Target 8.5.** is very lightly regulated by the ERP in the context of improving the national employment policy in compliance with good practice and EU standards (work formalisation in non-agricultural sectors, financial support to vulnerable groups and financing active measures on the labour market). It should be noted that structural reform SR 19: *Increasing activating pressure on able-bodied persons who are in the social care system and hard-to-employ unemployed persons in accordance with employment regulations*, was removed from the previous version of the ERP. Following the Europe 2020 document, the **ESRP** contains objectives in the field of labour market and

employment: preventing high unemployment, reducing the overall inactivity rate and increasing the employment rate by increasing access to the labour market for the Roma, strengthening the role of the employment policy and reducing duality in the labour mar-

**Sustainable Development Goal 8 is only partially covered by national goals. There is still no Development Plan envisaged by the Law on the Planning System, or an Investment Plan, which would clearly define priorities and target values in the field of economic growth, productivity and employment. It may be concluded that economic growth and the growth of employment are the focal point of most current development documents, however, that insufficient attention is paid to decent work as a whole.**

ket. The objectives of this programme mostly refer to increasing access to the labour market and improving employability, and significantly less attention is paid to creating productive jobs and achieving standards of decent work. Indicators under this target are only partially covered by the ESRP.

**Target 8.2.** is partially covered by the ERP where digital transformation and construction of the digital infrastructure are mentioned as the strategic orientation of the Government. The service sector in the ERP is viewed as the carrier of economic growth, which is also relevant for this target. The model of economic growth, included in the Strategy and Policy of Industrial Development of the Republic of Serbia in the period 2011-2020, implies the dynamic growth of investments, growth of industrial employment and focus on innovations. The Smart Specialisation Strategy identifies priority areas for investments, two of which are relevant for SDG 8, i.e., information and communication technologies and creative industries.

**Target 8.3.** is recognised as one of ERP priorities through innovations based on scientific and technological work, as well as on the development of and/or lending to small and medium-sized enterprises. The National Program for Countering Shadow Economy in Serbia in the period 2019-2020 and the relevant Action Plan include only supportive living care staff and only as an example of the staff whose position on the labour market may be formalised with the extension of the application of the Law on Simplified Work Engagement on Seasonal Jobs in Certain Activities. All other workers engaged in the informal sector in this period remained out of the sight of decision makers. Special objectives of the Strategy on Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2020 include strengthening of the connection between science, economy and society to achieve innovation.

**Target 8.6.** is primarily addressed in the ESRP document through the objective of improving the position of young people in the labour market, especially those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

**Target 8.8** is covered by the Strategy for Occupational Safety and Health in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2018-2022, which represents a global prevention policy framework for the prevention and reduction of the number of injuries at work and occupational diseases. The relevant planning document, as well as the relevant Action Plan and accompanying documents and standards define the following: minimum safety and health criteria for specific jobs, or protective equipment specification for workers, etc. However, the target is not addressed in the manner determined by the indicators set forth in this target<sup>56</sup>. There is no strategic document that directly addresses this target, apart from partially the Decent Work Country Programme for the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2022.

**Target 8.9.** may be partially recognised in the Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016–2025. Sustainable tourism is not a separate part of the document. The idea is to make tourism more sustainable as a whole through the efficient use and protection of natural resources and to make this part of the economy be the generator of innovation and good quality jobs, especially of those of an interest for young people.

**Target 8.b** is covered by the ESRP in the part addressing youth employment. Also, the National

56 8.8.1 Incidence rates of fatal and non-fatal injuries at work, by gender and migrant status and 8.8.2 Extent of compliance with labour rights at the national level (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, by gender and migrant status.

Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025 and the relevant Action Plan particularly address youth employment and entrepreneurship. The strategic objective of this Strategy is formulated as "Improved employability and employment of young women and men". The quality of employment is viewed primarily through the development of quality competencies for the labour market, as well as through the provision of quality youth work in general.

Strategic directions and priorities in the National Employment Strategy for the period 2011-2020

include employment growth and job quality improvement. However, they do not address clearly the standards of decent work, the issue of full and productive employment, occupational safety, as well as labour and education youth activities. Therefore, the relevant document may not be considered to be an adequate framework for the achievement of SDG 8.

**Target 8.4.** is covered in more detail by SDG 12 analysis. **Target 8.10** is covered by the ERP. However, it will be covered in more detail by SDG 9 analysis.

## Legal framework

**A**mendments to the Individual Income Tax Law and the Law on Mandatory Social Security Insurance Contributions in 2019 increased the non-taxable amount of income from RSD 15,300 to 16,300 per month, and decreased the rate of contribution for pension and disability insurance (from 26% to 25.5%). The aim was to reduce labour costs for the jobs with lower income distribution levels, which would depreciate the increase in minimum income to RSD 172,54 (net) and thus improve the standard and preserve jobs of workers with the lowest income and qualification level. However, this measure has not improved the level of decent work for the relevant categories of workers considering that the minimum market basket of a four-member household in Serbia still may not be secured with the minimum monthly income.

The LL provides a framework for the establishment of a legal and economic relations be-

tween the employer and employee. The more significant flexibility of this relation, starting with

**The legal framework for Goal 8 has been partially established. More has been achieved in the segment of economic growth than in the area of achievement of full employment and improvement of the level of decent work in Serbia.**

the amendments to the LL in 2014, considerably reduces job security and, thus, creates an opportunity for discretion for the employer to undermine job quality and standards of decent work. With the relevant iterative amendments to the Law, the decision-makers intended to make economic growth more dynamic with facilitated employment and dismissal of workers. Hence, this legal act is an example of a possible contradiction between the objectives of economic growth and objectives related

to the quality and security of jobs, which are collectively as targets covered by SDG 8.

Unfortunately, changes in the legal framework in terms of achievement of the standard of decent work have not been made in recent years. The time limits for the harmonisation of the LL with the relevant EU directives have long been missed, as set out in the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis. Moreover, certain solutions represent a step in the opposite direction. An example of this is the introduction of the notion "oral contract", unknown in the domestic labour and legal system, which was created with the adoption of the Law on Simplified Work Engagement on Seasonal Jobs in Certain Activities. Also, although the Law on Agency Employment was in principle used for conducting harmonisation with the relevant EU directive, it prescribes the possibility for the

employer to practically engage an entire group of employees through agency employment, and does not utilise the possibility allowed by the directive on limitation of the application of this notion, for example, in public administration, for all categories of employees. This created the possibility for the uncontrolled development of this precarious form of employment at a time when it has already reached proportions above the European average in our country. In addition, the Republic of Serbia avoids taking a step towards reaching the standard of decent work when it comes to combining work, family and private life. Thus, it has not yet ratified Article 27 of the Revised European Social Charter on the Right of Workers with Family Responsibilities to Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment, as well as the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

According to the Law on Ministries, the issues of economic growth and development are under the competence of the Ministry of Economy (ME) (8.1), and the same applies on the field of industrial policy and innovation and/or small and medium-sized enterprise development policy (8.2 and 8.3).

Productivity improvement, creation of new jobs and entrepreneurship (8.3 and 8.5), as well as cooperation with international organisations

in the field of labour and employment (8.7, 8.8 and 8.b), are also considered to be within the scope of work of the ME. Nevertheless, SDG 8 is not explicitly mentioned on the ME's website. Members of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Implementation of UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were appointed from the Sector for International Cooperation and represent the only official link between the ME and 2030 Agenda implementation process.

The provision of economic incentives through access to financial resources is stated as part of the work performed by the aforementioned ministry, whereas the coordination of financial institutions that provide incentives and access to financial resources is managed by the MFIN (8.10). In terms of 2030 Agenda and SDG, the situation is similar to the previous case.

The MLEVSP is in charge of most of the activities that may be linked to decent work targets such as: the system in the field of labour relations and labour rights (8.8), occupational safety and health and inspection in these fields (8.8), organisation of trade unions and strikes (8.8). The relevant ministry is responsible for the anti-discrimination policy (8.5 and 8.8), as well as for youth employment and/or reduction of the number of young people not in education, employment and training (8.6). The National Employment Service is operationally in charge of conducting employment activities and keeping employment records.

The Economic Development Council is a body consisting of the members of the ME, MFIN and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce. With the establishment of this Council, the ME was deprived of a significant number of powers in the field of economic growth and development. The work of this body may not be considered transparent, considering the lack of annual activity reports. Also, the Annual Progress Report in terms of EU Accession, published by the European Commission, states that cooperation and connection between different state bodies is unclear and insufficiently developed.

Decent work issues are part of the responsibilities of the Social and Economic Council (SES) (8.5). Also, this body is responsible for a social dialogue between the state, employers' and workers' representatives. The European

Existing resources for the achievement of this Goal are inadequate. There are no mechanisms and agreements that explicitly refer to the improvement of the level of decent work. It should be noted that, except in the context of general compliance with the international conventions relating to labour rights, the executive authorities do not explicitly address the challenges of decent work, which represents the focal point of this Sustainable Development Goal.

Commission's Progress Report for 2019 assesses bilateral and trilateral social dialogues as underdeveloped, especially at the local level, which partly refers to the work of this Council.

Resource efficiency in terms of production and consumption in the context of economic growth (8.4) may not be viewed through the spectrum of competencies of executive bodies in Serbia. Sustainable tourism, as a potential source of new and decent jobs (8.9), is not under the official competence of the ministries of the Republic of Serbia, except under the general competence of the State Secretary for Tourism.

National level official competencies or segments of competencies, which refer to economic growth and decent work, are not entrusted to non-state bodies and organisations. The Law on the Planning System and amendments to Article 77 of the Law on Public

Administration have significantly improved the legislative framework which ensures conditions for the participation of non-state actors in the process of adoption of regulations and public policy documents. An obligation of consulting non-state actors during the preparation of public policy documents and laws has been introduced, which was not the case before. If the number of calls for conducting consultations on the public hearings conducted in the process of preparation of regulations and public policy documents is taken as a criterion for involving the non-state sector in the decision-making process, a total of 31 in

2018, and in 2019 a total of 44 such calls were recorded through the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society. Nevertheless, in its Progress Report in terms of EU accession, the European Commission assessed state's cooperation with the civil sector as weak and fragmented in 2019. Apart from the legal obligation to invite the non-state sector to public hearings, not much has been done in terms of essential involvement of specific actors in the final definition of public policy documents and laws regarding up-to-date communication, acceptance of comments and transparency of the actual impact.

## Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS) monitors 17 sustainable development indicators listed as relevant to SDG 8. However, the SORS increases the number of indicators in this area every year. The challenge

is that the indicators are not connected to specific nationalised goals. Therefore, it could be said that specific indicators are monitored "blindly". Considering that there are no clearly set nationalised goals or targets, only the monitoring of SDG 8 segments is questioned.

**A general conclusion is that the framework for monitoring the implementation of target 8 is underdeveloped.**

Another problem is that the indicators are general and taken from the general framework of statistical indicators, thus, they are not adjusted to specific segments of economic growth and decent work.



Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.8	8.9	8.10	8.a	8.b

The SORS particularly monitors several indicators related to the achievement of Goal 8 in Serbia in accordance with the defined methodology at the international level:

- » 8.1 – GDP growth rate per capita;
- » 8.3 – Proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural employment, by sex;
- » 8.4 – Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita and domestic material consumption per GDP;
- » 8.5 – Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities;
- » 8.5 – Unemployment rate by sex, age and persons with disabilities;
- » 8.6 – Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- » 8.7 – Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age;
- » 8.10 – Number of commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults and (b) number of automated teller machines (ATMs) per 100,000 adults;

The list shows that in most cases the indicators do not cover all target aspects. Although target 8.1 primarily refers to the monitoring of the standard of living of the population, and it is possible to measure it with a specific indicator (economic growth per capita), most of the targets are complex and require a specific approach in measuring the phenomenon. For example, target 8.2 (Achieve higher levels of productivity of economies through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour-intensive sectors) should be measured on the basis of the movement of productivity levels by factors of production, as well as the share of technologically innovative and labour-intensive sector in the movement of the total economic activity of the country. In our case, we are talking only about the annual growth rate of the GDP per employee, which, as a measure of labour productivity, may be conditionally acceptable for this target's segment, depending on the method of measuring the number of employees in a year. Target 8.3 deals with the implementation of development policies and progress in the field of decent job creation, entrepreneurship development, innovation, micro – and small – and medium-sized enterprises, as well as access to financial services. For this reason, the proportion of informal employment in non-agricultural employment (by sex) may not be considered an adequate indicator for mon-



itoring this target. Nevertheless, the National Program for Countering the Shadow Economy, as one of the indicators at the general goal level, reads: *Reduced participation of informal employment in total employment from 19.5% in 2018 to 17.5% in 2020.*

The same may be concluded for the targets that promote decent work. The indicator that monitors target 8.5 covers exclusively the difference in earnings per hour, based on sex, age and persons with disabilities, i.e. the unemployment rate, on the same grounds. The framework for monitoring UN Sustainable Development Goals (through indicators) does not take into account aspects of decent work as defined by the ILO<sup>57</sup>. Thus, it may be said that official statistics do not actually monitor decent work adequately. Indicator 8.5.1<sup>58</sup> is not envisaged by the ESRP at all, whereas indicator 8.5.2<sup>59</sup> is not disaggregated. The ESRP expires this year, thus a revision of this document could be expected, although it has not been planned so far. Target 8.6 may easily be monitored through official statistics, however, these challenges remain relevant in the case of monitoring targets 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10. If we take target 8.10 as an example, the number of ATMs and the number of people who have a bank account may not be used to

measure actual access to finance, especially when in terms of vulnerable categories of the economy, workers and the population.

The SORS monitors certain indicators that may be relevant to SDG 8: the real GDP growth rate and median net income. The Occupational Safety and Health Directorate and the MLEVSP also monitor the total number of injuries at work. The annual Eurostat publication is also published at this moment, which monitors progress of sustainable development indicators that are monitored at the European level, and it includes Serbia. The relevant set of indicators is not identical to the indicators monitored by the SORS. This document presents information about the share of investments by institutional sectors of the economy, long-term unemployment rate and the number of deaths due to injuries at work per 100,000 people). The UN Annual Sustainable Development Goals Report monitors 5 indicators of sustainable development under SDG 8 which are not identical to those monitored by the SORS (economic growth rate, number of victims of modern slavery per 1000 people, share of adults who have an account with a bank or a financial institution or through a mobile money service, unemployment rate and number of work-related deaths per 100,000 people).

57 Employment opportunities; adequate earnings and productive work; decent working hours; combining work, family and private life; work that should be abolished; stability and security of work; equal opportunity and treatment in employment; safe work environment; social security; social dialogue, employer's and worker's representation, and economic and social context for decent work.

58 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities

59 Unemployment rate by sex, age and persons with disabilities

# Recommendations

1. Adopt the National Recovery Plan in line with current European policies, taking into account all aspects and targets of SDG 8;
2. Use target 8.1, determined by the current ERP, as a starting point for planning public policies in the field of economic development, productive employment and decent work.
3. Promote the importance of employment, with a focus on productive employment and decent work standards in national strategic documents, primarily in the ERP, National Employment Strategy for the period 2016-2025, Action Plan of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 and the like;
4. Adopt a new National Employment Strategy that prioritises targets that refer to decent work, employment in small – and medium-sized enterprises by encouraging innovation, reducing the number of young people who are not employed nor in education or training, and by protecting labour rights (8.5, 8.3, 8.6 and 8.8);
5. Adopt a new ESRP that will focus on the improvement of standards of decent work, i.e. achievement of targets that refer to decent and productive work, improvement of the position of young people who are not employed nor in education or training, i.e. protection of labour rights (8.5, 8.6 and 8.8);
6. Adopt a ten-year Sustainable Production and Consumption Programme, in accordance with target 8.4;
7. Ratify Article 27 of the Revised European Social Charter on the Rights of Workers with Family Obligations, and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
8. Improve compliance with the standards of decent work through amendments to the Labour Law and the Law on Agency Employment;
9. Adopt the Sustainable Tourism Development Programme of the Republic of Serbia, which is in line with target 8.9 and the current Tourism Development Strategy;
10. Improve the framework for monitoring SDG 8, according to defined targets, using indicators from Eurostat databases, ILO, national institutions (National Bank of Serbia – NBS) and other relevant organisations.

Goal 9:

# INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



## **Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation**









Inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, together with innovation and infrastructure, are an extremely important factor that may contribute to increasing the dynamics and competitiveness of the economy and creating new – and better – jobs, as well as the overall income of the population. Industrialisation, infrastructure and innovation also play a key role in introducing and spreading new technologies, facilitating international trade and increasing resource efficiency.

However, the full achievement of this goal of sustainable development in Serbia requires much more effort. For example, according to Eurostat data, Serbia has about 45,000 kilometres of roads – highways, local, main roads – compared to about 130,000 in the Czech Republic and about 200,000 in Hungary, which are countries of comparable size. Furthermore, research and development costs in Serbia amount to only about 55 euros per capita per year, compared to about 660 at the EU level.

Although an appropriate institutional framework and necessary administrative capacities have generally been set to achieve this goal, much more needs to be done to create favourable conditions for development. For example, although the level of development of the transport infrastructure is relatively solid, whereas in recent years there have been significant improvements in terms of construction of new roads, further plans are mainly announced by senior officials, without a transparent discussion or an adopted plan in accordance with the Law on Planning System.

# Public policy framework

**Table 10:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 9 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 9.1</b> Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.	
<b>Target 9.2</b> Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.	
<b>Target 9.3</b> Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.	
<b>Target 9.4</b> By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.	
<b>Target 9.5</b> Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.	
<b>Target 9.a</b> Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.	
<b>Target 9.b</b> Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.	
<b>Target 9.c</b> Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.	

**Target 9.1** is partially implemented within the Strategy of Railway, Road, Inland Waterway, Air and Intermodal Transport Development for the period 2015–2020, which comprehensively plans the development of all modes of transport in Serbia. The planning period of this Strategy ends in 2020, and a new strategy for the upcoming planning period has not been adopted yet. This strategy decides on the development and construction of key routes in the short and long term, and in this sense contributes to the achievement of this target. On the other hand, although the text has been adopted for the period starting in 2015, and no explicit harmonisation with the SDGs has been made, and the planning period ends in 2020, its elements to a large extent ensure compliance with this target.

**Targets 9.2 and 9.3** are mostly implemented within the Industrial Policy Strategy of the Republic of Serbia covering the period from 2021 to 2030, which adequately defines the industrial policy for the forthcoming period, and implicitly positions it within the framework of sustainable development goals.

Complementary to this document is the Strategy for Support of Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness for the period from 2015 to 2020, whose planning period ends in 2020, and according to currently available information, the new strategy is not in the process of drafting or public discussion.

