

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Public Consultation on revising the European Consensus on Development

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

(1) Introduction

The year 2015 was a strategic milestone for global governance, poverty eradication and sustainable development. It marked the target date of the UN Millennium Development Goals and a point to reflect on the progress made to date and the challenges ahead in addressing their unfinished business. 2015 also saw a series of landmark international summits and conferences over the course of the year (the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the COP 21 [Paris Agreement](#) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) which have collectively re-cast the way the international community, including the EU, will work to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication for many years.

Importantly, and in contrast to the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, including its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, is a universal Agenda which applies to all countries. It reflects many core European values and interests and provides an international framework for tackling global challenges such as climate change. The EU response to the 2030 Agenda is moving ahead in a range of ways:

- Firstly, as part of EU efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, the [Commission Work Programme for 2016](#) announces an initiative on the next steps for a sustainable European future which will explain how the EU contributes to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and map out the internal and external aspects of EU policies contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Secondly, the High Representative will present the [EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy](#) that is expected to steer the different EU external policies contributing to the global vision of a more stable, prosperous and secure world. It should set out the strategic direction for the full range of EU external action, and as such will help guide EU implementation of the 2030 Agenda in external action.
- Thirdly, the EU will review its development cooperation policy. Existing leading policy documents (including the [2005 European Consensus on Development](#) and the [2011 Agenda for Change](#)) are currently framed around the Millennium Development Goals and need to adapt to incorporate the 2030 Agenda. Given its direct relevance to the EU's overall relations with developing countries, this review will be carried out in full consistency with the ongoing work on the future of the partnership between the EU and the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, under a post-[Cotonou](#) framework.

Views from this consultation will be used to inform the way forward on the initiatives above and in particular the revision of the European Consensus on Development and other external aspects of 2030 Agenda implementation. The consultation seeks your views on **how development policy, in the context of EU external action as foreseen by the Lisbon Treaty**, should respond to the range of landmark 2015 summits and conferences, and also to the rapid changes happening in the world.

Replies can include views which could apply only to the EU institutions and also to both the EU and its Member States – it would be helpful to clarify this in your response. This open public consultation will run for 12 weeks from 30 May 2016 to 21 August 2016. A brief summary and analysis of all consultation contributions will be published by November 2016 and all individual contributions will also be made available on the consultation website (unless respondents ask for their contributions not to be published).

(2) Information on respondents

- * 2.1 Received contributions may be published on the Commission's website, with the identity of the contributor. Please state your preference with regard to the publication of your contribution.

Please note that regardless of the option chosen, your contribution may be subject to a request for access to documents under [Regulation 1049/2001](#) on public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents. In such cases, the request will be assessed against the conditions set out in the Regulation and in accordance with applicable [data protection rules](#).

- I do not agree that my contribution will be published at all
- My contribution may be published but should be kept anonymous; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication
- My contribution may be published under the name indicated; I declare that none of it is subject to copyright restrictions that prevent publication

- * 2.2 Are you registered in the EU's Transparency Register?

Please note: Organisations, networks, platforms or self-employed individuals engaged in activities aimed at influencing the EU decision making process are expected to register in the transparency Register. During the analysis of replies to a consultation, contributions from respondents who choose not to register will be treated as individual contributions (unless the contributors are recognised as representative stakeholders through Treaty provisions, European Social Dialogue, Art. 154-155 TFEU).

- Yes
- No

- * 2.2.1 If yes, what is your registration number?

0801162959-21

- * 2.3 Name (entity or individual in their personal capacity)

Microsoft Corporation

2.5 What type of stakeholder are you?

- Government institution / Public administration
- University / Academic organisation
- Civil society (including Non-Governmental Organisation, specialised policy organisation, think tank)
- International organisation
- Private sector or private company
- Citizen/private individual
- Other

2.6 Please specify

Microsoft is a technology company whose mission is to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more. Our strategy is to build best-in-class platforms and productivity services for a mobile-first, cloud-first world.

