



COORDINATION SUD

RASSEMBLER & AGIR
POUR LA SOLIDARITÉ INTERNATIONALE



OBJECTIFS DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

BRIEFING REPORT

SDG WORKING GROUP

IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA IN FRANCE AND SPAIN

Revised August 2023

Coordination SUD is the national coordinating body of French NGOs working for international solidarity

Coordination SUD was founded in 1994 and currently comprises 184 NGOs, either as direct members or through six networks of associations (CLONG-Volontariat, Cnajep, Coordination Humanitaire et Développement, CRID, FORIM and Groupe initiatives). These organisations work in the fields of emergency humanitarian and development aid, environmental protection, human rights, advocacy and global citizenship education for international solidarity – with a special focus on helping the most disadvantaged groups of people.

Coordination SUD and its member organisations in the French international NGO sector work in four key areas: promoting and defending an enabling environment for Civil Society Organisations' (CSO); supporting and strengthening CSOs; defining and advocating joint positions on international solidarity policies vis-a-vis public and private institutions in France, Europe and around the world; and finally, monitoring and analysing developments and challenges in the international solidarity space.

Coordination SUD, Rassembler et Agir pour la Solidarité Internationale - Working together for international solidarity

Coordination SUD – SDG Working Group

France's implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a strategic advocacy priority for Coordination SUD and is monitored by its SDG Working Group, a forum for discussion and analysis that aims to:

- Highlight and sustain the role of French civil society in measuring and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs in France's sustainable development and international solidarity policy.
- Ensure that the SDGs are integrated into and applied coherently across French public policies, including sectoral and transversal strategies and approaches, relating to international solidarity and sustainable development.
- Formulate Coordination SUD's positions on the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, the coherence of development policies and their inclusion in French development and international solidarity policy.
- Enable Coordination SUD's members and partners to share their analyses and expertise on current developments in terms of monitoring and implementing the SDGs in order to make recommendations for the effective transposition of the SDGs into strategic frameworks and policy actions.

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Translated from the French, 'Note d'analyse, Commission ODD, La mise en œuvre de l'agenda 2030 en France et en Espagne'.

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‘The French Senate has said that the General Commission for Sustainable Development's many functions justified a ‘one million euro increase in its planned allocation’ for 2021”.

In the 2021 edition of the UN report on "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals", the authors begin by pointing out that even before the COVID-19 pandemic, progress towards the goals was not being made fast enough to be achieved by 2030 and in some areas "had either stalled or reversed"¹.

In order to make proposals to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, we need to understand how it is being implemented in countries close to France. This document therefore analyses the cases of France and Spain. While France seems to be lagging behind in political and institutional support for the 2030 Agenda, the Spanish government has implemented numerous measures in recent years to integrate the SDGs into its public policies. A comparison of the situations in Spain and France might produce suggestions for civil society organisations on how to advocate most effectively to promote the objectives of the 2030 Agenda in France.

The aim of this document is therefore to stimulate discussion with a view to developing a common position among Coordination SUD member organisations on the institutional arrangements for transposing the SDGs into public policy. To this end, it will first present the institutions responsible for implementing the SDGs in the two countries, and then compare the action plans drawn up, as well as the monitoring of these policies and their impact in the public debate.

¹ Focus 2030 (2021), [United Nations report ahead of the Political Forum on Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, July 2021](#).

1. SPAIN HAS MAJOR BODIES SPECIALISED IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA, UNLIKE FRANCE

IN 2021, FRANCE HAD ONLY TWO BODIES TO IMPLEMENT THE 2030 AGENDA

The General Commission for Sustainable Development (CGDD)

The General Commission for Sustainable Development is part of the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion and has several functions:

- to prepare the proceedings of the Interministerial Committee for Sustainable Development (ICSD), monitor them and ensure the implementation of assessment, training and communication measures;
- to draw up recommendations and provide support for the sustainable development procedures, initiatives and projects of government departments, local authorities and economic players;
- to lead and coordinate the work of senior sustainable development officials;
- to lead, coordinate and organise the preparation and implementation of policies to adapt and combat the greenhouse effect.

In its report on the 2021 Finance Bill, the French Senate indicated that the CGDD's many functions justified a "EUR 1 million increase in its planned allocation" for 2021².

The French National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE)

Although INSEE is involved in the production and coordination of data with the statistical services of the various government departments, it is impossible to say that this organisation is specialised in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

² [Projet de loi de finances pour 2021 : Environnement](#), French Senate, November 2020.

IN SPAIN, THERE ARE SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS SPECIALISED IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2030 AGENDA³.

Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda

The Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda was created in 2020 following the integration into a single department of the social responsibilities of the Ministry of Health, Consumer Affairs and Social Welfare and those of the Presidency of the Government on the Sustainable Development Goals.

In particular, it is responsible for proposing and implementing the government's policy on promoting, monitoring and cooperating for the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.⁴

In March 2021, this portfolio was taken over by the former Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda, Ione Belarra, following the departure of the Deputy Prime Minister, Pablo Iglesias.

The Ministry includes the Secretariat of State for the 2030 Agenda and the Under-Secretariat for Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda.

- The Spanish Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda is the highest body of the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda, responsible for proposing and executing the Government of Spain's policy on promoting, monitoring and cooperating for the implementation of the SDGs. The current Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda is Lilith Verstryngge Revuelta, who was appointed on 27 July 2022⁵.
- It also includes a Directorate-General for Priority Policies (políticas palancas) for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, responsible for providing technical support to the Secretariat of State in its functions and evaluating the "políticas palancas" and their impact⁶.

³ "Gobernanza", Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda. Accessed 31 May 2022.

<https://www.mdsocialesa2030.gob.es/agenda2030/gobernanza.htm>

⁴ Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública, [Real Decreto 452/2020, de 10 de marzo, por el que se desarrolla la estructura orgánica básica del Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030, y se modifica el Real Decreto 139/2020, de 28 de enero, por el que se establece la estructura orgánica básica de los departamentos ministeriales](#), Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, March 2020.

⁵ Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública, [Real Decreto 655/2022, de 26 de julio, por el que se nombra Secretaria de Estado para la Agenda 2030 a doña Lilith Verstryngge Revuelta. s](#), Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, July 2022.

⁶ Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública, [Real Decreto 452/2020, de 10 de marzo, por el que se desarrolla la estructura orgánica básica del Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030, y se modifica el Real Decreto 139/2020, de 28 de enero, por el que se establece la estructura orgánica básica de los departamentos ministeriales](#), Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, March 2020.

Government Commission on the 2030 Agenda⁷

The Government Commission on the 2030 Agenda is made up of 15 ministries whose remit includes studying, promoting, coordinating and participating in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of plans and strategies to bring Spain in line with the 2030 Agenda.

This commission generates broad interministerial coordination and is assisted by a technical working group, whose membership is open to participation by all the ministries that make up the government, which is in line with the United Nations recommendations to integrate all efforts based on an inter- and multi-sectoral approach.

In addition, there is an interministerial working group responsible for preparing the meetings of the Government Commission on the 2030 Agenda, in which all the ministries participate for technical cooperation.

Sectoral Conference on the 2030 Agenda⁸

The Sectoral Conference on the 2030 Agenda facilitates cooperation between the General Administration of the State (central), the Autonomous Communities, the Autonomous Cities of Ceuta and Melilla and local government, through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The aim of this cooperation is to maximise the knowledge accumulated by the various levels of administration, based on the exercise of the powers assigned by the Constitution and the Statutes of Autonomy.

Its operating rules also provided for the creation of the Sectoral Commission on the 2030 Agenda as a support and advisory body. The two bodies, the Sectoral Conference and the Sectoral Commission on the 2030 Agenda, met twice, in July and December 2021.

⁷ Presidencia del gobierno, [Real Decreto 399/2020, de 25 de febrero, por el que se establecen las Comisiones Delegadas del Gobierno](#), February 2020.

⁸ Ministerio de Política Territorial y Función Pública, [Resolución de 19 de enero de 2021, de la Secretaría de Estado para la Agenda 2030, por la que se publica el Acuerdo de la Conferencia Sectorial para la Agenda 2030, por la que se aprueba su Reglamento de Organización y Funcionamiento](#), February 2021.

Sustainable Development Council⁹

The Sustainable Development Council is a consultative body that brings together representatives from the academic world, the business sector, trade unions, environmental, social, human rights and peace organisations, and organisations working in the field of international cooperation - as well as 13 advisory councils at state level.

This last feature makes it possible to coordinate the work carried out by the Sustainable Development Council with that generated by other sectoral consultative bodies.

In particular, the Council produced a contribution document that is largely reflected in Spain's sustainable development strategy. In addition, a Joint Commission for the coordination and monitoring of the Spanish strategy for achieving sustainable development objectives, created within the Spanish Parliament, also participated in the proceedings.

Joint Committee for coordinating and monitoring the Spanish strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁰

The Joint Committee is a parliamentary body which supports efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. It meets on a regular basis and, between February 2020 and March 2021, hosted a total of 21 appearances by representatives of the government, autonomous communities and local bodies, as well as representatives of universities, research institutes, civil society platforms, trade unions and the business sector.