**Target 9.4** is partially implemented within the National Energy Development Strategy, which provides a development plan until 2025, with projections until 2030. Since this document was adopted in 2015, and the planning is based on

older data, it is not fully harmonised with the principles of sustainable development goals. However, the existing document also emphasises the use of sustainable forms of energy, as well as energy resources, and despite incomplete harmonisation, i.e. based on relatively outdated data, it provides relatively well-harmonised – and quantified – guidelines.

**Target 9.5** is partially implemented within the Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2016 to 2020. This Strategy provides adequate elaboration of measurable objectives for the planning period, however, without explicit positioning of strategic objectives within the goals of sustainable development. The

**Sustainable Development Goal 9 is partially covered by national goals. No documents on the period after 2020 have been adopted yet for a part of the strategies referring to the achievement of the targets contained in Goal 9, for which the planning period expires in 2020.**

planning period ends in 2020, and apparently the new version of the document is not in the process of public discussion. However, it should be noted that this strategy provides unambiguous objectives in terms of inclusion in international cooperation as an important aspiration, i.e. to make Serbia part of the European Research Area, and to successfully implement the negotiation chapter in this area, i.e. Chapter 25. Also, this target is partially managed through the Smart Specialisation Strategy for the period from 2020 to 2027, which provides clear measurability criteria and an explicit link with the SDG framework.

## Legal framework

According to the latest available Annual Progress Report of the European Commission for Serbia for 2019, the chapter that refers to the transport policy emphasises the relatively adequate harmonisation of domestic public policies and the legal framework with the EU acquis. However, while the report emphasises the relatively favourable level of harmonisation of the legal framework and public policies with the EU acquis, in all areas of transport, from road, rail and air, to water, it emphasises that there is room for improvement in the field of combined transport legislation.

Thus, Target 9.1 is covered by several relatively recently enacted or amended laws that regulate the transport infrastructure. With regard to freight and passenger infrastructure, the Law on Roads is the basic legal act regulating the field of public road management, including the planning, design and construction of public roads. Apparently, the adoption of the law enabled the acceleration of public works on the construction of roads based on the regulation of the area of records of existing roads, and a more efficient process of expropriation of plots on the planned routes of new roads. The Law on Railways further regulated the railway traffic management and infrastructure; the Law on Navigation and Ports for Inland Waters regulated the area of water transport; the Law on Air Transport, which regulated the area of air traffic.

**Target 9.2** is not fully covered by special laws or bylaws. However, certain specific fields of

operation of industrial enterprises, or specific industries, are covered by individual laws. Thus, for example, the achievement of this target is to some extent influenced by the Law on Investments or the Law on Business Companies, whereas the legal acts regulating operation of individual industries of specific importance, such as the Law on Production and Trade of Weapons and Military Equipment, are also in force.

**Target 9.3** is also not explicitly covered by a specific law. On the other hand, legal acts regulating the field of corporate financing are mostly contained in the Law on Protection of Users of Financial Services and NBS decisions concerning the management of commercial banks operation, *inter alia*, the Decision on

The legal framework for SDG 9 is largely established through the legal framework for managing infrastructure, innovation and industrial development.

Capital Adequacy of Banks, Decision on Risk Management in Banks, or the Decision on Liquidity Risk Management in Banks.

**Target 9.4**, in terms of legal acts that would regulate greenhouse gas emissions, is not adequately covered by legislation. The Law on Climate Change, announced for 2019, has not been adopted yet, and according to the European Commission's Progress Report for Serbia for 2019, it is stated that harmonisa-

tion with the acquis in the field of industrial pollution and risk management is only at an early stage.

**Target 9.5** is mostly regulated through the Law on Innovation, the Law on Science and Research, the Law on Patents and the Law on Legal Protection of Industrial Design.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

**T**he primary ministry competent for target 9.1 is the MCTI, considering that it performs state administration tasks related to the regulation of the road, air, railway and water infrastructure. In addition to this Ministry, other institutions competent for the achievement of this target are the Corridors of Serbia, Roads of Serbia and four companies established by the separation of Serbian Railways – Holding, Infrastruktura, Serbia Voz, and Kargo.

The Ministry responsible for the achievement of target 9.2 and partially target 9.3 is the ME, considering that it is in charge of the economy and economic development; position and connection of companies and other forms of organisation for performing activities; encouraging development and structural adjustment of the economy and the like. In terms of the achievement of target 9.3, in the segment of access to finance, the NBS is also partly competent for this, since it is in charge of public policies and supervision in the field of financial markets, however, some bodies have certain influence such as the Development

Agency of the Republic of Serbia, or the Development Fund.

Target 9.4 is largely the responsibility of the MEP, considering that the issue of managing

**Existing resources for the achievement of this Goal are generally adequate. However, additional efforts are needed to strengthen institutional and analytical capacities, especially for the institutions dealing with the improvement of business conditions, industrial policies and environmental protection.**

greenhouse gas emissions is within the remit of this institution. In that sense, SEPA, and indirectly the Ministry of Energy, may have a certain impact on industrial gas emissions.

Target 9.5, which refers to the achievement of goals related to research and development, is mostly in the field of work of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, which is responsible for the supervision, planning and development of education.

# Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**he SORS, as a central institution in charge of monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals, as well as for the collection and processing of data on their achievement, monitors only 3 out of 8 targets (not all applicable), and only 5 out of 12 indicators:

The mechanisms are only half-way established for SDG 9, considering that the monitoring mechanism covers less than half of the total indicators covered by this SDG

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.a	9.b	9.c

- » 9.2 – Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita;
- » 9. 2 – Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment;
- » 9.5 – Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP
- » 9.5 – Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants
- » 9.c.1-Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology.

Alternatively, the following indicators could be used, which are available in the Eurostat database: gross domestic expenditure on research and development; employment in high – and medium-high technology manufacturing and knowledge-intensive services; human resources in science and technology; patent statistics relative to population; share of busses and trains in total passenger transport and share of rail and inland waterways in total freight transport.



# Recommendations

1. Adopt the Strategy of Railway, Road, Inland Waterway, Air and Intermodal Transport Development for the next period, after the expiration of the current Strategy, whose planning period expires in 2020.
2. Adopt the Strategy for Support of Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness for the period following the end of 2020.
3. Increase efforts to reform the railway system, primarily in terms of organisation and relations between public enterprises that manage this segment, as well as operators. Particular emphasis should be placed on reforms in terms of strengthening administrative capacities, in compliance with the guidelines provided through the latest Progress Report for Serbia, published by the European Commission.
4. Increase efforts to improve plans for the management and maintenance of public rail and road networks.
5. Make further efforts to improve safety on public road through the improvement of administrative and analytical capacities.
6. Improve the prioritisation of public infrastructure construction planning in terms of achieving higher value for invested public funds.
7. Make further efforts to provide sources of liquidity for small and medium-sized enterprises, both by encouraging lending through the traditional banking sector and by working on institutional solutions for the development of non-banking financial institutions and sectors.
8. Make further efforts to increase public spending on research and development and provide additional support for more intensive networking of the business and academic research community.
9. Improve the relevance of SDG 9 indicators that are currently monitored within the set of SORS' indicators of sustainable development.
10. Improve the monitoring framework for SDG 9 according to defined targets, using indicators from Eurostat databases and other relevant organisations..





Goal 10:

# REDUCED INEQUALITIES

## Reduce inequality within and among countries

Although inequality is primarily monitored through economic indicators, in this document we talk about a phenomenon that is extremely multidimensional, both in terms of inequality and the consequences that inequality creates. Access to education, markets and financial resources, equality in respect for human rights, the right to the same income for the same amount and complexity of work, access to health services, as well as social inclusion are only some of the perspectives from which the inequality concept may be viewed. The basic principles of 2030 Agenda (Human Rights based approach and Leaving no one behind) point to the need to overcome all forms of inequality so that global development is fair and sustainable in the long run.

According to the World Bank, Serbia is classified among the countries with a higher median income level, with the GDP per capita of USD 18,179.80 (adjusted to the purchasing power parity – PPP). Starting from an assumption that only a country with stable public finances and significant fiscal inflows has the capacity for the fair distribution and redistribution of income, it may be said that Serbia had a promising capacity to perform this function in early 2020. Based on the UN Human Development Report from 2019, Serbia ranks 63<sup>rd</sup> out of 188 countries with a human development index of 0.799, which classifies it in the group of countries with a relatively high level of human development and a low level of development in comparison to European countries. The coefficient of human inequality<sup>60</sup> is 13.7%, which is considerably higher compared to the countries such as Croatia and Belarus, or higher than the average

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60 Coefficient of Human Inequality was introduced in 2014 in the Human Development Report and represents the mean value of health, education and income inequalities.

for the region of Europe and Central Asia. Inequality is highest in terms of income inequality (28.1%) and the lowest in terms of life expectancy (4.9%).

In the past few decades, general inequality increased both among rich and poor countries as well as among households. Compared to the European average, inequality in Serbia is extremely high according to the SILC survey. The risk of poverty and social exclusion rate in Serbia was 36.7 in 2017, whereas it amounted to 34.3 percent in 2018. The Gini coefficient of disposable income in 2018, according to the SILC survey, amounted to 35.6, compared to the European average of 30.4, which makes Serbia a country with the second highest degree of income inequality in Europe<sup>61</sup>.







Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, quarterly data in 2020 that refer to the Household Budget Survey have remained unavailable and the data from 2019 show that the average monthly income in cash and in kind per household (all households) amounted to RSD 66,880, and household personal consumption expenditures (all households) amounted to RSD 67,099. Although all the data are more favourable compared to 2018, higher household expenditures than income indicate to a growing trend of borrowing for current consumption purposes.

# Public policy framework

**Table 11** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 10 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 10.1</b> By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.	✓
<b>Target 10.2</b> By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.	✗
<b>Target 10.3</b> Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.	✗
<b>Target 10.4</b> Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.	✎

61 Buglaria is in the first place with 39.6.

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 10.5</b> Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.	
<b>Target 10.6</b> Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.	
<b>Target 10.7</b> Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.	
<b>Target 10.a</b> Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements.	
<b>Target 10.b</b> Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes.	
<b>Target 10.c</b> By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.	

The issues that refer to inequality, including those that refer to both income and consumption, are not viewed as a priority in the public policy framework in Serbia. In this sense, there are no specific strategic documents that address this challenge, compared to poverty and social inclusion that are more addressed issues.

**Target 10.1** is covered by the ESRP which is identified as the only public policy document in which the issues of inequality of income, consumption and access to basic social services are specifically addressed.

**Target 10.2 and 10.3** are regulated by public policy documents that encourage and implement anti-discrimination and socio-economic inclusion measures. The Strategy for

**Sustainable Development Goal 10 is almost uncovered by national goals and strategic documents. It can be concluded that income redistribution in the context of reduced inequalities is not the focal point of public policies in Serbia.**

the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016-2025 encourages social inclusion of Roma men and women, although

the list of indicators included in the relevant Action Plan is not comparable with indicators that monitor the progress of targets 10.2 and 10.3. The Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia 2020-2024 seeks to improve the position of this vulnerable category of the population. However, a similar conclusion may be drawn as the one in previous planning documents in terms of comparability of inequality issues. The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 is aimed at improving the social position of young people and their exercising of rights in various fields of activity, although the economic position of young people, labour rights and analysed aspects of inequality are not the focus of this document.

Target **10.4** is mentioned in the ESRP as well as in the ERP for 2020, where social inequality is viewed solely as a limiting factor for economic growth and social development. This issue

is not taken into consideration in the Fiscal Strategy for 2020.

**Target 10.7** is regulated by the Economic Migration Strategy for the period 2021-2027. This public policy document regulates emigration control, as well as the encouragement of return and circular migration. The Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees Under the Readmission Agreement has expired and a new one has not been adopted yet, whereas it is considered to be important for this target. The National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 covers youth migration issues.

Public policies aimed at economic development and employment are considered extremely important for reducing inequalities in Serbia and are elaborated in detail within SDG 8. Also, gender, education and other aspects of inequality are analysed through the goals referring to specific areas of sustainable development.

## Legal framework

**T**he Law on Social Welfare (Articles 87 and 88) does not define the maximum amount of social assistance for the beneficiaries of these funds, only the base and scale, whereas nominal amounts are determined by the Minister in a separate decision (**10.1, 10.2 and 10.4**). Nevertheless, the stated amount is below the nationally defined absolute poverty

line. Also, formal employment<sup>62</sup> discourages exercising of the right to social assistance, which limits income and, thus, possible consumption of the lowest-income households. Households with able-bodied members are limited to nine months of social assistance during a calendar year, which similarly leads to the aforementioned effect.

62 It is not formally forbidden to be formally employed and receive social assistance, which may be the case if the income is lower than the basis, which is 8,508 RSD/month for an individual. Thus, according to the contract on temporary and occasional jobs, someone can earn 5,000 RSD/month and in this way be formally employed and still exercise the right to social assistance.).

The Law on Individual Income Tax primarily regulates income taxation, considering that the largest part of tax revenues is created through the collection of the relevant tax. The Law envisages proportional taxation, which is in compliance with the principle of economic efficiency, however, income redistribution and reduction of inequality is not achieved in this way **(10.1, 10.2 and 10.4)**.

ing to which employees are guaranteed equal income for the same work, or work of the same value that they receive from the employer,

**The legal framework for Goal 10 has been partially established. It cannot be said unambiguously that legal solutions in Serbia encourage reduction of inequality. Some solutions actually deepen inequality on different grounds.**

The Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance determines a benefit for unemployed persons, as well as conditions for exercising the right to the benefit. Unemployment benefits were reduced in 2009 due to the plan to increase funds for active labour market measures. Increased budget for active labour market measures is also envisaged by the National Employment Strategy 2011-2020. However, funds for the mentioned purposes decreased in the following years, which endangered the standard of living of unemployed persons **(10.1, 10.2 and 10.4)**.

which is also important for reducing inequality, especially the income gap between genders.

Amendments to the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance from 2014 prescribe a permanent reduction of pensions by 0.34% for each month before the full old-age pension (up to 20.4%), even if the worker has 40 or even 45 years of service, which promotes income inequality (10.1).

The Law on Temporary Regulation of Pension Payment envisages reduction of all pensions exceeding RSD 25,000 as one of the fiscal consolidation measures. Although the Law was officially effective until 2017, the reduction remained permanent for all pensioners who received over RSD 25,000 pension in the relevant period **(10.1, 10.2)**.

The Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities regulates the rights of persons with disabilities, with a focus on their economic and social inclusion and protection of their human rights, including access to the labour market and labour rights (10.3).

The Labour Law envisages an income increase of 0.4% based on years of service. In 2014, it was 0.5%, which affects the income of older workers (10.1). On the other hand, a provision of the Labour Law may be commended, accord-

With regard to the initiatives that could contribute to the harmonisation of the legal framework with SDG 10, one may recognise the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) project "Action for Reducing Inequalities in Education", which began in April 2020 and refers to strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations to participate in part-

nership in improving public policies and the legislative framework in this area.

The Law on Migration Management covers target 10.7 and refers to the management of incoming and outgoing migration of the population (immigration and emigration), with a focus on: relations with the diaspora, resolv-

ing issues related to the position of returnees through readmission programs, the position of asylum seekers, competencies of local self-governments in these processes, as well as a unique system of data collection, organisation and exchange. However, this Law does not cover issues of equality or inequality of migrants compared to the general population.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

According to the Law on Ministries, no institution at this level is explicitly in charge of inequality issues. However, the MLEVSP is responsible for the following issues: anti-discrimination policy; social protection system; gender equality; exercising the rights and integration of refugees and displaced persons, returnees under readmission agreements, the Roma population and other socially vulnerable groups; pension and disability insurance system, social insurance and protection of persons covered by military insurance; participation in the preparation, conclusion and implementation of international agreements on social insurance and the like. In operational terms, the SEC takes over some of the aforementioned responsibilities of the MLEVSP and addresses the following issues: social dialogue, development and improvement of collective bargaining, the impact of economic policy and measures for its implementation on social development and stability, employment policy, income and price policy,

competition and productivity, privatisation and other issues of structural adjustment, protection of the working and living environment, education and vocational training, health and social protection and security, demographic trends

**Existing resources for the achievement of this Goal are inadequate. There are no mechanisms and agreements that explicitly address inequality reduction.**

and other issues in accordance with SEC' acts. This body consists of the representatives of the Government, trade unions and employers. However, their work is currently insufficiently transparent, considering the lack of formal annual activity reports.

The MFIN is responsible for the following: public revenue and expenditure policy, provision of funds for mandatory social insurance and, thus, nominally it performs the execution of the



distribution and redistribution policy, which is not explicitly listed within the Law on Ministries.

The Fiscal Council, as an independent state body, aims to promote a culture of fiscal responsibility in Serbia by conducting an independent analysis of the fiscal policy and by encouraging expert discussions about the fiscal policy. In this sense, the Fiscal Council should be responsible for making recommendations in the field of the redistribution policy, which is not the focus of the work of this body.

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality is an independent state body responsible for supervising the implementation of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination. In 2017, the former Commissioner for the Protection of Gender Equality launched the "Code of Equality" initiative as part of development of the employers' anti-discrimination policy in Serbia. This non-binding document provides guidelines to employers on improving the relationship with job candidates and new employees to improve their social responsibility and reduce inequality among workers that is not based on work performance.

The Protector of Citizens protects the rights of citizens and controls the work of state administration bodies, which affects inequality, primarily in terms of access to public goods and services.

Mechanisms and agreements that specifically address the promotion of equality in the field of consumption, income, access to basic services, and reduction of inequalities on the basis of gender, nationality, age and other grounds are not clearly defined. Assuming the already explained mechanisms and competencies related to poverty reduction, gender inequality, education, etc., in addition to the MLEVSP, we can identify the competencies of SIPRU, which is formulated as "strengthening the capacity of the Government to develop data-based social inclusion policies, as well as to coordinate and monitor their implementation in accordance with international standards and examples of good practice in Europe".

There are a number of stakeholders, primarily in the civil sector and among foreign donors, who implement and support activities related to the reduction of economic and social inequalities. However, they are not recognised as actors dealing with these issues at the institutional level.

## Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

No indicators could be identified in policy documents that could be set as an

example of indicators relevant to inequality issues. The SORS monitors a total of two indi-

cators that refer to the fields and targets of Sustainable Development Goal 10:

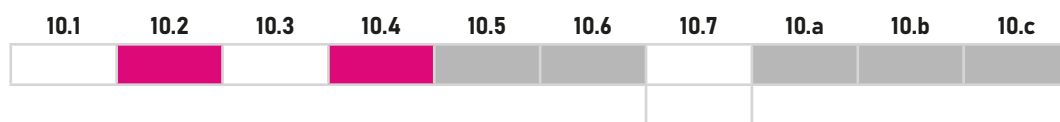
- » 10.2 – Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities;
- » 10.4 – Labour share of the GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers.