Founded in 1975, we operate worldwide and have offices in more than 100 countries. We develop, license, and support a wide range of software products, services, and devices that deliver new opportunities, greater convenience, and enhanced value to people's lives. We offer an array of services, including cloud-based services, to consumers and businesses. We design, manufacture, and sell devices that integrate with our cloud-based services.

* 2.7 What is your place of residence (if you are answering as a private individual) or where are the headquarters of your organisation situated (if you are answering on behalf of an organisation)?

- In one of the 28 EU Member States
- Other

2.8 Please specify

Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond, WA 98052-7329
USA

(3) Context: why a change is needed

The EU and its Member States are determined to implement the 2030 Agenda through internal and external actions as well as contribute to the successful implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, given the strong interlinkages. In this context, our policies, should take into account changing global conditions and trends, to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose across the time-horizon to 2030.

The global landscape has changed significantly compared to the time of adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. While much has been achieved, with more than one billion people having been lifted out of extreme poverty since 1990, great challenges remain and new ones are emerging. At global level, more than 800 million people still live on less than USD 1.25 a day. The world is witnessing multiple conflicts and security tensions, complex humanitarian and global health crises, deteriorations of human rights, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, urbanisation and migration. Migration flows across the world will continue to have important impacts, and present both a risk and an opportunity. The EU needs to address global security challenges, including tackling the root causes of conflict and instability and countering violent extremism. Climate change can continue to amplify problems and can severely undermine progress. Important changes include demographic trends, a new distribution of wealth and power between and within countries, the continuing globalisation of economies and value chains, an evolving geography of poverty and a proliferation of actors working on development. Projections also suggest important challenges are ahead (for example, continuing unprecedented urbanisation, and other demographic challenges including ageing societies for some and the potential for a demographic dividend for others). Continued attention will be given to a democratic, stable and prosperous neighbourhood. A revision to EU development policy should take into account these trends (including anticipating those that will remain central in future) whilst retaining a core focus on eradicating poverty and finishing the job started by the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, the EU Consensus needs also to adapt to the Lisbon Treaty, which provides for all external action policies to work within the frameworks and pursue the principles of objectives of Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union. In particular, coherence between the different parts of EU external action and between external and internal policies is crucial.

The EU will need to address these new global challenges, many of which require coordinated policy action at the national, regional and global levels. The 2030 Agenda provides a framework which can guide us in doing so.

3.1 There is a range of key global trends (e.g. changing geography and depth of poverty; challenges related to climate change, political, economic, social, demographic, security, environmental or technological) which will influence the future of development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Which of these do you think is the most important?

As a company that is in the forefront of many of the world's technological developments, in particular, innovating in areas that harvest the potential of cloud computing (such as machine-learning, Internet of Things and others), we believe the cloud-powered 4th Industrial Revolution will have a tremendous impact on the world's development agenda. At Microsoft, we work in developing countries across commercial, public-sector, NGO/Non-Profit sectors as well as on a CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) basis, helping communities to harness the potential of this "Digital Transformation" in support of the public good.

3.2 How should EU policies, and development policy in particular, better harness the opportunities and minimise the negative aspects of the trend you identified in the previous question?

Mobile and cloud computing-powered technologies can often help developing countries to leapfrog the decades of infrastructure-development that developed countries had to go through; and which are already becoming "legacy". Cloud computing-powered solutions can help deliver medical care through telemedicine into remote areas very affordably, better manage water in resource-scarce areas, can better predict energy needs to optimize the use of existing solar panels or can better help ensure public safety in the developing world's cities. However, the innovative (often happening somewhere for the first time ever) and needs-based (with demand/consumption adjusted in real time) nature of cloud-powered solutions, is difficult to capture in the traditional tendering models. We therefore encourage development policies to look at creating solution-neutral and technology-neutral approaches to achieving the goals of EU development policies and so allowing for innovative business models and solutions (e.g. operational expenditure-driven solutions versus capex based investments).

(4) Priorities for our future action: what we need to do

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require sustained EU efforts to promote a more just world, including a strong focus on the need to address gender equality and women's empowerment. Peace, inclusiveness, equality and good governance including democracy, accountability, rule of law, human rights and non-discrimination will need particular emphasis. The 2030 Agenda also requires recognition of the close interconnectedness between poverty, social issues, economic transformation, climate change and environmental issues.

To achieve poverty eradication, EU development policy will need to take into account key demographic and environmental trends, including challenges related to climate change, and concentrate effort on least developed countries and fragile states. The EU will also need to strengthen our approach to fragility and conflict, fostering resilience and security (as an increasing proportion of the world's poor are expected to live in fragile and conflict affected states) and to protect global public goods and to maintain our resource base as the prerequisite for sustainable growth. Peace and security, including security sector reform, will have to be addressed also through our development policy, as will the risks and opportunities related to migration flows. Tackling social and economic inequalities (both within and between countries) is a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda as is addressing environmental degradation and climate change. Job creation will be an important challenge in which the private sector has to play an active role. Finishing the job of the Millennium Development Goals requires identifying and reaching those people throughout the world who are still not benefitting from progress to ensure that no one is left behind.

To achieve lasting results, EU development policy will need to foster transformation and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Drivers of inclusive sustainable growth, such as human development, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, and healthy and resilient oceans should be an important part of our efforts to implement the new Agenda as will efforts aimed at tackling hunger and under-nutrition. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require a multi-dimensional, integrated approach to human development. Implementation will also require us to address vectors of change, such as sustainable urban development and relevant use of information and communication technology. Our development policy will have to engage and identify new ways of partnering with the business in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth, industrialisation and innovation. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will also require cooperation with partner countries and regions on science, technology and innovation. In all aspects of our external action, the EU will need to ensure that our approaches, including development cooperation, are conducive to achieving the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals and that the EU intensifies efforts to promote pursue coherence between our policies and our internal and external action.

4.1 How can the EU better address the links between achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change and addressing other global sustainable development challenges?

Beyond the question of policy work-stream alignment and looking for development synergies and cross-fertilization to break down funding /intervention silo's there are three relevant vectors from the perspective of a private-sector ICT company:

1/ The opportunities for sharing on the "Digital Dividends" (as identified by the World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends here <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016>) should be upper most in thinking about how removing impediments and accelerating access to ICT will help drive better health, education, poverty eradication, job creation & business innovation.

2/ The "Digital Transformation" of the policy and funding agencies; government institutions, the mechanisms and construction of development interventions needs to consider how judicious application of ICT is an accelerator for achieving the SDGs and other development goals (as identified in the GeSI June 2016 #SystemTransformation (for the SDGs) report here : http://systemtransformation-sdg.gesi.org/160608_GeSI_SystemTransformation.pdf).

3/ Partnering with the private sector in new and innovative ways through business models that transcend the philanthropic (donations) and the vendor (supplier/contractor) participation into the new "Shared Value" modes will be essential for sustainable success to 2030.

4.2 How should the EU strengthen the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in its internal and external policies, and in particular in its development policy?

4.3 What are the main changes you would like to see in the EU's development policy framework?

As mentioned elsewhere in this submission, the role of ICT as an accelerator for development policy has yet to be fully harnessed. There are many facets to this under exploited opportunity to creatively leverage ICT for advancement of the SDGs and other policy aims.

4.4 In which areas highlighted above would you expect to see greater consistency between development policy and other areas of the EU external action in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

4.5 In which areas does the EU have greatest value-added as a development partner (e.g. which aspects of its development policy, dialogue or implementation arrangements or in which category of countries)?

4.6 How can the EU refine its development policy to better address inequalities – including gender inequality – in the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

4.7 How can the EU development policy make a stronger contribution to the security of people? How can EU development policy contribute to addressing the root causes of conflict and fragility and contribute to security and resilience in all the countries where we work?