A limited number of indicators are relevant for Serbia. Here, we are primarily talking about the indicators that refer to targets 10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4. However, only two of the four listed indicators are supported by national statistics. In case of indicator 10.1, the SORS website contains data from the World Bank

**A general conclusion is that the framework for monitoring the achievement of Goal 10 is partially developed, however, that it is not based on national public policies and laws, rather on the requirements of international initiatives and agreements.**

from 2011, and indicator 10.3 is not covered by a specific source. The remaining two indicators cannot be linked to specific national policy documents, which also calls into question their relevance. The Ministry of Finance has information about social protection expenditures, which in this context could be relevant for reduced inequality issues, and the Household Budget Survey may be used for viewing the effect of social transfers.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)



In addition, the Eurostat database contains available data about the following indicators that may be relevant for monitoring progress in terms of Goal 10: income distribution; pur-

chasing power adjusted to the GDP per capita; relative median risk of poverty; risk of social exclusion rate and risk of poverty rate after social transfers.

## Recommendations

1. Adopt the National Economic Recovery Plan in compliance with current European policies, which takes into account all relevant targets of SDG10 (10.1, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.7);
2. Adopt as soon as possible a new ESRP that takes into account, as a matter of priority, all relevant aspects of reducing inequality, including inequalities in income, consumption and access to basic social services;

3. Improve revenue redistribution through amended solutions within the Fiscal Strategy, starting from 2021;
4. Improve income redistribution through amendments to the Law on Individual Income Tax by introducing solutions for progressive taxation and increasing the basis of the non-taxable part of earnings;
5. Harmonise goals and indicators for monitoring goals with targets and sustainable development indicators within the policies that address inequality issues (ESRP, Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia 2016-2025, Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities, National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, ERP, and alike);
6. Amend the Law on Social Welfare to reduce the number of people living below the nationally defined absolute poverty line by increasing the benefit for households without income and providing assistance to households with income (at least up to the level of the nationally defined absolute poverty line);
7. Clearly identify the institution responsible for inequality issues;
8. Explicitly state the distribution and redistribution policy as the responsibility of the MFIN by making amendments to the Law on Ministries;
9. Improve the anti-discrimination policy through programmes and initiatives of certain institutions and ministries (primarily the MLEVSP, the Commissioner for the Promotion of Gender Equality and the SEC);
10. Increase the relevance of SDG 10 indicators that are currently monitored within the set of SORS' indicators of sustainable development;
11. Improve the monitoring framework for SDG 10 according to defined targets using indicators from Eurostat databases and other relevant organisations.



Goal 11:

# SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



## Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Cities and their surroundings are the carriers of economic growth and development of their countries. More than half of humanity today lives in cities and organisation of life and work in them is an important precondition for the maximum exploitation of their socio-economic potential. Although territorially relatively small compared to rural and sparsely populated areas, cities also generate about 70% of carbon dioxide emissions and consume about 60% of resources. Even though it is an indicator of dynamic economic growth, rapid urbanisation creates additional problems: large slums, pollution, traffic congestion and the like.

The situation in Serbia is specific first of all because it is one of the relatively few countries whose population is continuously declining at the national level and the country that also shows a trend of population growth in a narrow circle of major cities such as Belgrade and Novi Sad, mostly due to internal migrations.

This development also contributes to the increasing challenges in the life and work of an increasing number of residents of the largest cities in the country such as air pollution, increased loss of public green spaces and, in some situations, regression of protection of public and cultural goods.

Serbia has at its disposal mainly adequate instruments and an institutional framework for managing the achievement of this goal of sustainable development. However, its full achievement requires additional efforts, primarily related to monitoring: out of 15 indicators, the SORS monitors only two.

# Public policy framework

**Table 12:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 11 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 11.1</b> By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums	✗
<b>Target 11.2</b> By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons	✎
<b>Target 11.3</b> By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	✓
<b>Target 11.4</b> Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	✓
<b>Target 11.5</b> By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations	✎
<b>Target 11.6</b> By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	✗
<b>Target 11.7</b> By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	✗
<b>Target 11.a</b> Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, per-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	○

## TARGET

PUBLIC POLICY  
FRAMEWORK

**Target 11.b** By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels



**Target 11.c** Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.



**Target 11.1** is mostly implemented within the National Strategy for Social Housing, adopted by the MLEVSP in 2012, with an intention to increase the infrastructural level of apartments and contribute to solving the issue of informal settlements. The main objective of this strategy is providing appropriate-size apartments and equipment to the entire population, with the most rational type of support, in the functional environment and at reasonable prices, and selection of the population that has access to apartments should be

the least privileged as possible. According to conducted research, the team that conducted the research did not determine that a new strategy that would refer to this area was developed or prepared in the meantime. In this sense, this goal is not adequately covered by the relevant strategy, considering that its assumptions are based on partially significantly outdated data and its adoption preceded the definition and adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

the period 2015–2020, which was also adopted by the MCTI. This document listed measurable and adequate target values for the end of the planning period, as well as ways to achieve these objectives – where the key objective is stabilising and/or reducing the number of road

**Sustainable Development Goal 11 is partially covered by national goals. The most significant room for improvement exists in targets 11.2 and 11.5.**

traffic deaths and, in particular, completely avoiding road traffic deaths of children, halving the number of deaths and serious injuries and halving the socio-economic costs of traffic accidents by the end of the planning period. On the other hand, although the planning period of this strategy ends in 2020, judging by the available information, there are still no indications that the preparation of a new strategy for the upcoming period is underway.

**Target 11.2** is mostly covered by the Road Safety Strategy for the Republic of Serbia for

**Target 11.3** is mostly regulated by the Sustainable Urban Development Strategy of the

Republic of Serbia until 2030, which has been effective since mid-2019, and whose preparation and adoption was organised by the MCTI. This strategy adequately fits into the framework of this SDG, both in terms of a clear analysis of the current situation, indication of the criteria for the end of the planning period, inclusiveness, i.e. involvement of the professional public in development and implementation, as well as in terms of explicit reference to SDG 11.

**Target 11.4** is implemented in accordance with the Cultural Development Strategy 2020-2029 whose draft was proposed by the Ministry of Culture and Information, primarily in the field in which this sustainable development goal refers to the preservation of cultural heritage. This document lists measurable objectives whose fulfilment is planned to be achieved by 2029, i.e., general objectives – improving the role of culture in the Republic of Serbia, and individual objectives – improving the regulatory framework, developing investment systems, developing production, improving international cooperation and digitalisation in culture. On the other hand, it is not known whether an action plan was adopted with this strategy, whereas the strategy itself does not state how it fits into the sustainable development goals. In addition to this strategy, the Spatial Plan of the

Republic of Serbia for the period 2021-2035, for which the process of early public inspection is still underway, which will possibly be adopted according to the MCTI' draft, further regulates plans for the achievement of cultural and natural heritage objectives.

**Target 11.5** is achieved to some extent through the National Strategy for Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situation, adopted by the Mol, which, since it was adopted in 2011, has not been methodologically integrated into the system of sustainable development goals. Nevertheless, it has the ability to adequately support the achievement of this target to a significant extent.

**Target 11.6** is, in the part referring to waste management, covered by the new Waste Management Strategy 2019-2024, which has not been adopted yet. The strategy that is in force, whose planning part expired in 2019, enabled compliance with this target as much as possible, bearing in mind that it provides quantitative objectives that support the achievement of this target.

Target 11.7 is not explicitly covered by strategies or other strategic or planning documents, as assessed by the team that conducted the research.

## Legal framework

According to the latest available Annual Progress Report of the European Commission for Serbia for 2019, within Chapter 23 that refers to the rule of law, an emphasis is placed on a relatively large proportion of the

population that does not have basic housing conditions. In addition to a large number of settlements with inadequate living conditions, it seems that a significant part of housing stocks do not have an adequate infrastructure. The



area that refers to **target 11.1** and **target 11.3** is mostly regulated by the Law on Housing and Building Maintenance, the Law on Communal Activities in the element of this target that refers to housing stock management, and the Law on Construction Products in the part concerning housing requirements.

**Target 11.2** is covered by the Law on Road Traffic Safety, whose draft, as well as the laws from the field of the previous target, was prepared by the MCTI.

**Target 11.4** is regulated mainly by the Law on Cultural Heritage and the Law on Environmental Protection, as well as also in a specific sense by the Law on Ratification of the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, in the field of harmonisation of domestic legislation with foreign standards for culture and natural heritage preservation.

**Target 11.5** is to a great extent regulated by the Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management.

The legal framework for SDG 11 is largely established through the existing legal framework.

**Target 11.6** is, in the field of air quality management, regulated by the Law on Air Protection, whereas the element of this target related to waste stream management is regulated by the Law on Waste Management.

**Target 11.7** is regulated by the Law on Communal Order in the part referring to the provision of safe access to public green areas, whereas the issue of maintenance, arrangement, introduction of content in green public areas, etc., is regulated by LSG decisions.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

The primary ministry competent for **targets 11.1** and **11.3** is the MCTI, considering that it performs the tasks of state administration related to the regulation of housing and housing stock management. In this group of jobs, in addition to the MCTI, local PUCs play a significant role, such as, for example, PUC Stan (Novi Sad), or PUC Infostan (Belgrade). The scope of work of this ministry is very wide

and, as such, it can also serve as a hub, i.e. a platform, for communication between stakeholders, including other state bodies and the private and civil sector. In that sense, there are visible efforts that this ministry is making in terms of organisation of public hearings. In addition, as one of the larger ministries, whose scope (primarily construction of road and other infrastructure) is the focus of the

current government, this ministry seems to have an adequate number of employees.

The MCTI also has an impact on the achievement of **target 11.2** in terms of providing conditions for traffic safety, arrangement and safety of the technical and technological traffic system is part of the scope of work. In addition to the Ministry, other public bodies have an operational role in the implementation of regulations such as the Auto-Moto Association of Serbia, Roads of Serbia, etc.

The key stakeholders in the field of achievement of **target 11.4** are the Ministry of Culture and Information, to whom the protection of immovable, movable and intangible cultural heritage as an activity is prescribed by the Law on Ministries, as well as by the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. The ministry is one of the smallest in the government – only about 80 jobs per systematisation – although its scope is extremely broad, which implies that capacity may not be adequate.

**Target 11.5** is largely within the competence of the Public Investment Management Office, which co-ordinates reconstruction and improvement projects for public facilities, and which was established after this need was identified, after catastrophic floods that hit Serbia in 2014. This is a relatively new government body. However, it has shown in its work so far that it is able to deal with a wide range of tasks.

**Solidly established institutional and coordination mechanisms in the form of relevant ministries and other administrative bodies.**

**Target 11.6** is largely within the competence of the MEP, which is responsible for dealing with waste management, as well as SEPE. Like the Ministry of Culture, this is also one of the smaller ministries in terms of the number of employees and it may be necessary to expand in this regard in to more adequately cover the tasks arising from the Law on Ministries.

## Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**he SORS, as the central institution in charge of monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals and the

collection and processing of data about their achievement, monitors only 1 out of 10 targets and only 1 out of 15 indicators:

11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities (through the of municipal waste recycling rate and generated waste excluding mineral waste).

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

11.1	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.5	11.6	11.7	11.a	11.b	11.c

Potential alternative indicators from the Eurostat database for measurement purposes related to Goal 11 include the following indicators: population living in households considering that they suffer from noise; area of populated places in relation to the total number of inhabitants; people killed in road accidents; exposure to air pollution based on emissions of various matter (classified by type of matter); recycling rate of municipal waste; population living in a

Very poorly established measurement instruments for Sustainable Development Goal 11.

dwelling that does not have basic conditions: leaking roof, damp walls, floors; population that has access to water purification and number of reports on crime and/or violence, and vandalism in the area.

# Recommendations

1. Adopt a new National Strategy for Social Housing, whose planning period has expired.
2. Adopt a new road traffic strategy for the Republic of Serbia, whose planning period expired in 2020.
3. Adopt a new National Strategy for Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situation, i.e. link it more explicitly with the framework of sustainable development goals.
4. Adopt a new Waste Management Strategy 2019-2024 for which, to our knowledge, there is no information on the adoption plan.
5. Contribute to strengthening administrative and analytical capacities, especially within the MEP and SEPA.

6. Strengthen efforts to transform inadequate waste and improve activities in the field of waste collection, transport and separation, as well as a complete transition to the principles of circular economy, wherever possible.
7. Implement the Paris Agreement, according to the suggestions resulting from the Progress Report for Serbia prepared by the European Commission.
8. Make further efforts in the transition to the green economy and continue to increase the portion of renewable energy.
9. Improve the relevance of indicators for SDG 11 that are currently monitored within the set of SORS indicators of sustainable development.
10. Improve the monitoring framework for SDG 11, according to defined targets using indicators from Eurostat databases and other relevant organisations.

Goal 12:

# RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



## Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 12 is partially covered by national planning documents and the legislative framework. The institutional and coordination mechanism needs to be further defined and regulated, whereas mechanisms for monitoring progress need to be defined and further improved so that monitoring is applicable.

Goal 12 refers to responsible consumption and production, which implies that we manage our common natural resources with quality, in a manner that generates as little hazardous or non-hazardous waste as possible, and that we encourage recycling in the economy, as well as by consumers. The Republic of Serbia cultivates a more traditional linear way of production and it should be directed towards circular production, that is, towards sustainable use of resources and waste minimisation and elimination.







In 2019, the amount of deposited waste in Serbia increased by about 60 tons, compared to 2018. There are still large amounts of waste that are disposed of on unsanitary landfills. Slightly more than 2 million tons of waste were disposed of in 2019, out of which 14 thousand tons were hazardous waste. The amount of produced annual waste per capita in Serbia for 2019 is 11.3 kg/capita/year. The National Waste Management Strategy from 2003 and 2010 envisages closing down and reclamation of existing landfills and construction of 29 regional sanitary landfills with recyclable waste separation centres and transfer stations. A total of 11 sanitary landfills have been built so far. There is no controlled discharge of landfill gas generated by waste decomposition



at the landfill, which may cause fire or explosion. Landfill leachate is not collected or treated, which jeopardises groundwater and surface water and soil due to the high content of organic matter and heavy metals. There is no systematic monitoring of emissions, leachate, or landfill gas.

Industrial plants produce greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants into the air, water and soil, generate waste and they are a major energy and raw materials consumer. The largest emissions of pollutants into the air of the industrial sector in 2017 were emissions of NMVOC (non-methane volatile organic compounds) in the amount of 67.8 Gg. In 2018, the share of the industry in the production of non-hazardous waste was 1.3%, and in the production of hazardous waste 10.3%. The industry's sector on average participates with 28.6% in the final energy consumption.

# Public policy framework

**Table 13:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 12 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 12.1</b> Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries	
<b>Target 12.2</b> By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources	
<b>Target 12.3</b> By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses	
<b>Target 12.4</b> By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimise their adverse impacts on human health and the environment	
<b>Target 12.5</b> By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse	
<b>Target 12.6</b> Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 12.7</b> Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	
<b>Target 12.8</b> By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature	
<b>Target 12.a</b> Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production	
<b>Target 12.b</b> Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products	
<b>Target 12.c</b> Rationalise inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimising the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities	

**T**arget 12.1 is partially implemented within the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with projections until 2030. One of its strategic objectives is increasing energy production from renewable energy sources to reduce import dependence and increasing energy security. According to this Strategy, the current RES' share in gross final consumption is 20.1%. In the National Action Plan for the Use of Renewable Energy Sources, set mandatory national objectives are that RES share in the total gross final energy consumption in Serbia will amount to 27%, and RES' share in the gross final energy consumption in Serbia in transport will amount to 10% by 2020. This partially covers the aspects of target

12.1, which refer to sustainable production and consumption.

The main strategic document for the implementation of **target 12.2** is the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods. The Strategy defines sustainable development and three key prin-

Goal 12 is partially covered by national targets. Specific targets may be linked to specific national goals.

ciples for sustainable use and management of resources (renewable and non-renewable). The main strategic objectives may be directly related to target 12.2. This document contains

seven chapters that define a framework for sustainable use of key natural resources. The lack of plans and programmes for each of the resources, whose development is envisaged by the Strategy, prevents its adequate implementation and application.

**Target 12.3** determines which desired result should be achieved by 2030 with regard to food waste per capita at certain levels, as well as the need to reduce food losses in production and supply, including post-harvest losses. Although the National Rural Development Program 2018-2020 and the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2024 recognise the problem of obsolete machinery and incentive measures for their replacement, which in practice could lead to reduction in crop residues, the objectives in these documents are not set primarily to reduce food loss, but to prevent the loss of food quality and failure to meet European standards in production.

**Target 12.4** and **12.5** refer to the responsible chemicals and waste management and the intention to reduce waste production. It is not possible to monitor their implementation since the Waste Management Strategy, which would be an adequate strategic document, is being drafted.

There are no regulations in Serbia that oblige companies to introduce sustainable practices and integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycles. The implementation of **target 12.6** is based on the fact that companies decide whether they want to introduce good practice in line with their policies and operations.

Defining needs and benefits of complying public procurement with environmental protection standards is directly related to **target 12.7**. The Public Procurement Development Programme of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2023 sets as one of the objectives the promotion and encouragement of the environmental and social aspect of public procurement. The Programme requires execution of additional analysis and development of additional guidelines to increase the number of green public procurements.

**Target 12.8** needs to ensure that people have the necessary information and awareness of sustainable development. Implementation of this target is partially enabled through two strategic documents: The Strategy for Education Development in Serbia (SEDS) until 2020 and the Strategy for the Development of Adult Education in the Republic of Serbia. The education strategy strives towards directing formal and non-formal education towards the sustainable development goals and environmental protection. The main condition for resolving the inequality of region's development in the country is the need to raise awareness of the entire population, including education about environmental protection for the purpose of achieving sustainable development. Strategies for the development of adult education envisage education programmes for environmental protection and sustainable development. This programme would provide an understanding of the broad concept of sustainable development in the society. Both strategies state the need to raise awareness of sustainable development and environmental protection, and thus enable partial implementation of target 12.8. Despite that, none of them defines further ways to im-



plement the offered solutions and meet existing and future needs. It is also important to point out that these strategies cover only part of the RS population.