4.8 How can a revised Consensus on Development better harness the opportunities presented by migration, minimise the negative aspects of irregular migration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and better address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement?

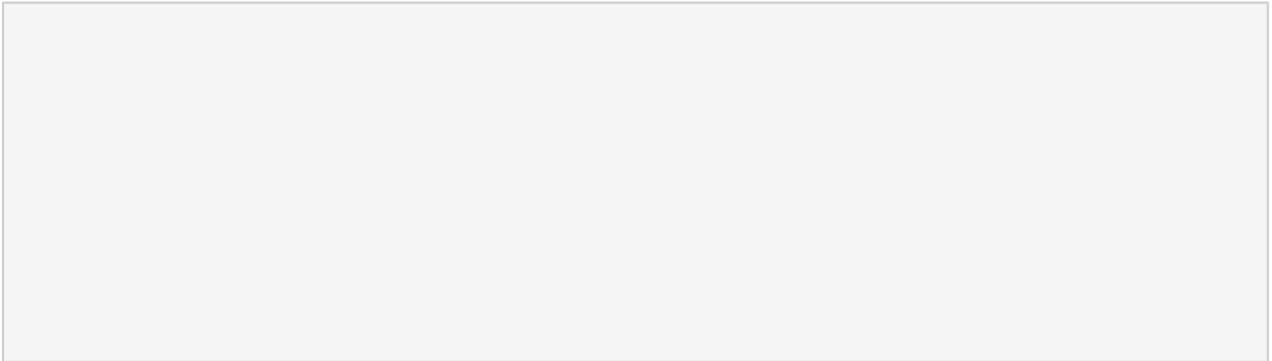
(5) Means of implementation: how do we get there?

The principle of universality underpinning the 2030 Agenda will require a differentiated approach to engagement with countries at all levels of development. Official Development Assistance will continue to play an important role in the overall financing mix for those countries most in need (particularly the Least Developed Countries). The EU and its Member States should continue to progress towards achieving their commitments. However, in all countries our development cooperation will need to take account of other sources of finance, including by leveraging other (non-Official Development Assistance) sources of finance for poverty eradication and sustainable development. The delivery of the 2030 Agenda means that our work helping countries raise their own resources (domestic resource mobilisation), the provision of aid for trade, blending* and partnering with the private sector should be priority areas of focus. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, provides a framework for our efforts, including for our work supporting the right enabling policy environment for sustainable development in our partner countries. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be closely coordinated given the strong interlinkages. Engagement with middle income countries, notably the emerging economies, will be important to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, considering the role they can play in promoting global public goods, what they can achieve within their respective countries on poverty eradication and sustainable development, and the example they can set within their regions as well as their role in regional processes. Here differentiated partnerships can play an important role (examples include different forms of political, economic, and financial investment as well as cooperation in science, technology and innovation). Specific attention and focus should also be given to Least Developed Countries, as acknowledged by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

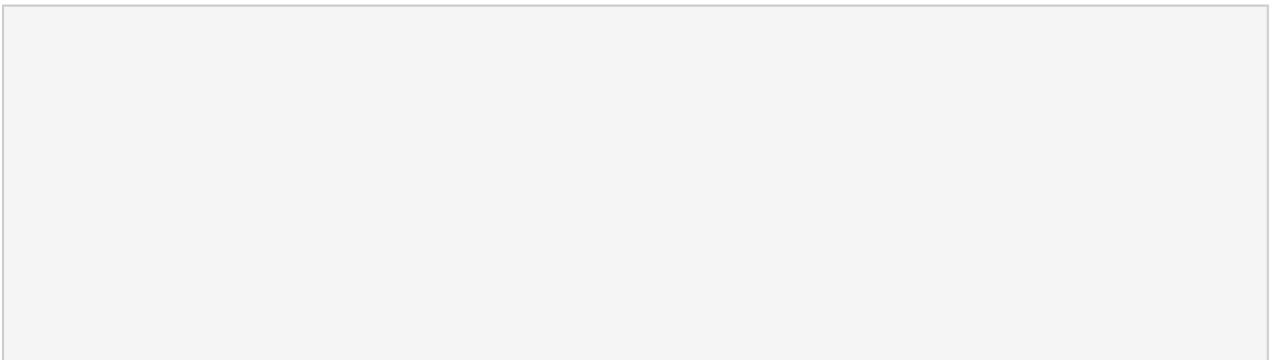
The EU's implementation of the 2030 Agenda provides an opportunity for enhancing consistency between the different areas of the EU's external action and between these and other EU policies (as outlined in the Lisbon Treaty and in [EU's Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises](#)). The EU will continue to pursue [Policy Coherence for Development](#) as a key contribution to the collective effort towards broader policy coherence for sustainable development. In our external action, the EU needs to consider how we can use all policies, tools, instruments at our disposal coherently in line with the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

* Combining EU grants with loans or with equity from other public and private financiers with a view to leveraging additional resources.

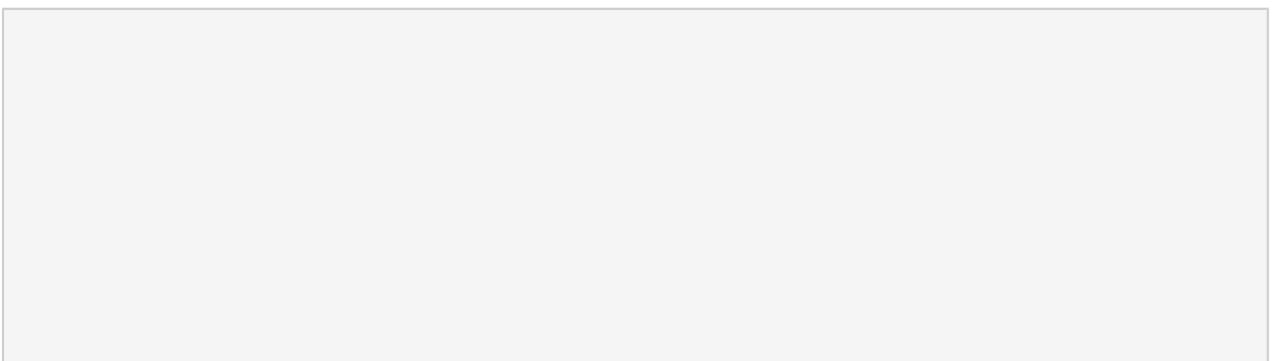
5.1 How can EU policies, and EU development policy in particular, help to mobilise and maximise the impact of the increasing variety of sustainable development finance, including in particular from the private sector?



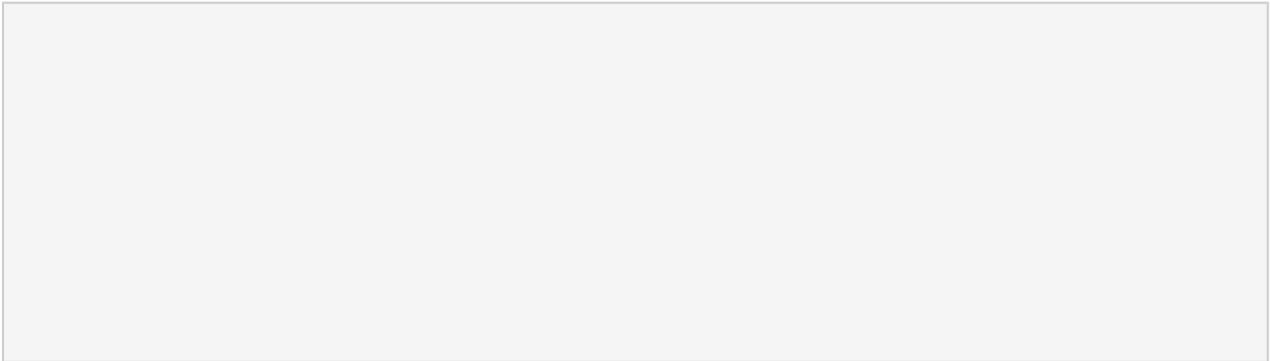
5.2 Given the evolving availability of other sources of finance and bearing in mind the EU's commitments on Official Development Assistance (e.g. [Council Conclusions from 26 May 2015 on "A New Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015"](#), and inter alia, paragraphs 32 and 33), how and where should the EU use its Official Development Assistance strategically and to maximise its impact?