**Target 12.b** is partially covered by the following strategies: The Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 and the National Rural Development Programme for the period 2018-2020. The Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2025 sets sustainable economic, ecological and social development of tourism as one of its strategic objectives. The document contained in the guidelines for the promotion of tourism within protected areas states that it is necessary to direct all actors to the development of the necessary instruments for the creation and implementation of the concept of sustainable tourism in protected areas. Unfortunately, the strategy does not include the development and application of tools in other areas of tourism, whereas, even in the area in which it does so, the strategy does not define clear measures and activities towards achieving this objective as it only recognises the need. The National Rural Development Program for the period

2018-2020 defines a measure for the encouragement of improvement of economic activities in the countryside through support for of rural tourism, domestic handicrafts, traditional crafts and more. Target 12.b can be partially implemented through this document, that is, the part that refers to the promotion of local culture and domestic products. Even though specific objectives define more closely how and in which direction this measure should contribute to the development of non-agricultural activities, the document does not define the relationship between sustainable development and sustainable tourism.

Although Serbia still has no obligation to implement the objectives of EU directives related to comprehensive waste treatment, the gradual inclusion of these requirements and the establishment of an integrated waste management system is one of the priorities of the Serbian Government and all relevant strategic documents. The compliance of public policies in the field of waste management with the Waste Framework Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) is expected to be increased with the content of the National Waste Management Strategy, which is being prepared.

## Legal framework

**T**he Law on Environmental Protection can be correlated with **target 12.2** and **12.8**. This Law represents the manners in which **target 12.2** is implemented. The Law on Environmental Protection envisages the drafting of a National Strategy for the

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods, which should ensure sustainable use and protection of natural values. Creating plans and programmes and reporting on their implementation can enable sustainable use of natural resources, which is covered by target

12.2. If by inspection of the submitted reports it is determined that the use of goods and resources disturbs the balance of ecosystems, the Government may, at the proposal of the Ministry, temporarily limit the volume of their use. With this power, the competent authorities may directly influence the efficient use of resources. Article 90 of the Law on Environmental Protection partially covers **target 12.8** in the field of raising awareness about sustainable development and environmental protection. This article of the Law envisages the establishment of the Green Fund and sets a set of 24 activities. Funds from this Fund may be used for financing programmes for environmental education and raising public awareness about environmental protection and sustainable development issues that are envisaged as part of a set of activities.

agement, Article 8 defines that all persons handling chemicals must adhere to measures to prevent any negative impact of chemicals on human health and the environment. The Law envisages that, if there is a possibility of replacing the chemical with a safer alternative, and this may be done in accordance with the socio-economic and technical reasons, it should be done. Thus, this Law covers most of the tasks to be executed within target 12.4. Article 58 of the Law on Waste Management

The existing legal framework of the Republic of Serbia regulates only some areas covered by the targets of Goal 12, which is why we estimate that the legal framework for Goal 12 has been partially established. There is a need to further improve regulations in compliance with this Goal.

Article 5 of the Law on Standardisation prescribes the objectives of standardisation of the Republic of Serbia, the most related objective to this topic is 1) improvement of the protection of life, health and safety of humans, animals and plants, as well as environment protection, 2) raising the quality of products, processes and services, partly matches **target 12.6**.

The legal framework that refers to **target 12.4** consists of: The Law on Chemicals, the Law on Waste Management and the Rulebook on the contents, manner of keeping and appearance of the Register of issued waste management permits. The Law on Chemicals does not fully cover the responsible management of chemicals envisaged by target 12.4. Within the chapter on integrated chemicals man-

defines that the materials used for packaging should be designed and produced in a manner that, during their life cycle, they meet requirements related to environmental protection. The article of the Law set up in this manner regulates responsible waste management, which is envisaged by target 12.4. With regard to the reduction of negative effects of waste management, the Law stipulates that waste management should be performed in a manner which ensures the lowest risk in terms of endangerment of human life and health and environment. It is necessary to further develop and harmonise domestic legislation with EU regulations, especially with new regulations in this field. Strengthening enforcement capacity is also necessary. The Rulebook on the contents, manner of keeping and appearance

of the Register of issued waste management permits prescribes the content, manner of keeping and appearance of the register of issued waste management permits. The Rulebook defines what types of permits are issued and the content of the permit in order to be valid. This Rulebook enables adequate keeping of records of issued permits, which may partially apply to target 12.4. to the part referring to waste management. The Rulebook on the form of daily records and annual report on waste management with instructions for their population defines all forms to be populated by waste producers, operators, waste exporters and waste importers. These data are sent to the Environmental Protection Agency by 31 March of the current year for the previous year. Based on these data, the SEPA creates an annual Waste Report.

The principle of hierarchy defined by the Law on Waste Management establishes the legislative framework for the implementation of **target 12.5**, which covers all aspects of the target. The Rulebook on the list of waste prevention measures prescribes a list of waste prevention measures and thus enables application of target 12.5 in the part referring to the waste production reduction through prevention. The Regulation on determining packaging waste reduction plan for the period 2020-2024 envisages the reduction plan that introduces general objectives for the reuse and recycling of packaging waste and specific targets for the recycling of packaging waste. Target percentages are presented by years.

The Law on Public Procurement and the Rulebook on Minimum Criteria for Energy Efficiency in the Procedure for Public

Procurement of Goods may be viewed through the existing legislative framework for **target 12.7**. by defining that economic entities, when executing public procurement contracts, must comply with obligations concerning environmental protection, labour and social law, and during the implementation of collective agreements, they are obliged to adhere to the provisions of international law in the field of environmental protection. In this manner, the general provisions of this Law promote the implementation of sustainable public procurement. The Rulebook on Minimum Criteria for Energy Efficiency in the Procedure for Public Procurement of Goods prescribes minimum energy efficiency criteria that contracting authorities determine in the public procurement procedure. The Rulebook also defines which procurements apply and what is exempt from the minimum criteria.

The following laws are relevant for the implementation of **target 12.8**: The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System, the Law on Secondary Education and the Law on Associations. The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System defines as one of its objectives: "Raising awareness about the importance of sustainable development, protection and preservation of nature and environment, ecology related ethics, and the importance of animal protection." The Law on Secondary Education states the environmental protection programme as the content of the curriculum. The programme includes activities aimed at raising awareness about environmental protection and sustainability. Target 12.8 also refers to one by-law, the Rulebook on the curriculum for the first grade of high school. The Rulebook, as one of the

elective subjects, list the subject Education for Sustainable Development. The objective of this subject is defined, as well as topics and advantages that the student will obtain after attending this subject. The above-mentioned laws on education and the Rulebook cover only a certain part of the population, thus, application of target 12.8. is limited. Article 38 of the Law on Associations defines which programmes may be considered to be programmes of public interest, and they include environmental protection and sustainable development. Funds, or part of funds for the

implementation of such programmes, are provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. Through this Law, the application of target 12.8. may be recognised.

**Target 12.b** may be partially implemented through the Law on Tourism. Referring to the principles 2 and 3 of Article 2 of the Law on Tourism, we may conclude that it recognises sustainable development of tourism and its definition, as well as the need to increase efficiency and responsibility. However, it does not define tools and manners to achieve all this.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

Considering the complexity of this target, the overlap of two or more ministries is not a coincidence. Unfortunately, the planning documents do not define well enough how the competencies between the ministry and other government bodies will be regulated. In compliance with target 12.2, implementation of the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Natural Resources is the responsibility of the MEP, together with other ministries in charge of individual natural resources and goods. In this regard, the competent ministries may be: The Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management; the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development; the SEPA as an organisational unit within the MEP.

The coordination body in charge of implementation of the Public Procurement Development Programme in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2023 is the Public Procurement

**It is necessary to define and improve cooperation between institutions more clearly, as well as strengthen capacities for the implementation of regulations.**

Directorate. Measures for the achievement of Programme objectives are implemented in cooperation with the competent institutions. It is necessary to develop and strengthen institutional capacities in certain fields that refer to Goal 12. Capacity need to be strengthened at all levels, both administrative and professional.

# Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

Some of the analysed strategies that may refer to SDG 12 define their own indicators that may be indirectly used for monitoring the achievement of Goal 12. Most documents state the need to create mechanisms that would enable proper monitoring of progress. The National Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods defines its own indicators and proposes a list of relevant indicators in certain areas. Some indicators may be used for monitoring **target 12.2**. The programme for the implementation of the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia sets the following as measurable indicators: RES' share in total gross final energy consumption, RES' share in gross final energy consumption in the Republic of Serbia in traffic, total projected net reduction of greenhouse gas emissions using RES, projected net greenhouse gas emission reduction using RES in traffic. The institutions responsible for monitoring the progress of these indicators are the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and the SORS, and the data are available on the SORS' website. They are collected on an annual basis. These indicators enable partial monitoring of the implementation of **target 12.1**.

The implementation of **target 12.7** may be monitored through the indicator "number of

conducted public procurements" with the application of environmental criteria. This indicator is defined by the Action Plan of the Public Procurement Development Programme for the period 2019-2020. Since 2019 is the initial year of Programme implementation, there are no initial values, and the target value of this indicator for 2020 is projected to be 1.

Several planning documents define objectives related to sustainable tourism. However, none of them defines development and implemen-

**Existing mechanisms need to be improved to allow more adequate monitoring of progress in the achievement of Goal 12.**

tation of tools for monitoring implementation of the target well enough. On the other hand, the National Rural Development Programme provides a number of indicators that can monitor its implementation and may be partially linked to **target 12.b**, and the Sector for Rural Development of the MAFWM and the Directorate for Agrarian Payments are responsible for monitoring progress of set indicators. The Programme for the Implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, as one of the indicators, defines tourist capacities

in rural households, so this indicator may be used to partially monitor target 12.b.

The SORS calculates and monitors only one global indicator concerning SDG 12. It is monitored through two aspects: domestic material consumption and resource productivity, monitored under **target 12.2**.

The SORS collects and calculates the Goal 12 indicator through the data collected through the *Generated Waste* form, which is populated by waste generators for all types of waste, except for mineral waste, which is part of the EU Sustainable Development Indicators set and is used for monitoring progress of Goal 12 in terms of ensuring solid consumption and production patterns.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.6	12.7	12.8	12.a	12.b	12.c

The indicators in the Eurostat database related to Goal 12 are the *circular material use rate* whose data are available and collected on an annual basis, and their initial value from 2008 is defined at 114,452 (thousand tons). Also, the indicator *consumption of hazardous and non-hazardous chemicals*, which measures the volume of total consumption of hazardous chemicals, is expressed in millions of tons. Then indicator *CO2 emissions from new passenger cars* is defined as average carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per kilometre from new passenger cars during a relevant year, where reported emissions are based on homology and may deviate from actual CO2 in new cars. The next indicator *value added in environmental goods and services sector* is defined as part of the country's economy dealing with the production of goods and

services used in environmental protection activities and resource management either in the country or abroad. The last indicator from the Eurostat database is *generation of waste excluding major mineral wastes*, and it is defined as total waste produced in the country, with the exception of large mineral waste, excavation and contaminated soil.

The database of the Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network contains available data on the following indicators: *municipal solid waste (kg/capita/day)*, *electronic waste (kg/capita)*, *SO2 emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)*, *production-based on nitrogen emissions (kg/capita)*, *nitrogen emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)*, *production-based SO2 emissions (kg/capita)*.

# Recommendations

1. Develop a new Sustainable Development Strategy and accompanying action plan with developed indicators that are uniform, relevant and harmonised with UN and EU indicators to ensure the achievement of **target 12.1**. Involve representatives of the civil sector in the working group for the development of this Strategy
2. Revise the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods, as the main strategic document for the implementation of **target 12.2**, in a manner that includes a circular economy, green public procurement and energy efficiency.
3. The new Waste Management Strategy should recognise the need to create a composting island to respond to **target 12.3**.
4. Introduce the circular economy principle into relevant strategic documents and regulations at the national level, in accordance with the EU economic policy in which the circular economy is recognised as one of the key mechanisms for developing economic growth and increasing human well-being, and preventing excessive consumption of non-renewable natural resources.
5. Establish a system for monitoring hazardous chemicals and replacing the use of hazardous chemicals with less hazardous ones. Establish local registers of pollution sources with legal obligations to collect data.
6. In addition to the new Waste Management Strategy, develop an action plan for municipal waste management and a waste management prevention plan to adequately respond to **target 12.6**.
7. Develop tools and indicators for monitoring sustainable tourism that are necessary for the implementation of **target 12.b**.





Goal 13:

# CLIMATE ACTION



## Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Average yearly temperatures for the territory of the Republic of Serbia in the period 1998-2017 increased on average between 0.5 and 1.5°C in relation to the average mean yearly temperatures in the period 1961-1990. Since the beginning of temperature measurement in Serbia, the ten warmest years occurred after 2000. Those were years 2018 and 2019, which were, on average, the warmest years since temperatures were systematically measured and recorded in Serbia. In addition to the increase in mean yearly temperatures, Serbia is facing a change in the precipitation regime and more frequent long dry periods interrupted by intense precipitation. Such changed climatic conditions affect biodiversity, food production, as well as the habits of people living in Serbia and cause social and economic damage.

There is no country in the world that is not affected by global climate change. Global greenhouse gas emissions are on the rise and today, they are 50% higher than in 1990. Global warming is the cause of long-term changes in the climate system, which may lead to irreversible impacts, if we do not take immediate actions.

# Public policy framework

**Table 14:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 13 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 13.1</b> Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.	✗
<b>Target 13.2</b> Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.	✓
<b>Target 13.3</b> Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	✓
<b>Target 13.a</b> Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilising jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalise the Green Climate Fund through its capitalisation as soon as possible.	✗
<b>Target 13.b</b> Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalised communities	○

The main strategic document that would enable achievement of Goal 13 in Serbia is the Low Carbon Development Strategy and the proposal for this document was created through the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) project "Climate Change Strategy". However, the Strategy has not been adopted to this day. The Low Carbon Development Strategy should, together with the Action Plan, set the direction of development of the Republic of Serbia towards the low carbon and resource-efficient economy. In addition, the Strategy is the main instrument for the ful-

filment of Serbia's obligations under the Paris Agreement and other international obligations that Serbia assumed.

On the other hand, certain SDG 13 targets are covered by other strategic documents. Thus, climate change measures (**target 13.2**) are integrated into several public policy documents.

This target is partly covered by the Energy Sector Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia by 2025 with projections until 2030, where the section about transition to sustain-

able energy indicates that the implementation of energy efficiency measures, the use of renewable energy sources, environmental protection and reduced impact on climate change are the key elements of transition to sustainable energy development in Serbia. For this reason, it is necessary to analyse climate change impacts on the energy sector in Serbia and adopt adequate adaptation plans.

The ISP lists the following measures for the improvement of environmental protection and reduction of impact on climate change in natural gas production, transport and distribution:

- » Improving efficiency of oil and natural gas production – by introducing more efficient technologies and optimising oil and natural gas production
- » Improved prognostic assessment methods and socio-economic analysis of multiple risks;
- » Maintenance and rehabilitation of the transmission system, including compressor station revitalisation – by performing diagnostics of the existing transport infrastructure condition, replacement of critical sections and investment maintenance of equipment and installations
- » Assessments of risks related to decision-making processes at the national and local level;
- » Maintenance and rehabilitation of the distribution system – by performing diagnostics of the existing distribution infrastructure condition, replacement of critical sections and investment maintenance of equipment and installations.
- » Developed urban and technical construction conditions that ensure resilience of facilities to disasters based on the assessments of social, economic and environmental impacts;
- » Disaster risk assessments integrated into urban and spatial plans and management plans in disaster-prone settlements, especially in overcrowded areas and settlements with rapid urbanisation rate.

The National Strategy for Protection and Rescue in Emergency Situation recognises

global climate change and its contribution to environmental destruction, with detrimental effects on human health, survival of many natural species and cultural heritage, and envisages the following with its objectives:

Despite the adoption of umbrella international documents, Serbia still has not adopted strategic documents on the prevention and adaptation to climate change. Serbia still has not adopted a strategic document that would regulate the framework for combating climate change. Certain national objectives from the planning documents may be linked to Goal 13 targets.

Thus, **target 13.1** is covered by this strategic document, although it cannot be said that the public policy framework is harmonised with it.

The National Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods contains as objectives and partially covers **SDG targets 13.2 and 13.3**:

- » Preparation of a study on climate change impacts on forest ecosystems;
- » Preservation of forest habitats and their successive lines, which is important for the functional connection and adaptability of forests in conditions of practically continuous, climate change;
- » Incorporating the aspect of climate change into all long-term investments (especially in biological works such as reclamation of coppice and degraded forests and afforestation, primarily in the selection of types, techniques and technology of works).
- » As support to research and analysis of the possible scope and methods for carbon storage in forests, promote efficient utilisation of bio-energy from sustainably managed forests, in accordance with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and thus create conditions for applying for international funds to enlarge the areas under forests.

The Water Management Strategy on the territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034 states in the guidelines that water resources must be managed using the principle of sustainable development, that is, in a manner that the needs of current generations are met in a way

that does not jeopardise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. When managing water resources, account must be taken of adaptability not only to climate, but also to social, economic and other changes. This partially covers **SDG target 13.1**. Operational objective 3, set out in the Water Management Strategy, defines the development of national and regional projects, within which the following will be considered and determined:

- » Conditions for the sustainable use of groundwater, conditions for the survival of aquatic systems dependent on groundwater and effects of irrigation and drainage, as well as measures necessary for harmonising their mutual influences;
- » Impacts of climate change, especially on very sensitive groundwater resources in karst and fissure environments;
- » Characterise water resource for each water area in drought conditions and, by using historical data and climate change forecasts, develop a programme of measures for the prevention and mitigation of drought effects;
- » Establishment of an appropriate water management system;
- » Research related to defining the impact of climate change on the water regime of watercourses.

The National Environmental Approximation Strategy identifies the basic obligations in terms of transposition and implementation of EU legislation in the field of air quality and climate change, industrial pollution and noise, nature protection, chemicals and GMOs, water man-

agement and waste management. The most important regulation in the climate change sector is Directive (2009/29/EC) which improves and extends the gas emission allowance trading scheme. This regulation enabled development of the European market for greenhouse gas emissions for larger industries, thus ensuring reduction of emissions at the "lowest cost". This partially covers **target 13.2**.

**Target 13.3.** Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning, is partially covered by the following strategic documents: The National Youth Strategy for 2015-2025 and Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2018-2020, SEDS until 2020, Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020.

The National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025, through specific objective 5, defines the development of the responsibility of young women and men towards the preservation of the environment. Expected results and planned activities for the achievement of this objective are as follows:

- » Improved training programmes for youth, parents and teachers about the protection of the environment, sustainable development and climate change.
- » Improved information for youth, parents and teachers about the protection of the environment, sustainable development and climate change.

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period

2018-2020 defines activities, indicators and competent institutions for the implementation of the stated objectives.

The SEDS recognised the importance of environmental protection, climate change, as well as trends in the development of new technologies and engineering solutions necessary for sustainable development. However, this Strategy, as well as the Action Plan, do not define objectives related to climate change education.

The Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020, as well as the Programme for the Implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2020 set the following priorities:

- » Support to adaptation to changing climatic conditions, mitigation of impacts and risk prevention;
- » Establishment of the National Climate Forum for the purpose of educating and informing decision makers and the general public about the causes and effects of climate change;
- » Strengthening the capacity of operational, research and communication and information functions of the National Center for Climate Change, which executes the functions of the Subregional South East European Climate Change Center;
- » Establishment of a system for collecting information on applied and planned measures for adaptation to changed climate conditions, as well as other information relevant for combating climate change;

- » Implementation of programmes for multidisciplinary research of local climate change and impacts of climate change on agriculture, forestry, water management, energy, biodiversity and ecosystems, infrastructure and health of the population, as well as development of sectoral plans and programmes for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change;
- » Development of a climate monitoring system and databases of spatial data and information about local and regional climate change, including information on extreme climatic events and disasters, vulnerabilities of certain areas, risks of natural disasters related to observed and projected climate change, for purpose of using them in strategic planning and spatial development planning.

The Programme for the Implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2020 also envisages the development of plans and programmes for the rehabilitation of forest ecosystems endangered by risk factors due to climate change, which is related to **target 13.1**.

SDG **target 13.a** is not covered by any national objective and national planning documents do not envisage financing of the global Green Climate Fund.

## Legal framework

**T**he draft Law on Climate Change should lay the foundations for the harmonisation of the domestic legal framework with Goal 13, as well as with EU regulations in the field of climate change. Despite the fact that the Government's 2019 Work Plan contained announcement of the adoption of this Law, it has not been adopted yet, and Government's 2020 Work Plan does not envisage adoption of the Law on Climate Change.

The legal framework for Goal 13, as well as for some of its targets, has been partially established through the legal acts that will be listed in the following text.

The Law on Environmental Protection, as the umbrella law in the field of climate change, provides general guidelines that have an impact on target 13.1. The field of water protection is defined in Article 23 of this Law. Although the Law envisages integrated management to ensure water protection and utilisation, water management is not considered in terms of climate change. It envisages the use of funds from the Green Fund of the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the law, the national environmental protection

**The legal framework for Goal 13 has been partially established. The Law on Climate Change, as a key document for regulating this field, has not been adopted yet.**

programme and strategic documents, as well as with a list of priority infrastructure projects in the field of environmental protection, including reduction of the impact of climate change and taking adaptation measures.

The legal framework for **target 13.1** is regulated by the following legal acts:

In the field of protection against major chemical accidents the Law on Environmental Protection contributes to building resistance to the dangers caused by climate change and resistance to natural disasters by promoting and working on the improvement of the field of land use planning and adequate location. Also, regulations in this field provide the basis and define the obligation to develop accident protection plans (internal and external).

Avoidance, prevention and reduction of pollution that affects ozone depletion and climate change is one of the objectives of the Law on Air Protection. This Law also deals with greenhouse gas emissions as well as measures for monitoring emissions and removed greenhouse gases. The National Greenhouse Gas Inventory is being established for the purpose of achieving these measures.

The Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management prescribes the principle of the primary role of local communities: "Local self-government units have a primary role in disaster risk management and this role is supported by all competent state and provincial institutions".

The Law on Waters regulates the legal status of waters, integrated water management, management of water facilities and water land,

sources and manner of financing water activities, supervision over the implementation of this Law, as well as other issues important for water management. In terms of Goal 13, the Law defines that water management activity is performed in a manner that ensures sustainable water utilisation, protects and improves the aquatic and coastal ecosystem, reduces the adverse effects of floods and droughts and reduces harmful effects of global climate change. This Law requires that preliminary flood risk assessments, as well as assessment of potential adverse effects of future floods are conducted, taking into consideration long-term development plans and climate change in the assessment of impact on floods.

Every year, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopts the Regulation on Determining Water Management Programme, which defines the annual water management programme.

The Law on Land Protection regulates land protection, systematic monitoring of land condition and quality, rehabilitation measures, remediation, reclamation, inspection and other issues of importance for the protection and preservation of land as a natural resource of national interest. The objective of this Law is to preserve the areas and functions of land as a natural resource and to prevent or eliminate harmful changes in the land that may occur, *inter alia*, as a result of: erosion processes; soil compaction, landslides; fire. Despite not being mentioned in this Law, the consequences of climate change have a direct impact on land protection and, in this sense, this Law is relevant.

The Law on Forests provides conditions for sustainable management of forests and forest land as a good of general interest in the manner and to the extent that their productive

capacity, biodiversity, regenerative capacity and vitality are permanently maintained and improved and their potential for climate change mitigation promoted, as well as their economic, ecological and social function, without harming the surrounding ecosystems.

**SDG target 13.2.** is covered by the following laws:

The Law on Ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, with annexes, ratifies the Convention which aims to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference in the climate system. Such a level should be achieved in a period of time that would allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, which would ensure that food production is not compromised and ensure further stable economic development. Adaptation measures for priority sectors were identified on the basis of a list of broader measures presented in the Second National Communication under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Identification of the most important

adaptation measures, with effects until 2030 and 2050, respectively, is based on the risk assessment methodology, with the application of the Adaptation Planning Framework.

The Law on Ratification of the Paris Agreement – with the adoption of this Law, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia ratified the Paris Agreement, that is, the global agreement for combating climate change. With this, Serbia committed itself to contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions on the global level in the future.

The National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis and the work plans of the Government of the Republic of Serbia envisage the adoption of ten acts (one law, five regulations, four rulebooks) which will harmonise Serbian legislation with the EU acquis in the field of climate change. None of the planned acts has been adopted yet.

Due to the fact that the legislative framework in the field of climate change is in the process of development, very limited progress has been made in the implementation of regulations in this field.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

According to the Law on Ministries, the MEP is responsible for the field of climate change (overall, horizontal competence). The MME and MAFWM have organisational units that deal with climate change, and in the case of the MME, this is stated in the Law

on Ministries. However, they do not have the overall competence like the MEP. The MESTD, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and their institutions are responsible for the implementation of certain activities related to the impact of climate change.



Competences related to climate change are often divided between two or more ministries, which often causes problems in the implementation of strategic and legal documents due to insufficient coordination.

The Ministry in charge of environmental protection is responsible for the implementation

Existing resources for the achievement of Goal 13 are inadequate and the Goal is not adequately recognised in public policies.

of international obligations assumed under the Law on Ratification of the Paris Agreement and the Law on Ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

# Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on implementation for the achievement of SDG

At present, Serbia has no established mechanisms for monitoring the progress of Goal 13. There is no data available in the SORS database, or on the portal for monitoring SDG indicators.

Progress monitoring mechanisms have not been established for Goal 13. Data are not available in the SORS database for any of the indicators used for progress monitoring.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

13.1	13.2	13.3	13.a	13.b

Target 13.a<sup>63</sup> may be monitored through a contribution to the international liability in the amount of USD 100 billion for climate-related costs. So far, Serbia has not contributed finan-

cially to the global Green Climate Fund. Two projects in Serbia were supported through the Green Climate Fund.

63 The Green Climate Fund is the world's largest dedicated fund that helps developing countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve their ability to respond to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010. Its main goal is to direct funding for combating climate change in developing countries.

In addition to the above stated, Eurostat offers five other relevant indicators for Serbia for monitoring the achievement of SDG 13:

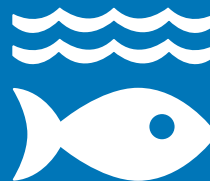
- » Greenhouse gas emissions – this indicator measures human-induced emissions, from so called "Kyoto basket" of greenhouse gases (GHG), which are integrated into a single indicator expressed in units of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents using each gas' individual global warming potential (GWP);
- » Greenhouse gas emissions intensity of energy consumption – the indicator is calculated as the ratio between energy-related GHG emissions and gross consumption of energy. It expresses how many tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents of energy-related GHGs are being emitted in a certain economy per unit of energy that is being consumed;
- » Mean near-surface temperature deviation – the indicator measures average near-surface temperature deviations globally and for Europe compared to the 1850-1899 average;
- » Climate related economic losses – this indicator shows the total financial losses due to weather and climate disasters;
- » Population covered by the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

## Recommendations

1. Adopt the Law on Climate Change;
2. Adopt the Low Carbon Development Strategy with the Action Plan;
3. The SORS should monitor and regularly publish indicators for SDG 13;
4. Revise all elements of legislation (laws, documents, bylaws, etc.) that are directly related to greenhouse gas emitters to include the climate change aspect;
5. Define and adjust the legal and institutional framework related to adaptation to climate change and integrate it into other sectors, primarily: water management, agriculture, urban planning, construction, infrastructure, forestry, nature protection and energy.

Goal 14:

# LIFE BELOW WATER



## Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development









Serbia, as a land locked continental country, has no developed policies that refer to the protection of the sea and oceans. Although it ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea in 2001, in practice Serbia does not recognise the rights and obligations resulting from this Convention, thus, it is not mentioned in any planning or strategic document.



However, the UN methodology for monitoring Goal 14 clearly indicates that certain targets are also applicable in continental countries because a significant amount of marine pollution originates from the continental part and later enters the sea from rivers. Most of wastewater in Serbia is not treated. It is released directly into watercourses. It is estimated that the percentage of the wastewater treated in some way is below 10%. Therefore, it may be said that the proportion of pollution originating from the territory of Serbia in the total pollution of the Black Sea basin is not negligible.

Also, a certain number of migratory fish species depend on river ecosystems. Such species are fish from the sturgeon family *Accipenseridae*, whose populations are highly endangered in the Danube basin. The condition of the populations of these species in Serbia is extremely unfavourable and the most pronounced threatening factors are habitat disturbance and pollution and overfishing. After the construction of the Đerdap I and II hydropower plants, which are an insurmountable obstacle for these species, migratory sturgeons may be found in Serbia only in a short section of the Danube, downstream from the Đerdap II hydropower plant.

# Public policy framework

**Table 15:** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 14 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.	
<b>Target 14.2</b> By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive ocean.	
<b>Target 14.3</b> Minimise and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.	
<b>Target 14.4</b> By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.	
<b>Target 14.5</b> By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.	
<b>Target 14.6</b> By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognising that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organisation fisheries subsidies negotiation.	
<b>Target 14.7</b> By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.	
<b>Target 14.a</b> Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.	

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 14.b</b> Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.	
<b>Target 14.c</b> Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of "The Future We Want"	

Existing public policies in Serbia have not recognised the importance of marine conservation, that is, they have not directly recognised potential contributions of Serbia to the achievement of this Goal. Some of the public policies in the field of the environment indirectly, without an explicit connection with marine conservation, contribute to the achievement of Goal 14. This primarily refers to the field of water protection and pollution reduction, which contributes to the achievement of **target 14.1**.

The main strategic document in this field is the Water Management Strategy on the territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034. One of the strategic objectives of this Strategy that is compatible with target 14.1 is: achieving and maintaining good status and good ecological potential of surface water bodies. This strategic objective contains several operational objectives that are relevant for pollution reduction and target 14.1:

- » Prevention of surface and groundwater pollution
- » Reduction of pollution input from diffuse sources of pollution

- » Reduction of pollution input from point sources of pollution
- » Management in the field of water protection – water monitoring.

The strategic objective, that is, the good status of water bodies is, according to the Strategy, envisaged to be achieved within 15 years from

**Sustainable Development Goal 14 is not directly covered by any of the objectives stated in national planning documents. Certain national objectives may be linked to Goal 14 targets.**

the adoption of the EU WFD. The action plan for this Strategy that would specify measures and ensure effective implementation has not been drafted yet.

The water pollution issue is also addressed in the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020 and in the corresponding Programme for the Implementation of the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2016-2020. The main objective of the Spatial Plan and the Implementation Programme

is the sustainable use of natural resources and protection and improvement of the environment, and the operational objective is the preservation of natural resources. Strategic priorities set by the Implementation Programme, which refer to water pollution reduction, are:

- » Rehabilitation and remediation of black spots (Veliki Bački Kanal);
- » Improvement of surface and groundwater quality and development of a basin management plan;
- » Water and sediment quality monitoring.

The National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods sets the sustainable and integrated use of water resources as a general objective, in accordance with environmental requirements, as well as a number of specific measures that should enable the achievement of good status of surface and groundwater.

Relevant environmental strategic and planning documents (Environmental Protection Programme, Nature Protection Programme) are being drafted, thus they could not be analysed in relation to SDG 14. Also, the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the Water Pollution Prevention Plan are missing relevant planning documents. Both plans are envisaged by the Law on Waters.

It may be said that target 14.1 is partially covered by strategic documents in Serbia. This primarily refers to nutrient pollution, whereas the area of plastic waste pollution is currently uncovered (the Waste Management Strategy, which should

cover this field, is being drafted). It should be noted that the contribution to Goal 14 largely coincides with the contribution to Goal 6, considering that Serbia is a continental country.

**Targets 14.4 and 14.6** are applicable in Serbia in terms of protection and conservation of sturgeon migratory species. These fish species migrate between the sea and freshwater habitats (rivers) and in that sense their conservation depends on protection measures in continental areas. The National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods also sets the objective of creating sustainable use of fish resources in the fishing waters of Serbia, fully complying with environmental and socio-economic principles, which supports target 14.4. Sturgeon migratory fish species that inhabit the territory of Serbia (spawning in the Danube and other major watercourses) are covered by these strategic documents. Some of the specific objectives set in this Strategy directly contribute to the achievement of target 14.4, which are as follows:

- » Projecting the intensity and manner of using fish stocks in accordance with the principle of sustainability;
- » Combating poaching to the limit of 10% below total fishing production.

Certain specific objectives indirectly contribute to target 14.6, as they strengthen the capacities of users of fishing areas and develop mechanisms for the objective assessment of sustainability of fisheries management, thus supporting the responsible and sustainable use of fish resources and minimising the space for encouraging illegal and unsustainable fishing practices. Those objectives are as follows:

- » Conducting evaluation of fisheries programmes;
- » Assessment of sustainability of fishing in fishing areas;
- » Determining performance indicators for fisheries management.

There are no specific strategies for the management and protection of fish stocks. Several years ago, Serbia announced the development of an Action Plan for the protection of sturgeon species, however, it has not been adopted yet.

Targets 14.4 and 14.6 are partially covered by the national strategic framework. One of

the major shortcomings is the lack of a clear strategic and legal framework for monitoring fish catches. Sturgeon species that are also the subject of targets 14.4 and 14.6 are currently strictly protected in Serbia and completely excluded from recreational and commercial fishing.

Serbia ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and has legal grounds for participating in the application of international law for the conservation of the oceans and their resources. In this sense, **target 14.c** may be applicable in Serbia. However, no planning document mentions this Convention and Serbia does not have a strategic framework currently that is contributing to this target.

## Legal framework

The main legal document that regulates water pollution protection is the Law on Environmental Protection. The Law on Environmental Protection introduces the principle of integrated water management, which includes water conservation measures. This Law envisages the adoption and mandatory implementation of action plans for the gradual achievement of emission limit values for pollutants in water, for all legal entities that emit pollution. The Law also lays the foundation for monitoring water quality and for taking water purification measures. The Law on Waters regulates the entire field of water management and provides a detailed description of regulation of the field of water protection.

The legal framework for Goal 14 was partially established with the legal framework for water protection and conservation of fish resources. Although the legal framework for water protection is to a great extent harmonised with EU regulations, there are still some provisions missing that refer to the specific forms of pollution which are specifically considered under target 14.1.

The legal framework for water management in Serbia is in the process of harmonisation with EU legislation in this field. Most EU legislation related to water protection has been transposed, however, a certain level of harmonisation with the WFD and other relevant documents is still required. Goal 14 implies

consideration of wider, transnational effects of water pollution and, as such, it is not specifically elaborated within the regulatory framework for water pollution in the Republic of Serbia,

According to the Regulation on Limit Values for Pollutants in Surface and Groundwaters and Sediments and the Deadlines for Their Reaching in Serbia, limit values were determined for the following nutrients: total nitrogen, nitrates, nitrites, ammonium ion, non-ionised ammonia, total phosphorus, orthophosphates. The Regulation does not set limit values for chlorophyll and silicon dioxide, which, according to the UN methodology, are envisaged as indicators for target 14.1. It should be noted that SEPA measures concentrations of chlorophyll and silicon dioxide during regular monitoring of water status.

One of the specific indicators for monitoring the implementation of target 14.1 at the global level is the quantity of plastic waste and plastic residues in water. Plastic waste in the sea mainly comes from inland parts, thus the plastic waste that is generated on the territory of Serbia and

further transported by rivers definitely contributes to pollution in marine ecosystems. Plastic waste management is insufficiently regulated by the current legal framework and the issue of waste disposal and concentration in rivers is not treated specifically by any legal act. Monitoring of microplastics pollution in water is not regulated.

The legal framework for the protection and conservation of fish populations in Serbia, including migratory sturgeons which, at a certain stage of their life, also make part of the marine fauna, are part of the Law on Nature Protection. The Law on Nature Protection prescribes basic measures for the protection of species and their habitats. The Law on Sustainable Use of Fish Stock prescribes protection of fish populations and manners and mechanisms of their sustainable use (fishing).

In addition to these acts, there are legal acts that regulate international trade in wild species, including sturgeons (legal acts implementing the CITES Convention – Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

Regarding target 14.1 and the water pollution issue, the competent ministries are the MAFWM and MEP. Water protection competencies are divided between the two ministries, which often creates problems in the implementation of strategic and legal documents. Water protection is considered one of the most complex fields

to be regulated in the EU accession process. It is demanding both in terms of institutional capacities and in terms of financial capacities. The

**Existing resources for the achievement of this Goal are inadequate and it has not been adequately recognised in public policies.**



estimates provided in the Water Management Strategy show that there is a significant lack of capacities and that the programming period requires double number of total engineering capacities to achieve the envisaged objectives. SEPA is a key institution responsible for monitoring water status. Water monitoring has not been fully established yet (coverage of measuring points), however, it is gradually improving. SEPA publishes an annual Water Quality Report.

Plastic waste management falls under the competence of the MEP. The companies and organisations managing hydropower systems and dams, where a large amount of this waste is retained, play a significant role in floating solid waste management. Cooperation and coordination of competent institutions in plastic waste management is not clearly formulated in strategic and legal documents. Although the companies managing dams have a potentially significant role to play in managing floating plastic waste, their method and schedule of plastic waste disposal is not clear.

Fish population management falls primarily under the competence of the MEP. Relevant institutions are also institutes for nature conservation, which are responsible for monitoring the

state of natural populations of wild species and prescribing measures for their protection by defining conditions for nature protection. Important entities in the protection and management of fish resources are also users of fishing areas, who are entrusted with fisheries management. Capacities for efficient implementation of sustainable use of fish stocks are insufficient both in terms of administrative body capacities and in terms of competent inspections and fisheries services that conduct on-site control.