5.3 How can the EU better support partner countries in mobilising their own resources for poverty eradication and sustainable development?



5.4 Given the importance of middle income countries to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, what form could differentiated partnerships take?



5.5 Given experience so far in taking into account the objectives of development cooperation in the implementation of EU policies which are likely to affect developing countries (e.g. [Policy Coherence for Development: 2015 EU Report](#)), how should the EU step up its efforts to achieve Policy Coherence for Development, as a key contribution to the collective effort towards policy coherence for sustainable development? How can we help ensure that policies in developing countries, and internationally contribute coherently to sustainable development priorities?

Although Microsoft have offered no specific policy responses to 5.1 - 5.4, Microsoft would like to make an orthogonal point about Policy Coherence for Development in the context of private sector engagement. It is hard for many private sector organisations who wish to engage on these topics to understand the framework within which the EU is operating and how to connect and navigate the system. The history of policy development has been an amalgam of policies and programmes over the last 10 years or so and clearly there is a recognised need (in part through this consultation) to bring these threads into a single, modernized, focus and clear set of principles and actions (of course referencing the history of how earlier political consensus on other instruments has got the EU to the current point). However, even the reference document (Policy Coherence for Development :2015 EU Report) is some 60 pages although the 8 page Executive Summary at least starts to draw in the framework boundaries on the 6 dimensions (of Trade & Development, Food Security, Climate Change, Migration and Security) which is helpful. Microsoft has active engagements with other actors in these dimensions, for example our considerable history of collaboration and co-development with UN agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, UNDP and others in the related NGO/non-profit sectors. Whilst these have also been challenging at times, there is much to be learned and shared from those engagement models (e.g. the holistic models for the approach to natural disasters, or refugee situations) that could be transferable; as well as an opportunity to better alignment and partnership with such agencies and the associated private sector eco-system.

(6) The actors: making it work together

An important feature of the new Agenda is that all governments, developed and developing, will need to work with a wide range of stakeholders (including the private sector, civil society and research institutions) to improve the transparency and inclusivity of decision-making, planning, service delivery, and monitoring and to ensure synergy and complementarity.

The EU must continue to work collaboratively with others and contribute to a coordinated approach. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda puts national plans for implementation (including associated financing and policy frameworks) at the centre. To maximise our impact, EU development policy should be based on a strategic and comprehensive strategy for each country, which also responds to the country-specific context.

Our partner countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda will inform our overall engagement and our development cooperation dialogue with them and will help shape our support for their national efforts. The EU should also help partner countries put in place the necessary enabling policy frameworks to eradicate poverty, tackle sustainable development challenges and enhance their policy coherence.

There is a need for a renewed emphasis on the quality of development cooperation, including existing commitments on aid and development effectiveness made in Paris, Accra and Busan* and through work with the [Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#).

An updated EU development policy should also provide a shared vision that guides the action of the EU and Member States in development cooperation, putting forward proposals on how to further enhance coordination, complementarity and coherence between EU and Member States. Strengthening [Joint Programming](#) will be an important part of this. Improving the division of labour between the EU and its Member States in order to reduce aid fragmentation will also contribute to increased development effectiveness.

* See [Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action](#) and the [Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation](#)

6.1 How should the EU strengthen its partnerships with civil society, foundations, the business community, parliaments and local authorities and academia to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (including the integral Addis Ababa Action Agenda) and the Paris Agreement on climate change?

The ambitions of the Addis Ababa and other declarations is understood, but the putting into practise in terms of private sector engagement is more intangible. As commented "...reduce aid fragmentation will also contribute to increased development effectiveness" must be a core aim of the new policy through coherence, alignment, integration and engagement. Building on the submission in 5.5, Microsoft believes that mobilising the broad eco-system of private sectors and other players is firstly achieved by articulating a clear framework for the policy objectives the EU is pursuing, detailing the value derived from and benefits of involvement and specifying the modus operandi of the engagement model that is easy and clear for other parties to navigate.

6.2 How can the EU promote private sector investment for sustainable development?

6.3 How can the EU strengthen relations on sustainable development with other countries, international financing institutions, multilateral development banks, emerging donors and the UN system?

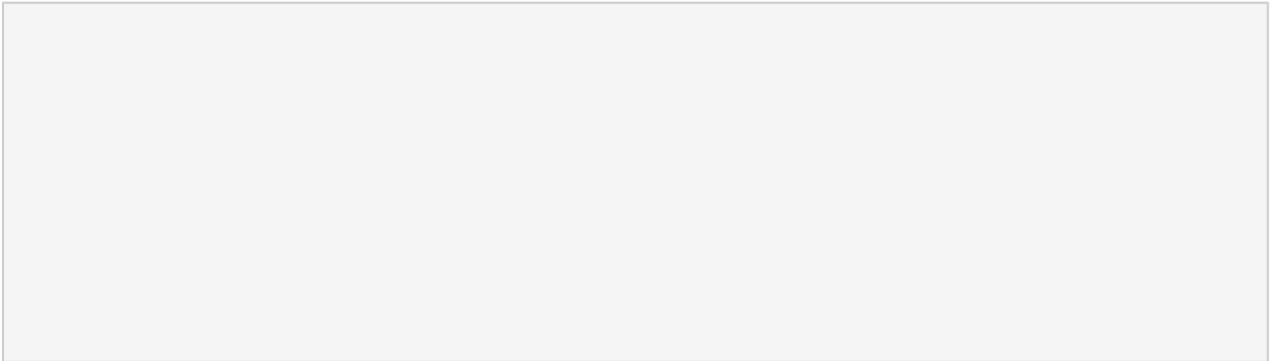
6.4 How can the EU best support partner countries to develop comprehensive and inclusive national plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

6.5 What are the best ways to strengthen and improve coherence, complementarity and coordination between the EU and the Member States in their support to help partner countries achieve poverty eradication and sustainable development?

6.6 How can EU development cooperation be as effective as possible, and how can we work with all partners to achieve this?

As commented in 6.1 and 5.5 there needs to be a better focus on how to streamline the policy imperatives and support that framework with clear articulation of the value proposition to the private / 3rd and other sectors to engage and develop a robust engagement mechanism for these players to bring their contributions to the table in the lowest friction way possible.

6.7 What further progress could be made in EU Joint Programming, and how could this experience be linked with other EU joined-up actions in supporting countries' delivery of the 2030 Agenda?