Inclusion of Serbia in the international legal processes of ocean protection is in no way envisaged by the strategic and planning documents, thus, the competencies are also unclear. Certainly, part of the competence for this topic should fall under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Involvement of stakeholders in water management and protection decision-making is gradually improving, although it is still mainly limited to public institutions and professional or scientific organisations. Participation of civil society organisations and the general public remains low. Involvement of stakeholders in the field of management and use of fish resources is poor and limited to consultations within the narrow circle of institutions dealing with this topic.

## Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on the implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**here are no mechanisms currently established in Serbia for the targeted monitor-

ing of progress for the achievement of Goal 14, and there are no data in the SORS database

for the indicators related to this Goal. There are certain capacities and data collected for **target 14.1** during the regular monitoring of water status conducted by SEPA.

Developed indicators within Goal 6, which refer to water quality, are: proportion of wastewater safely treated and proportion of water bodies that have good ambient water quality. These indicators are partially applicable to target 14.1, however,

Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting have not been established for Goal 14. There are no data in the SORS database for any of the indicators that could be used for monitoring.

specific indicators recommended by the UN methodology for this target (concentrations of nutrients, chlorophyll, microplastics and large plastic waste) should be developed.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

14.1	14.2	14.3	14.4	14.5	14.6	14.7	14.a	14.b	14.c

Mechanisms for monitoring progress in terms of protection and conservation of fish resources are poorly developed. The issue is that the collection of data on the quantity of fish caught is not clearly defined by law and there is no objective and usable information on these quantities.

» Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports per million population (*Bertelsmann Stiftung & Sustainable Development Solutions Network Database*) – data for this indicator are available for Serbia and are already presented in the report Sachs et al (2020).

Other relevant indicators are:

» Estimated trends in fish stock biomass (*Eurostat*) – only data related to migratory sturgeon populations would be relevant for this indicator. Currently these data are not available in Serbia.

# Recommendations

1. Strengthening the capacity of institutions for monitoring and engaging in international ocean protection initiatives through the Convention on the Law of the Sea.
2. Improve the legal framework in the field of water protection against pollution and waste management to enable implementation of target 14.1, especially in terms of plastic waste pollution in water;
3. Improve the strategic and legal framework for the protection and use of fish stocks in order to achieve effective protection of migratory fish species;
4. Strengthen international cooperation related to the protection of fish resources.



Goal 15:

# LIFE ON LAND



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

Protection of ecosystems and natural resources in Serbia is implemented through several sectoral policies. In addition to the environmental protection sector, forestry, water management, agriculture, energy, transport and spatial planning sectors are particularly significant for the protection of ecosystems. Serbia ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2002 as the central international treaty for the protection of biodiversity and nature. The transposition of European legislation in the field of nature protection began in 2009 with the adoption of the Law on Nature Protection and, the following year, the Law on Forests and the Law on Waters, which provide a basis for harmonisation with the EU acquis in the field of natural resources.




Less than 8% of the territory in Serbia is currently protected, which is significantly below the global average (15%). The forest area currently covers 31% of the territory, whereas the European

average is around 46%. Apart from the forest area, their condition is also unfavourable as only about 29% make tall and preserved forests. The percentage of degraded land area in Serbia is estimated at 6.5%.

## Public policy framework

**Table 16** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 15 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 15.1</b> By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.	✓
<b>Target 15.2</b> By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.	✗
<b>Target 15.3</b> By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.	✗
<b>Target 15.4</b> By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.	✗
<b>Target 15.5</b> Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.	✓
<b>Target 15.6</b> Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed.	✗
<b>Target 15.7</b> Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.	✗
<b>Target 15.8</b> By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.	✗
<b>Target 15.9</b> By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts.	✗

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 15.a</b> Mobilise and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.	
<b>Target 15.b</b> Mobilise significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.	
<b>Target 15.c</b> Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.	

Some of key strategic documents (e.g., Forestry Development Programme, Nature Protection Programme) for the achievement of Goal 15 are being drafted and may not be analysed. On the other hand, the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods, which should be one of the key strategic documents for the achievement of Goal 15, is inapplicable as no action plan has been drafted for it, thus, there are no basic assumptions for its implementation.

The coverage of individual Goal 15 targets with existing strategic documents in Serbia may be summarised in the following manner:

**Target 15.1.** – This target is integrated in several strategic documents, the most important being the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010–2020. The main strategic document for target 15.1 should be the nature protection strate-

gy or programme, which is currently being drafted. Increasing the surface of protected areas was set as a clear objective in national policies with a quantitative indicator – 12% of the territory by 2020. The objective is less ambitious than Aichi Target 11 (Convention on

**Sustainable Development Goal 15 is partially covered by several sectoral policies whose national objectives directly refer to the Goal targets. However, Serbia does not have key strategic documents for the protection of biodiversity, that is, a planning document for nature protection, or a strategic document regulating forest development and management.**

Biological Diversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020), which amounts to 17% of protected terrestrial areas. The shortcomings of the strategic framework that should be addressed in the following period refer to the clearer setting of objectives for ecological network development (including the European Ecological Network in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive

and the Emerald Network in accordance with the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) and habitat restoration.

**Target 15.2** – A new Forestry Development Programme that should strategically cover this target is being drafted. Sustainable use of forests is covered by the national objectives in the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020. There is also a quantitatively defined national indicator which refers to forest area increase (2000 ha/year). The socio-economic aspect of forestry and its importance for the rural population is recognised in strategic documents and the objectives emphasise the need to use all forest functions. There are certain shortcomings in terms of harmonisation of the forestry and nature protection sectors. Therefore, future strategic documents should formulate a coherent definition of sustainable forestry.

**Target 15.3** – Serbia submitted objectives related to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)<sup>1</sup> in 2020 as part of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation (UNCCD). These objectives are harmonised with target 15.3. The National Programme for Combating Land Degradation and Drought of the Republic of Serbia is being drafted. The land degradation issue is covered by several strategic documents (the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2010-2020, the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2024, the Water Management Strategy of the Republic of

Serbia until 2034). There are not set quantitative national indicators for this target. Additionally, it is evident that there is a need for better cross-sectoral coordination on the harmonisation and creation of more specific land protection policies. Although the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development envisages an objective for land degradation prevention, this Strategy also emphasises the importance of increased land use, which may lead to certain conflicts with forestry development and nature protection policies.

**Target 15.4** – The importance of mountain area preservation is recognised in the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia, but not in other documents. The objectives and measures envisaged in the Spatial Plan are mainly focused on the construction of infrastructure, tourist capacities and economic development of mountain areas. Such objectives are not in line with target 15.4 as the need to protect and preserve natural resources in mountain areas is significantly neglected. Also, these objectives are not fully in line with the framework for EU accession, especially in the part referring to the development of the European ecological network Natura 2000. This target requires improvement and creation of more specific objectives of national policies in the field of nature protection and forestry.

**Target 15.5** – This target is currently covered by the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2014-2024 and the Water Management Strategy on the territory of the Republic of Serbia until 2034, although the key document for this topic is being drafted (the Nature Protection Strategy or Programme). The



National Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources sets a large number of objectives that refer to this target, however, they are not quantified in terms of target 15.5. There are no major inconsistencies between sectoral policies. However, better policy development coordination and cooperation is required in the water, forestry, nature protection and other sectors that affect natural resources. Agri-environmental measures and protection of agricultural areas of high natural value are integrated into the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, which is in line with EU agricultural policies.

**Target 15.6.** – Serbia recently ratified the Nagoya Protocol, which created preconditions for a more specific development of policies related to the fair distribution of genetic resources. This topic is only elaborated in the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, thus target 15.6 elements are not elaborated in national strategic documents.

**Targets 15.7 and 15.c** – The field of prevention of illegal trade in wild species is elaborated in the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources without specific, quantitative indicators. The Strategy sets objectives and measures for the prevention of illegal use and trade in species, whereas the measures and objectives referring to the market, or supply and demand of wild species (the second target element), are not provided. Public policies for this target should be additionally elaborated through strategic documents in the field of hunting and the Nature Protection Programme. The existing strategic documents do not contain objectives that would directly refer to target

15.c, or to support to local communities in the development of alternative sources of funding in order to prevent illegal activities related to wild species. Certain objectives of the Strategy, such as involvement of the local population in the development of sustainable tourism, may be indirectly linked to this target.

**Target 15.8.** – The National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources defines objectives and specific measures for the prevention and control of invasive species. The stated objectives and measures were not quantified and do not provide specific levels of prevention and control of invasive species that should be achieved. Prevention and control of invasive species is not integrated in the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development. The strategic framework for this target should be further developed through the Natural Environment Protection Strategy/Programme, as well as through strategic documents in the agricultural sector.

**Target 15.9** – Although the National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources sets an objective that refers to the development of mechanisms for the economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystems, it is evident that this field is poorly represented in strategic documents. It may be said that target 15.9 is only partially covered by national policies and relevant objectives were not quantified. Further elaboration and more specific description of this topic should be achieved through the Nature Protection Strategy/Programme and the Forestry Development Programme.

**Targets 15a, 15b** – That refer to increased funding of biodiversity and forest protec-

tion are covered by the National Strategy for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, which sets several objectives aimed at increased funding of biodiversity and forest protection. However, they are not quantified. Also, the Strategy for Agriculture

and Rural Development envisages subsidising biodiversity protection through agri-environmental measures. Both targets are only partially covered by national policies and there is no clear harmonisation between different sectoral policies.

## Legal framework

Similar to strategic documents, it may be said that there is a satisfactory legal framework for the achievement of Goal 15. The achievement of targets that directly refer to the protection of biodiversity and natural resources (**15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.5, 15.7, 15.c**) is generally well regulated and enabled through the sectoral laws dealing with nature, forests, wildlife, fish stocks, waters and land. The Law on Nature Protection and accompanying bylaws prescribe measures for the protection of species and habitats, the manner in which species are used and the framework for the establishment and management of protected areas. The Law on Forests prescribes conservation, planning and cultivation of forests and, considering that it introduces sustainable use as a basic principle, it significantly supports the achievement of **target 15.2**. Similarly, the Law on Wildlife and Hunting and the Law on Protection and Sustainable Use of Fish Stock support the achievement of **targets 15.5**, and **15.7**, with the introduction of sustainability-based measures. Water protection principles and measures prescribed by the Law on Waters directly contribute to the achievement of **targets 15.1, 15.3** and **15.5** (for aquatic habitats and organisms). The Law on Land Protection

The legal framework for the conservation of ecosystems and natural resources was partially created through several sectoral laws. The achievement of targets that directly refer to biodiversity protection is generally well regulated and enabled through sectoral laws. There is a need to improve the legal framework for the targets referring to the conservation of mountain ecosystems, equitable allocation of genetic resources, prevention and control of invasive species, ecosystem services and economic evaluation of ecosystems, as well as to directing funds to ecosystem and natural resources protection measures.

prescribes protection measures that directly contribute to the achievement of target 15.3, whereas in a broader sense, these measures also contribute to the achievement of targets 15.1, 15.2 and 15.5.

**Target 15.4** is not specifically regulated by laws because mountain areas are not specified as a priority for the application of protection measures.

**Target 15.6**, which refers to the fair allocation of genetic resources, is also not fully regulated

by national legislation. A legal basis for the use of genetic resources is set by the Law on Nature Protection, however, it does not fully enable the achievement of this target.

The prevention and control of invasive species (**target 15.8**) is regulated by the Law on Nature Protection. In this case, no provisions or bylaws enable the implementation of specific measures. The shortcoming is also insufficient regulation of issues addressed by this target within the legal framework for agriculture.

Ecosystem services and economic evaluation of ecosystems (**target 15.9**) are not regulated by any law. The Law on Nature Protection stipulates ecosystem services in the definitions,

however, there is no specific provision referring to them. The Law on Forests defines forest functions, which can be partially connected to ecosystem services, however, these legal provisions are insufficient in terms of this target.

Financial mechanisms necessary for the achievement of **targets 15a and 15b** are partially defined in the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Forests. These laws determine budget funds that should ensure adequate funding for environmental protection, including ecosystems and forests. There are no specific legal provisions or bylaws ensuring allocation of funds for ecosystems and natural resources protection measures in accordance with the targets.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG

**T**he achievement of Goal 15 mostly falls under the competence of the MEP. Practically all the targets have elements that fall under the competence of

this ministry and it has a leading role in the achievement of most of the targets. Institutes for nature conservation are also important for the achievement of the targets that refer to nature protection, especially targets **15.1, 15.5, 15.7** and **15.8**.

The MAFWM also plays a significant role in the achievement of Goal 15. This ministry is

Although Goal 15 was identified and integrated into sectoral policies, resources for the achievement of this Goal are insufficient.

responsible for the development and implementation of policies in the field of agriculture and agricultural land, forestry, hunting and water management. The Forestry Directorate assumes a significant part of competencies related to the achievement of targets **15.2, 15.3, 15.7, 15b, 15.c.**, the Republic Water Directorate assumes part of competencies related to the achievement of **targets 15.1, 15.3, 15.5, 15.9** in

the part referring to the protection and preservation of freshwater ecosystems and species. The Directorate for Agricultural Land has significant competencies related to the achievement of **target 15.3**, and the Directorate for Agrarian Payments has some competencies related to the achievement of **targets 15.4, 15.5** and 15.6.

The two ministries have legally determined cooperation mechanisms, which primarily refer to the joint adoption of bylaws. Examples of this are the bylaws concerning the protection of species (**targets 15.5, 15.7**). The ministries are legally obliged to cooperate in determining the minimum amount of water in natural habitats (**targets 15.1 and 15.5**), setting measures that ensure unhindered communication of wild animals (**target 15.5**), declaring invasive species (**target 15.7**) and determining gene bank methods (**target 15.6**). These ministries also jointly determine erosion maps and erosion areas (**target 15.3**).

Involvement of stakeholders in the development of strategic and legal documents is

reduced to minimum, as must as required by law. Ministries involve the public through public hearings and public inspections of proposed documents. Occasionally, CSOs are also involved in formal working groups for drafting documents. A small number of CSOs are actively involved in policy-making processes, primarily due to the lack of clear mechanisms for their involvement.

Available human resources in the field of nature, ecosystem and species protection are generally insufficient, especially when taking into consideration the complexity of this field and rather demanding Goal 15. Current MEP capacities are insufficient for the efficient achievement of Goal 15. The Ministry disposes with only few experts who are engaged in demanding and complex areas such as establishment and management of protected areas and establishment of the European ecological network Natura 2000.

Other ministries that have competences related to the achievement of Goal 15 also lack experts for ecosystem and species protection issues.

## Mechanisms for monitoring progress and reporting on the implementation for the achievement of SDG

**T**here is generally no precise framework for monitoring the implementation of measures in the strategic documents analysed in relation to Goal 15. The Spatial Plan of the

Republic of Serbia and the Implementation Programme provide a precise framework with defined competencies and time limits for monitoring indicators, including indicators

that refer to the protection of ecosystems (protected areas – target 15.1). The National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources sets a large number of indicators, however, it does not specify how they should be monitored, according to what schedule and under whose competence. In addition to the proposed indicators, the Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development also provides the source of information, unit of measure, base value and target value. The Water Management Strategy envisages the development of an action plan that will specify the implementation and mon-

Monitoring of achievement of Goal 15 is partially enabled with existing mechanisms. There are only a few indicators that are systematically monitored and directly related to Goal 15 targets. There are still no adequate mechanisms for monitoring a large number of targets, even though there are basic capacities and preconditions for collecting these data.

itoring of measures. However, the action plan has not been drafted yet. Certain indicators related to Goal 15 are defined in the Rulebook on the national list of indicators of environmental protection.

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

15.1	15.2	15.3	15.4	15.5	15.6	15.7	15.8	15.9	15.a	15.b	15.c

The national database for monitoring the achievement of sustainable development goals, managed by the SORS, contains indicators and data for only three targets: 15.1, 15a and 15b, and the same data are used as an indicator for targets 15a and 15b. The indicator monitored for target 15.1 is "Forest area as a proportion of total land area". The source of data for this indicator is the FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization. Data are available from year 2000 in periods of five years. The indicator "official development assistance and public expenditure on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems" is used for targets 15.a and 15.b. The source of data is the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development (OECD), and data are available from 2002 on an annual basis.

In terms of the remaining indicators envisaged by the UN methodology in Serbia, there are basic capacities for the application of the following indicators:

- » 15.1.2. – Important sites for the protection of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity covered by protected areas – SEPA and institutes for nature conservation dispose with the data,
- » 15.2.1. – Progress towards sustainable forest management – there are basic capacities and data that need to be further mobilised and processed,

- » 15.3.1 – *Proportion of degraded land* – SEPA monitors basic land indicators (organic carbon content, changes in land use). The Report on applied methodology and identification of objectives for achieving land degradation neutrality in the Republic of Serbia provides a methodology for determining indicator 15.3.1 and its value (6.47%).
- » 15.4.1 – *Coverage by protection areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity and 15.4.2. Mountain Green Cover Index* – SEPA and institutes for nature conservation dispose with data that could be used for the application of these indicators,
- » 15.5.1 – *Red List Index* – the creation of red books in Serbia was activated in the last few years, which created a basis for the application of this indicator,
- » 15.6.1. – *Number of countries that have adopted legal, administrative and political frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits* – conditions for the application of this indicator were created with the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol,
- » 15.7.1. and 15.c.1 – proportion of illegal trade in total trade in wild species – basic data exist in the MEP, however, it is necessary to improve the legal framework for recording and monitoring this trade.
- » 15.8.1 – *Proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species* – Serbia has not yet developed an adequate legal framework for the prevention and control of invasive species, although certain capacities for invasive species have been developed in the scientific sector,
- » 15.9.1. – (a) *Number of countries that set national objectives in line with Aichi Target 2 in their biodiversity protection strategies and (b) integration of biodiversity into national accounting and reporting mechanisms* – Serbia has not yet established a legal framework for the economic evaluation of ecosystems, and certain capacities in the competent institutions were created with the implementation of international projects.

In terms of the Eurostat database in Serbia, one indicator relevant to Goal 15 is monitored: the proportion of forest land. The following indicators are defined in the Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network database for monitoring the achievement of Goal 15 targets in Serbia:

- » Mean area that is protected in terrestrial sites important to biodiversity (similar to UN indicator 15.1.2),
- » Mean area that is protected in freshwater sites important to biodiversity (similar to UN indicator 15.1.2),
- » Permanent deforestation (% of total forest area, five-year average)
- » Red List Index (similar to the UN indicator 15.5.1).

The legal framework and administrative capacity in Serbia are insufficiently prepared for the application of the following indicators:

# Recommendations

1. It is necessary to ensure better cooperation and coordination of different sectors (nature protection, forestry, water management, energy, agriculture, transport, etc.) in drafting strategic documents concerning the protection and use of natural resources.
2. It is necessary to clearly and explicitly integrate SDG into strategic documents that are planned to be drafted in the forthcoming period. This primarily refers to the Forestry Development Programme and the Nature Protection Programme that are being drafted.
3. In terms of the objectives of the national planning documents in relation to the SDG, it is necessary to define appropriate indicators that would enable monitoring of the SDG, the data collection methodology and collection schedule, as well as responsible institutions.
4. Future strategic documents should integrate more adequately the following:
5. Objectives and measures for the protection of mountain areas (target 15.4),
6. Specific objectives and measures for the improvement of control of use and prevention of illegal trade in protected species (target 15.7)
7. Specific objectives and measures for the prevention of introducing and control of invasive species (target 15.8), as well as measures for the development of alternative sources of income for the local population to prevent illegal or unsustainable use of wild species (target 15.c)
8. Principles of ecosystem services and specific measures for their performance (target 15.9)
9. In addition to the strategic, it is also necessary to improve the legal framework for the achievement of objectives. This particularly refers to setting a clear definition of invasive species and measures for their control (target 15.8) and to introducing the concept of ecosystem services into the laws on natural resources (target 15.9).
10. It is necessary to improve the cooperation and interconnectivity of the institutions that collect data about SDG 15 in order to perform effective monitoring of indicators for certain targets.

11. It is necessary to amend the Rulebook on the national list of indicators of environmental protection in order to adapt the existing indicators and directly connect them to internationally defined indicators for the targets and to develop new indicators for certain targets that did not exist (e.g. targets 15.4 and 15.9).



Goal 16:

# PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



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

The purpose of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) is to reduce instabilities and conflicts in society, strengthen institutions and enable broad access to justice, as horizontal preconditions for creating inclusive societies in which the quality of life is high and sustainable development possible. These dimensions of SDG 16 are indispensable characteristics of modern democratic societies, and global challenges and risks, such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, can only exacerbate existing weaknesses and additionally highlight the importance of responsible, strong and inclusive institutions, especially with regard to the most vulnerable groups.

According to the latest report of the European Commission, cases of threats and violence against various groups in society are still pronounced, among others, against journalists, human rights defenders, members of the LGBT population, women victims of domestic violence and children placed in institutions for children with developmental disabilities.



The constitutional reform aimed at strengthening the independence of the judiciary from political influence is in the process of development and a strategy aimed at developing the judiciary was adopted in 2020. In terms of fundamental rights, freedom and operation of the media are burning issues. Therefore, even though the long-awaited media strategy was adopted in 2020, the results of its implementation and progress in the field of freedom of expression remain to be seen. The similar situation is with the prevention and fight against corruption, considering that the new anti-corruption law has been in effect only recently and there has been no progress in the number of completed high-level corruption cases. According to the Corruption Perceptions Index, Serbia was ranked 91st out of 198 countries in 2019, with the same score (39/100) as in 2012. The issues of justice, fundamental rights and fight against corruption are among the top priorities of Serbia's EU accession process. In the field of fight against organised crime, the number of convictions for arms trafficking is low, as well as the number of cases of property seizure and confiscation, whereas the number of convictions for money laundering increased, compared to 2018, according to the Commission's report.

The public administration reform in Serbia has been implemented continuously for many years, as a comprehensive process of reforming several complex administrative subsystems. Although legally regulated by the Law on Planning System and the Law on Public Administration, inclusive creation of public policies and regulations, based on data and evidence, is still evolving, whereas access to information generated by public authorities is hampered by frequent inaction or silence of the administration with regard to free access to the information of public importance.

Finally, according to the annual report of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the largest number of complaints of discrimination in 2019 refers to disability, health and gender as a personal characteristic, and top five refer to age and membership in political, trade union and other organisations.

# Public policy framework

**Table 17** Assessment of the existing public policy framework for the achievement of SDG 16 (by targets)

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 16.1</b> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.	
<b>Target 16.2</b> End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.	

TARGET	PUBLIC POLICY FRAMEWORK
<b>Target 16.3</b> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.	✓
<b>Target 16.4</b> By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.	✓
<b>Target 16.5</b> Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.	✗
<b>Target 16.6</b> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.	✗
<b>Target 16.7</b> Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.	✗
<b>Target 16.8</b> Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.	○
<b>Target 16.9</b> By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.	✗
<b>Target 16.10</b> Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.	✗
<b>Target 16.a</b> Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.	○
<b>Target 16.b</b> Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.	✗

Below are key strategic documents by targets, except for those targets that are not applicable in Serbia.

**Target 16.1** and **16.2** – Prevention of violence is not regulated with a comprehensive, uniform framework. Several different strategic documents define the direction of public policies aimed at preventing various forms of violence.

Until recently, there was no special strategy for the protection of children in Serbia, which was changed with the adoption of the Strategy for the Prevention and Protection of Children against Violence in June 2020, with a three-year validity period. The general objective of the Strategy is providing a comprehensive response of society to violence against children, through (1) prevention and systematic work on changing values, attitudes and behaviour, (2) interventions aimed at protecting children against violence,

and (3) a normative framework, institutional and organisational mechanisms. The Strategy explains in detail various types of violence and abuse, starting from child exploitation, domestic violence, violence in educational institutions, in social care institutions, in the social community, in the digital and media field. Therefore, although relatively short-term, this Strategy considerably covers target 16.2. On the other hand, the National Strategy for Combating Violence and Misconduct at Sports Events addresses the specific issue of violence in sporting events, however, the validity period of this Strategy was from 2013 to 2018. The Community Policing Strategy was adopted in 2013 and is based on the values of cooperation between the police and the local community in solving common security problems and addresses the violence prevention issue. This Strategy has no formal duration, and the latest Action Plan for the Implementation of this Strategy refers to years 2015 and 2016. Therefore, the question is to what extent the mentioned strategic frameworks contribute to the achievement of target 16.1. Also, the relevant strategic framework for these targets is the current Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Humans, Especially Women and Children and Protection of Victims for the period 2017-2022. In addition to improving prevention, a proactive case detection system, effective prosecution and legal protection of victims, the Strategy also focuses on long-term sustainable programmes of assistance and support to victims and their social inclusion. Finally, the Action Plan for Chapter 24 under provisional measure 8 envisages a series of activities to combat trafficking in human beings by 2022 (last revision adopted in 2020).

**Target 16.3** – The latest innovation in terms of the strategic framework is the adoption of the Judicial Development Strategy for the period 2020-2025 and the National Strategy on the Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Crime in the Republic of Serbia for the same period in which this target is recognised. The first of these two strategies was adopted for the development of

**GSD 16 targets are considerably covered by the national priorities of public policy documents in Serbia. However, some targets are either partially covered by national strategic documents, or are the subject of several different documents, or the strategic framework is completely missing.**

the judiciary as one of the long-proclaimed strategic priorities to ensure the rule of law and legal certainty. Then, a set of strategic documents in this field continue to be adopted (the National Judicial Reform Strategy for the period 2006-2011, and the National Judicial Reform Strategy for the period 2013-2018). In this regard, the Strategy envisages that this is a step towards completing the reform process and focuses on strengthening independence and autonomy, improving impartiality, accountability, expertise, efficiency, transparency and accessibility of the judiciary, as well as developing e-justice. Certain parts of this Strategy are to some extent contained in other policy documents, primarily in the Action Plan for Chapter 23, which determines a set of transitional measures for reform purposes within a special sub-chapter dedicated to the judiciary (revised Action Plan was adopted in July 2020). Therefore, the Action Plan for Chapter 23 is one of the key documents in the field of the rule of law for the achievement of target 16.3. The

National Strategy on the Rights of Victims and Witnesses of Crime in the Republic of Serbia sets the improvement of the position of victims and witnesses in the Serbian criminal justice system as its general objective, in accordance with EU standards and, in addition to dealing with the issue of reform of the criminal justice system, it also deals with the issue of the system of social care, human rights and education to a certain extent. Other strategic documents that recognise target 16.3 are the National War Crimes Prosecution Strategy adopted in 2016, and the Information Society Development Strategy in the Republic of Serbia until 2020, as well as the Strategy for Reducing Overcrowding in Penal Institutions in the Republic of Serbia until 2020.

**Target 16.4** – The recently adopted Strategy against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism for the period 2020–2020 directly refers to the prevention of money laundering, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, entering illegally acquired property into the financial and non-financial system, as well as the punishment of perpetrators of these criminal offences. On the other hand, the newly adopted Strategy for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019–2024 aims to reduce the threat of illegal possession and civilian misuse of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives. Thus, the stated strategic documents match the content of target 16.4 and fill the vacuum created by the expiry of previous strategic documents. On the other hand, the National Strategy for the Fight against Organised Crime provides the broadest framework for strengthening cooperation and capacities, as well as harmonisation with international standards in the fight against organised

crime. However, adopted in 2009 and without a valid action plan, this Strategy has no current relevance to SDG 16. Finally, the Action Plan for Chapter 24 deals in more detail with the issues of target 16.4 in the parts referring to the fight against organised crime and envisages activities for the prevention of illegal arms trafficking, money laundering, financing of terrorism and confiscation of criminally acquired property.

**Target 16.5** is partially covered by the existing strategic framework. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy, the umbrella strategic document in this field, was valid for the period 2013–2018 and envisaged systemic measures to strengthen the institutional and legal framework and capacities to combat corruption. Since the Strategy that comprehensively directs the anti-corruption policy in the next period of several years expired, other valid public policy documents address this field to a certain extent. For example, the current Action Plan for the Implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy (2018–2020) envisages several activities related to the strengthening of ethical standards of public administration employees and reducing corruption by strengthening prevention mechanisms. However, the Action Plan for Chapter 23, in the sub-chapter *the fight against corruption*, envisages the same or similar obligations as the Action Plan of the mentioned National Strategy, and the Action Plan for Chapter 23 ensures monitoring of activities that are common to both planning documents. Other public policy documents that are relevant to this target are the Strategy for Development of Public Internal Financial Control in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2017–2020 and the Public Procurement Development Programme for the period 2019–2023.

**Target 16.6** is largely covered by the still valid Public Administration Reform Strategy and its Action Plan for the period 2018-2020 (a new strategic document for the period after 2021 is currently being drafted). The Strategy envisages a comprehensive approach to the public administration reform in its various areas and systems, whereas one of the priority objectives is to increase citizens' participation, transparency, improve ethical standards and accountability in public administration, which defines specific reform measures and activities. However, considering that this is a comprehensive strategy, it also focuses on reforming the civil service system and human resource management, improving public financial management, the business environment, and the quality of public services. For some of these areas covered by the Public Administration Reform Strategy, special policy documents were adopted that further elaborate reform priorities. Therefore, the relevant public policy framework for the target *effective, accountable and transparent institutions* create the Public Financial Management Reform Programme, the eGovernment Development Programme, the Strategy for Development of Public Internal Financial Control, the Public Procurement Development Programme, the Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of the Public Policy Management System, as well as the Strategy for Professional Development of Civil Servants, and the Strategy for Professional Development of Employees in Local Self-Government Units.

**Target 16.7** is closely related to **target 16.6**, i.e. the strategic framework for public administration reform, since participatory and inclusive decision-making are partly covered by the Public Administration Reform Strategy with the meas-

ure for the improvement of public participation in public administration operation and increase of access to information on public administration operation. Nevertheless, the Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of the Public Policy Management System, which expires in 2020, is directly aimed at reforming the decision-making process which should be based on facts, and one of the objectives of this document is improving the role of citizens and the economy in policy making, adoption of regulations and improvement of the quality of administrative procedures. In this regard, the Government adopted the Programme for the Simplification of Administrative Procedures and Regulations "e-Paper" for the period 2019-2021 in July 2019, which elaborates in more detail the objectives of the Strategy for Regulatory Reform, that is, it focuses on the optimisation and efficiency of administrative procedures, or provision of services. Finally, it should be said that the Action Plan for the Implementation of Open Government Partnership Initiative for the period 2018-2020 envisages a range of obligations defined in cooperation with civil society concerning open data and fiscal transparency, integrity of the government, public services, access to information and public participation. Thus, this Action Plan is relevant for targets 16.6 and 16.7 as well as for target 16.10 below.

**Target 16.9** – The target is only partially covered by the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women for the period from 2016 to 2020. The Roma part of the population is considered to be one of the most endangered in terms of having a legal identity. However, the reason for the adoption of the Strategy is primarily to enable social inclusion of the Roma population, which means reduction of poverty and combating

discrimination, as well as full access to human rights with a focus on specific areas relevant to social inclusion: education, employment, housing, health and social care. Therefore, legal identity is not covered by this Strategy, however, it defines preconditions for the wider realisation of the issue of legal identity and registration at birth, i.e. registration in registry books.

**Target 16.10** – There is no special policy framework in Serbia that specifically addresses the issue of exercising the right to access information and this right is guaranteed by the existing legal framework. Nevertheless, the still valid Public Administration Reform Strategy, and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Open Government Partnership Initiative envisage more specific reform measures for achieving a higher level of right to access information of public importance. Namely, the action plans for both documents envisage activities aimed at improving proactive transparency with the information sheet, that is, development of an information system for access, processing and presentation of the information sheet by the authorities. Greater proactive publication is expected to reduce the number of complaints to the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection, i.e. less violations of rights in general. Additionally, the Partnership Action Plan envisages legal changes that would enable the mentioned improvement of the information sheet, as well as solving other problems from the practice of exercising the right to access information, which, among other things, concern strengthening the role of the Commissioner. The legal framework amendment process is still underway. In addition, this Action Plan defines other obligations that are relevant for the greater transparency of and access to information, pri-

marily in the field of public sector data opening and fiscal transparency.

In February, the government adopted the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System for the period 2020-2025 (the previous strategy was valid until 2016) whose development also involved participation of scientific institutions, CSOs, representatives and founders of the media. The Strategy objectives are aimed at improving the working conditions for journalists and in the media, establishing a sustainable and fair media market free from political influence, protecting institutions from external pressures and advancing the knowledge and digital competencies of citizens, institutions, media, journalists and media workers.

**Target 16.b** – The strategic framework for the implementation of public policies consists, first of all, of the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, and the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020. The first Strategy addresses the issue of prevention and reduction of discrimination comprehensively, that is, all its manifestations towards all persons, with special reference to vulnerable groups – national minorities, women, LGBT persons, persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, refugees, internally displaced persons, vulnerable migrants, persons belonging to various religions, and persons whose health condition may be the grounds for discrimination, and in relation to which specific objectives are defined. On the other hand, anti-discrimination measures and objectives are woven into all three general strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Gender Equality, that is, in terms of improving the position of multiple discriminated and vulnerable groups of women, increasing



equality between women and men with the application of equal opportunity policies and measures, systematic introduction of the gender perspective in the adoption, implementation and monitoring of public policies. Additionally, the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2020-2024 sets as a general objective

equalising the ability of persons with disabilities to exercise all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, with full respect for their dignity and individual autonomy, ensuring independence, freedom of choice and full and effective participation in all the areas of social life, including community life. This document is also relevant to SDG 10.

## Legal framework

Having in mind the 12 targets within this Goal, which refer to the different segments of the society and public administration, a number of laws and bylaws make the legal framework in these areas. Although the basic principles that refer to most of Goal 16 targets are set in the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, such as the right to a fair trial, legal security, the right to equal protection of rights and remedies, protection of human and minority rights and freedoms, personal data protection, rights of the child, etc., further elaboration is envisaged to be made in special laws and bylaws. A number of regulations were adopted some time ago and have been regulating these issues for many years, whereas other regulations were adopted in recent time as completely new regulations, or as amendments to the existing ones. The following text presents key laws governing issues relevant to Goal 16.

The Criminal Code is an umbrella regulation which regulates the criminal legislation in Serbia, i.e. criminal offences and criminal sanc-

tions, as well as other elements of criminal law. The latest amendments to this regulation were adopted in 2019 when, in addition to numerous other amendments, life imprisonment (again) was introduced in Serbia for the most serious criminal offences and the most serious forms of serious criminal offences. Amendments to this regulation were accompanied by amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code. In order

**The legal framework for SDG 16 is partially established. Although a number of regulations that regulate certain fields within this Goal were adopted, it is necessary to further harmonise the normative framework with international standards and EU law, especially with regard to the further improvement of the transparency of the work of institutions, independence of the judiciary, prevention of corruption and exercising citizens' rights.**

to enable effective and equal access to justice for all persons, the Law on Free Legal Aid was adopted in 2018, which regulates free legal aid for citizens and manners of obtaining and providing the aid.



The Family Law explicitly prohibits domestic violence as a form of behaviour with which one family member endangers the physical integrity, mental health or tranquillity of another family member, and envisages measures for the protection of family members against violence. It also establishes state's obligation to take all necessary measures to protect the child from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional abuse and from any form of exploitation. In addition, the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence was adopted in 2016, which has been in effect since 1 June 2017. It regulates the prevention of domestic violence and actions of state authorities and institutions, as well as the provision of protection and support to victims of this form of violence. In order to achieve the main objective proclaimed by this regulation – enabling effective prevention of domestic violence and urgent, timely and effective protection and support to victims, the Law identifies authorities and institutions that should primarily prevent domestic violence and, in case violence occurs, provide protection and support to the victims of violence. Also, application of this Law refers to certain criminal offenses, which connects it with the Criminal Code. The Law on Prohibition of Discrimination contains provisions on the prohibition of discrimination against children, thus, it prescribes that it is forbidden to discriminate against a child or a minor on the grounds of certain statuses, i.e. personal characteristics of the child, parents, guardians and family members. In addition to this umbrella law in the field of non-discrimination, the Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities regulates general prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of disability, special cases of discrimination against persons with disabilities, protection of persons exposed

to discrimination and measures taken to promote equality and social inclusion of persons with disabilities (the regulation is also relevant to SDG 10). Also, the Law on Special Measures for the Prevention of Crimes against Sexual Freedom Involving Minors envisages special measures to be taken against the perpetrators of criminal offences against sexual freedom of the minors determined by the same law and regulates keeping special records of persons convicted of these criminal offences.

The Law on Prevention of Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events, which determines measures for the prevention of violence and misbehaviour at sports events and in relation to sports events, as well as the obligations of organisers and powers of the competent authorities in the implementation of those measures, was amended in 2018. These amendments extended the scope of activities that are interpreted as violence and misbehaviour at sports events. Specifically, the latest amendments recognise the possession, on arrival or departure, of pyrotechnic devices, items and assets that may endanger security, as well as disguise of persons to conceal their identity in case of committing any form of violence. Another important segment of amendments to the Law referred to the tightening of penal provisions for non-compliance with regulations, both those related to sports federations, clubs and other organisers, and individuals who attend sports events.