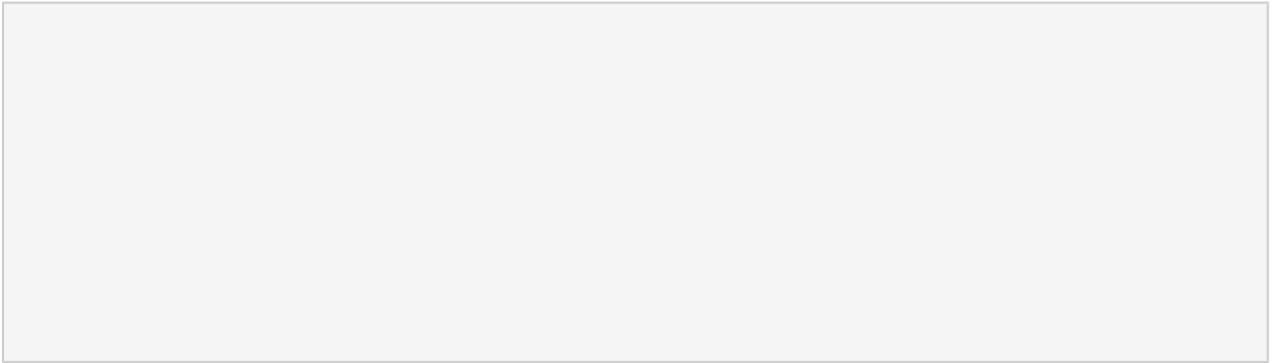
(7) Keeping track of progress

The EU will need to contribute to the global follow-up and review process for the 2030 Agenda. Keeping track of progress in a systematic and transparent way is essential for delivering the 2030 Agenda. The EU is actively contributing to the setting up of a Sustainable Development Goal monitoring system at global, regional and national level. Demonstrating results and impact from our efforts and the promotion of transparency will be important priorities for EU development policy, as part of a wider move to strengthen accountability, follow-up and review at all levels.

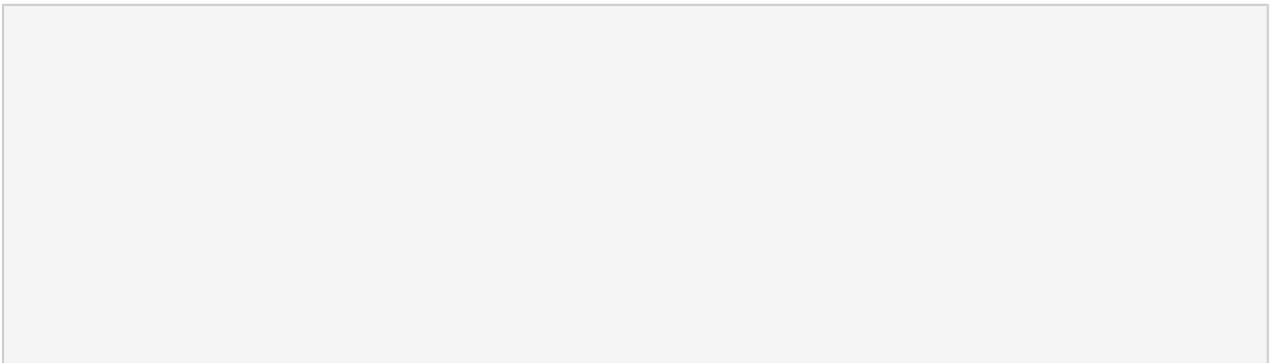
7.1 How can the EU strengthen its own use of evidence and analysis, including in the development field, to feed into its regular review on the Sustainable Development Goals to the UN?

There needs to be a clear framework of expectations and accountabilities for the various national and trans-national Statistical Agencies working in these fields (e.g. SDG measurements) and better collaboration with and between countries and their (private sector and other) partners. The LDC's have very poor / non-existent data gathering and statistical analysis capabilities. One idea is for the EC to consider the option of not investing €m into Brussels based systems of measurement and instead to support the investments needed in the LDC's for them to build capacity and competence in this field in exchange for transparent and accountable output sharing back to Brussels. The magnitude of this investment shortfall is covered in the UN publication from the Sustainable Solutions Development Network (A global initiative for the United Nations) "Data for Development : A Needs Assessment for SDG Monitoring and Statistical Capacity Development "
<http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/a-needs-assessment-for-sdg-monitoring-and-statistical-capacity-development/>.

7.2 How can the EU help to ensure the accountability of all actors involved in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the private sector? How can the EU encourage a strong and robust approach to the Follow Up and Review of the 2030 Agenda from all actors?



7.3 How should EU development cooperation respond to the regular reviews on progress of the partner countries towards the 2030 Agenda goals?



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