The Law on Organisation and Jurisdiction of Government Authorities in Suppression of Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption, which regulates education, organisation, competences and powers of state authori-

ties and special organisational units of state authorities for detection, prosecution and trial for criminal offences determined by this Law, was soon after adoption in 2016 amended in 2018. The Law on Prevention of Corruption was adopted in 2019 as an umbrella anti-corruption law, whereas its implementation started on 1 September 2020. This Law regulates the legal position, competence, organisation and work of the Anti-Corruption Agency, rules of the prevention of conflicts of interest in performing public functions, cumulation of public functions, reporting on public officials' property and income, procedure for deciding on violations of this Law and other relevant anti-corruption issues. In addition, a number of laws regulating various areas that are relevant from the aspect of the fight against corruption, such as the Law on Financing Political Activities, the Law on Lobbying, the Law on Public Procurement, the Law on Privatisation, the Law on Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime, and other laws, including a number of laws ratifying international conventions.

The Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance regulates the rights to access information of public importance held by public authorities, with the purpose of fulfilling and protecting the public interest to know and attain a free democratic order and an open society. Furthermore, the Law on State Administration stipulates that state administration bodies are obliged to enable the public to have access to their work, in accordance with the law regulating free access to information of public importance. The Law also envisages proactive provision of information to the public about their work through the media and in other appropriate manner. Also,

amendments to the Law from 2018 introduced an obligation of state administration bodies to provide conditions for public participation in the preparation of draft laws, other regulations and acts. With the adoption of the Law on the Planning System in 2018, which regulates the management of the public policy system and medium-term planning, the principle of publicity and partnership was introduced as one of the key principles of managing the public policy system. It implies that public policies are determined in a transparent and consultative process, i.e. that, during the development and implementation of planning documents, as well as analysis of the effects and evaluation of public policy effects, a transparent process of consultations with all stakeholders and target groups is conducted, including associations and other CSOs, research and scientific and other organisations.

Despite the large number of these laws, which to a great extent make the normative framework in the relevant areas, Serbia still faces a lot of challenges in ensuring the implementation of existing regulations and in introducing new legal concepts. In order to further improve the normative framework in the field of judiciary, it is necessary to work on harmonising a set of judicial laws (laws on the organisation of courts, judges, public prosecutor's office, High Judicial Council, State Prosecutorial Council, Judicial Academy, etc.) with the Constitution in the following period, in order to improve the efficiency of court proceedings in accordance with EU standards and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as to strengthen the independence of judges and prosecutors. Additionally, the Criminal Procedure Code should be amended to harmonise it with certain

EU directives<sup>64</sup> in order to improve the rights of persons in criminal proceedings. In the anti-corruption field, harmonisation with EU law and international standards should continue, including amendments to the Law on Financing Political Activities to ensure transparent funding of parties. Also, it is necessary to complete the initiated process of amending the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance based on a published analysis of the implementation of the existing Law, without reducing the level of already acquired rights to access information. Furthermore, it is necessary to pass a bylaw based on the Law on Organisation and Jurisdiction of Government Authorities in Suppression of Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption, which will regulate actions of the official communication sector in the police and public prosecutor's office concerning organised crime and corruption cases. Also, amendments

to the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination should be adopted in order to achieve full harmonisation with the EU acquis, in particular with regard to: the scope of exceptions to the principle of equal treatment; definitions of indirect discrimination and the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities. Finally, in order to strengthen the systemic and institutional mechanisms of response to all forms of violence against children, it is necessary to amend the Family Law so that it contains an explicit prohibition of corporal punishment. Finally, there is a need for additional measures, including the improvement of bylaws to ensure that children whose parents do not have identity documents are registered at birth in registry books in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that children born as stateless in the country have immediate access to citizenship.

## Institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG 16

An analysis of the Law on Ministries indicates that the areas covered by SDG 16 fall within the scope of work of several ministries. On the other hand, competencies

for certain targets are not explicitly stated in the Law on Ministries. The text below lists key ministries and tasks they perform that are relevant to SDG 16.

<sup>64</sup> Directive 2013/48/EU regarding the strengthening of the right of access to a lawyer for suspects and accused persons without delay and before any hearing by investigating authorities in criminal proceedings and European arrest warrant proceeding; Directive 2010/64/EU on the right to interpretation and translation in order to precisely define the waiver of the right to translation; Directive 2012/13/EU on the right to information, in order to improve the exercise of the right to information; Directive (EU) 2016/343 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on the strengthening of certain aspects of the presumption of innocence and the right to be present at the trial in criminal proceedings; Directive (EU) 2016/800 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on procedural safeguards for children who are suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings; Directive (EU) 2016/1919 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on legal aid for suspects and accused persons in criminal proceedings and for requested persons in European arrest warrant proceedings, and two recommendations (1) on procedural safeguards for vulnerable persons [C (2013) 8178], (2) on the right to legal aid for suspects or accused persons in criminal proceedings [C(2013) 8179].

The Ministry of Justice performs state administration tasks related to the organisation and work of judicial bodies, free legal aid, preparation of regulations in the field of fight against corruption; harmonises international cooperation in the field of fight against corruption.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government performs state administration tasks related to the state administration system and organisation and work of ministries, special organisations, public agencies and public services, registry books, as well as to the preparation of regulations on human and minority rights. Also, the application of regulations in the field and free access to information of public importance is monitored within this Ministry. The MoI performs state administration tasks related to: protection of life, personal and

property security of citizens, illegal migration, asylum, unique personal identification number of citizens, electronic management of personal data. The MLEVSA performs state administration tasks related to anti-discrimination policy, social protection system, marriage and gender equality. Finally, although the Law does not show the direct competence that the Ministry of Culture and Information would have in these fields, it is recognised as relevant for the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In addition to ministries, other state bodies have competencies in relevant fields within SDG 16. The Commissioner for Information of Public

Importance and Personal Data Protection is an independent state body competent and authorised to monitor compliance with the obligations of public authorities under the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance, as well as to start an initiative for

**The existing institutional and coordination mechanisms for the achievement of SDG 16 targets are partially developed, however, they are not established in the context of the achievement of the SDG, rather to meet the objectives of a series of parallel reform processes that are part of European integration, primarily part of the implementation of the public administration reform and implementation of activities from the Action Plan for Chapter 23.**

the adoption or amendment of regulations in order to ensure implementation and improvement of the right to access information of public importance and the like. The Agency for the Prevention of Corruption is an independent state body whose goal is to prevent conflicts of interest, corruption, etc. Also, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, as an independent state body, is responsible for supervising the implementation of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination. Also, the Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia, as a special organisation, deals with professional tasks related to improving the quality of public policy documents, and the Office for Human and Minority Rights as a government service, is responsible for the protection and promotion of human and minority rights. Thus, they are relevant for the achievement of this Goal.

However, an overview of the competencies of the bodies whose scope of work covers SDG 16 does not show that they specifically deal with the achievement of this Goal, which results in the absence of bilateral agreements and memoranda between the institutions responsible for the achievement of this Goal. Namely, all reform processes in these fields are conducted as part of other processes, primarily the EU accession process, however, it would certainly be useful to connect the processes and clearly draw parallels between the strategic documents and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Also, one of the challenges in achieving SDG 16 targets are insufficient human capacities in the competent institutions. In the conditions of fiscal consolidation and "prohibition" of employment, state authorities did not adopt annual human resource plans, thus, new employment was controlled and defined exclusively according to fiscal parameters, and not according to actual needs. Finally, in terms of the mechanisms for the involvement of stakeholders in the adoption of regulations and public policy documents, as well as implementation of

measures relevant to SDG 16, the authorities generally ensure a formally transparent and participatory process. For example, civil society organisations directly participated in the work of the Working Group for the preparation of the new Public Administration Reform Strategy, whereas media representatives played an active role in the preparation of the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System. Also, representatives of civil society organisations were consulted during the development of the Action Plan for Chapter 23. However, the quality of the formally provided participatory process differs in each individual case and it is still necessary to work on the systematic involvement of the civil society in accordance with regulations. Public hearings are almost always conducted, although, as a rule, at a late stage of the process when proposed solutions are simply presented to the public, i.e. when the public cannot essentially have an impact on them. Instead, a practice should be established to involve stakeholders at the very beginning of the process, when all possible options are considered.

## Mechanisms for progress monitoring and reporting on the implementation for the achievement of SDG 16

**T**he SORS lists a total of 8 out of 23 indicators for monitoring SDG 16:

» 16.1 – Proportion of the population subject to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months (source: OECD);

- » 16.2 – Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month (source: MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey);
- » 16.2 – Number of victims of human trafficking by sex, age, and form of exploitation (source: Center for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings);
- » 16.3 – Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to the competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms (OECD);
- » 16.3 – Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population (Ministry of Justice);

The framework for monitoring the achievement of SDG 16 targets was developed and is based on the work of one of SORS' internal units. A large number of indicators are well developed and adequately set in relation to the targets, but not all aspects of the targets are covered.

- » 16.5 – Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months (UNODC);
- » 16.6 – Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sectors (or by budget lines or something similar) (source: Ministry of Finance);
- » 16.9 – Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with civil authority, by age (source: MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey).

Targets with indicators available on the SORS Portal, against global indicators (global indicators available at the Portal are marked in colour; indicators of targets which were assessed as not applicable in Serbia are marked grey)

16.1	16.2	16.3	16.4	16.5	16.6	16.7	16.8	16.9	16.10	16.a	16.b

The table indicates an uneven number of indicators by targets.

There is a number of indicators that may serve as complementary and, in some cases, as an alternative data source for monitoring SDG

16 for most targets. Worldwide Governance Indicators are a set of aggregated individual indicators according to six dimensions of governance, which rely heavily on perception data and each may be relevant in the context of SDG 16:

- » Political stability and absence of violence/terrorism (measures the perception of the likelihood of political instability and/or targeted violence including terrorism)
- » Government effectiveness (measures the quality of public services, the independence of the civil service system from political pressures, as well as the quality of implementation of government policies)
- » Rule of law (measures the perception of the extent to which social actors have confidence in institutions – contract enforcement, property rights, police, courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence)
- » Control of corruption (refers to the extent to which public positions are used for private gain, small and large cases of corruption, as well as the use of institutions for private interests)
- » Voice and accountability (perception of the extent to which citizens are free to choose government, as well as to enjoy the freedom of speech, assembly and the freedom of the media).
- » Public consultations on public policies;
- » Meritocracy and efficiency of the process of hiring civil servants;
- » Integrity of public servants.

The World Justice Project Index is one of the world's leading sources of independent data on the rule of law, which relies on national surveys of households, lawyers and professionals. The total value of the index takes into account the value of its individual factors (sub-indicators): constraints on government powers, absence of corruption, open government, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, and civil justice.

The WeBER Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society initiative provides an independent, fact-based overview of the implementation of the public administration reform in these countries from the perspective of civil society and citizens. WeBER approaches reform monitoring by using composite indicators that balance qualitative and quantitative data sources, in all sub-areas of the public administration reform also monitored by SIGMA. The following indicators are relevant for monitoring progress in the achievement of Goal 16 in Serbia:

The OECD SIGMA programme conducts detailed assessments of the state of the public administration reform in the countries of the Western Balkans, focusing on all key sub-areas of public administration, primarily through the qualitative analysis of the adequacy of legal, institutional and public policy frameworks, as well as the implementation of policies and regulations in practice. The following indicators are relevant for monitoring progress in the achievement of Goal 16 in Serbia:

- » Public perception of public administration orientation towards citizens;
- » Civil society perception of the accessibility of public services;
- » Proactive provision of information to the public by government bodies.



The Global Right to Information Rating (RTI) is an initiative based on a methodology that compares the strength of legal frameworks for the right to access information worldwide. At the core of the rating application methodology are 61 indicators, each of which corresponds to one aspect of a good free access to information regime. The RTI is limited to measuring the quality of the legal framework, not the quality of implementation.

The Bertelsmann Sustainable Governance Indicators (SGI) may also be used to measure progress in different SDG 16 targets, primarily in two pillars – democracy and governance. The first pillar examines the quality of democracy through indicators of the electoral process, access to information, civil rights and freedoms, and the rule of law. On the other hand, the pillar of governance focuses, among other things, on the extent to which citizens, civil society, the media and other organisations are capable of holding the government accountable. SGI indicators combine qualitative and quantitative data.

Eurostat lists 8 indicators for monitoring SDG 16. Three measure the confidence of EU citizens in European institutions, whereas others include the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), total general government costs of justice per capita, population's perception of judicial independence, percentage of the population reporting violence or crimes in their environment, as well as deaths due to homicides (per 100,000 persons).

Finally, annual public opinion polls and economic research within the Balkan Barometer give comparable results of the population's perception since 2015 of various political, economic and social aspects in six countries of the Western Balkans. The public opinion poll on public institutions and services examines, among other things, the perception of the actions of administrative bodies, trust in executive authorities, legislative, judicial and independent authorities, issues related to the rule of law, and corruption in the public sector.

## Recommendations

1. The strategic, legal and institutional framework covers most of the SDG 16 targets. However, in order to fully achieve SDG 16 targets, it is necessary not only to work on the implementation of the normative and strategic framework, but also on the adoption of new public policy documents and new regulations and improvement of coordination and progress monitoring mechanisms. Key recommendations are as follows:
2. Adopt a three-year Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System.
3. Adopt a new Public Administration Reform Strategy that defines a comprehensive process of reforming several complex administrative subsystems to enable continuation of the process after the expiry of the Action Plan of the existing Strategy after 2020.



4. Adopt a new strategy aimed at combating violence and misbehaviour at sporting events.
5. Adopt a completely new strategy or an action plan for the implementation of the Community Policing Strategy, because with the expiry of the latest action plan this Strategy has no use value.
6. Adopt a new anti-corruption strategy, as the existing one has expired in 2018.
7. Adopt a new strategy for fight against organised crime.
8. Since the Strategy for Regulatory Reform and Improvement of Public Policy Management System expires this year, a new strategic document needs to be prepared.
9. In order to ensure the rule of law, human rights, the independence of the judiciary from political influence and transparent institutions at the highest level, it is necessary to continue with the development of the constitutional reform.
10. Also, to improve the efficiency of court proceedings in accordance with EU standards and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as to strengthen the independence of judges and prosecutors, it is necessary to harmonise a set of judicial laws (laws on courts, judges, public prosecutor's office, High Judicial Council, State Prosecution Council, Judicial Academy, etc.) with the Constitution.
11. In order to improve the rights of persons in criminal proceedings, it is necessary to amend the Criminal Procedure Code to comply with a set of EU directives previously stated in the document.
12. For the purpose of achieving harmonisation with EU law and international standards in the field of prevention of corruption, it is necessary to increase the level of transparency in the financing of parties by making amendments to the Law on Financing Political Activities.
13. It is necessary to complete the process of amending the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and make sure that the acquired rights to access information by the public are not reduced.
14. It is necessary to adopt a bylaw based on the Law on Organisation and Jurisdiction of Government Authorities in Suppression of Organised Crime, Terrorism and Corruption, which will regulate actions of the official communication section in the police and public prosecutor's office concerning organised crime and corruption cases.

15. Amendments to the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination need to be adopted to fully comply with the EU acquis, in particular with regard to: the scope of exceptions to the principle of equal treatment; definitions of indirect discrimination and the obligation to provide reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities.
16. For the purpose of strengthening the systemic and institutional mechanisms for response to all forms of violence against children, it is necessary to amend the Family Law so that it contains an explicit prohibition of corporal punishment.
17. Finally, there is a need for additional measures, including the improvement of bylaws to ensure that children whose parents do not have identity documents are registered at birth in registry books in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and that children born as stateless persons in the country have immediate access to citizenship.
18. It is necessary to train public administration employees in adequate application of the provisions of the Law on Public Administration and the Law on Planning System concerning transparent and inclusive creation of policies and regulations.
19. The Anti-Corruption Agency, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Personal Data Protection should be included in the work of the Interdepartmental Working Group for the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
20. It is necessary to revise the framework of indicators for monitoring progress in the achievement of SDG 16 by replacing inadequate indicators or adding new ones to the existing framework, in accordance with the findings presented in this document.

# List of abbreviations

<b>GDP</b> – Gross Domestic Product	<b>RES</b> – Renewable energy sources
<b>SDG/SDGs</b> – Sustainable Development Goal/Goals	<b>PISA</b> – Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>ERP</b> – Economic Reform Programme	<b>SIP</b> – Decree on Establishment of Implementation Program of the Energy Sector Development Strategy for the period 2017-2023
<b>ESRP</b> – Employment and Social Reform Programme in the Process of Accession to the European Union	<b>PPP</b> – Preparatory Preschool Programme
<b>EU</b> – European Union	<b>PPS</b> – Public Policy Secretariat of the Republic of Serbia
<b>IPA</b> – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance	<b>RTI</b> – Global Right to Information Rating
<b>PUC</b> – Public Utility Company	<b>SORS</b> – Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
<b>LSU</b> – Local Self-Government Unit	<b>SEPA</b> – Serbian Environmental Protection Agency
<b>MFIN</b> – Ministry of Finance	<b>SEC</b> – Social and Economic Council
<b>MCTI</b> – Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure	<b>SILC</b> – Survey on income and living conditions
<b>MICS</b> – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	<b>SIPRU</b> – Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia
<b>ILO</b> – International Labour Organization	<b>SFRY</b> – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
<b>MoJ</b> – Ministry of Justice	<b>SGAE</b> – Secondary general and artistic education
<b>MESTD</b> – Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development	<b>SEDS</b> – Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020
<b>MAFWM</b> – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	<b>SVE</b> – Secondary vocational education
<b>MME</b> – Ministry of Mining and Energy	<b>UN</b> – United Nations
<b>MLEVSA</b> – Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs	<b>UNDP</b> – United Nations Development Programme
<b>MoI</b> – Ministry of Interior	<b>UNICEF</b> – United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
<b>MH</b> – Ministry of Health	<b>LL</b> – Labour Law
<b>MEP</b> – Ministry of Environmental Protection	
<b>NREAP</b> – National Renewable Energy Action Plan	
<b>NBS</b> – National Bank of Serbia	
<b>NGES</b> – National Gender Equality Strategy	
<b>CSOs</b> – Civil society organisations	
<b>WFD</b> – Water Framework Directive	
<b>OECD</b> – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	

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For further information please contact [info@sdgs4all.rs](mailto:info@sdgs4all.rs)