Several of these appearances contributed to the drafting of an opinion aimed at informing and guiding the Executive in the formulation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy, by producing specific guidelines and recommendations. An opinion was approved on 19 April¹¹.

In particular, this Committee provides parliamentary oversight of government action to implement the 2030 Agenda objectives.

⁹ "Alto Comisionado para la Agenda 2030", Wikipedia, accessed 31 May 2022.

https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alto_Comisionado_para_la_Agenda_2030

¹⁰ "Comisión Mixta para la Coordinación y Seguimiento de la Estrategia Española para alcanzar los Objetivos del Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS)", Congreso de los Diputados, accessed 31 May 2022.

https://www.congreso.es/comisiones?p_p_id=organos&p_p_lifecycle=0&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&organos_selectedLegislatura=XIV&organos_codComision=315

¹¹ Comisión Mixta para la Coordinación y Seguimiento de la Estrategia Española para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, *Dictamen de la ponencia de estudio de la definición de la estrategia de desarrollo sostenible Comisión Mixta para la Coordinación y Seguimiento de la Estrategia Española para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) marzo – abril 2021*, February 2021.

2. GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Generally speaking, the Spanish government is very clear about what it is doing to promote sustainable development. A single web page¹², for example, provides access to the main documents and information from the Ministry of Social Rights and the 2030 Agenda about the SDGs, in particular its governance, regularly updated indicators and regular monitoring of Spain's results. This will make it easier for citizens and civil society organisations to follow progress and will therefore make the government more accountable.

THE SPANISH ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

In 2019¹³, 2020¹⁴, 2021¹⁵ and 2022¹⁶, the Spanish government published extremely detailed annual progress reports. These documents included, among other things:

- An assessment of the current situation at the socio-economic, environmental and international levels, taking into account the COVID crisis from 2020 onwards.
- Monitoring of the implementation of the "políticas palancas", taking into account progress, successes and results, with details of the legislation corresponding to each objective.
- Details of the coordination mechanisms and instruments, explaining in particular their functions, their structure and the work carried out by each of the structures. These include:
 - the Government Commission on the 2030 Agenda;
 - the Sectoral Conference on the 2030 Agenda;
 - the Sectoral Commission on the 2030 Agenda;
 - the Sustainable Development Council;
 - actions implemented at local level (particularly autonomous);
 - commitments from different sectors (business, civil society, etc.).

¹² "[Documentos](#)", Ministerio de Derechos sociales y Agenda 2030. Visited on June 1, 2022.

¹³ [Informe de progreso. La implementación de la Agenda 2030 en España](#), Government of Spain, November 2019.

¹⁴ [Reconstruir lo común. La implementación de la Agenda 2030. Informe de progreso 2020](#), Government of Spain, July 2020.

¹⁵ [Informe de progreso 2021 y estrategia de desarrollo sostenible 2030](#), Government of Spain, July 2021.

¹⁶ [Informe de progreso 2022 de la Estrategia de Desarrollo Sostenible 2030](#), Government of Spain, December 2022.

THE CURRENT SITUATION OF FRANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE SDGs

In France, only one document of this kind has been published since the adoption of the roadmap in 2019. On 15 September 2021, the General Commission for Sustainable Development (CGDD) published its report on progress made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals¹⁷.

While this document demonstrates the CGDD's good will, the lack of resources and knowledge of the SDGs in France is glaringly apparent. Compared to its Spanish equivalents, the report is too superficial. In particular, it focuses on the first five of the six major challenges defined by France in its national sustainable development strategy, indicating whether their implementation is "on track", "needs improvement" or whether significant progress is expected. In addition, the international dimension is not addressed, notably due to the absence of participation from the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, demonstrating the French government's difficulty in working transversally to implement the 2030 Agenda.

3. THE 2030 AGENDA IN ELECTORAL MANIFESTOS

It is worth taking a quick look at the party-political manifestos in the run-up to major elections in Spain and France to understand the extent to which the SDGs are central to public debate. This may help to explain the results of the Focus 2030 survey, according to which only 10% of French people claim to know what the "United Nations Sustainable Development Goals" are, compared with 53% who do not know¹⁸.

The comparison here focuses on the election programmes of the four majority parties in Spain for the 2023 general elections, and in France for the 2017 or 2022 presidential elections, depending on the availability of the documents. We can see that virtually no major party mentions the SDGs in its manifesto in France, while only the Spanish far right makes no reference to them.

¹⁷ [État des lieux de la France 2020. Transformer la société par les Objectifs du développement durable](#), Ministry for the Environment and Solidarity, September 2021.

¹⁸ [How \(un\)familiar are French people with the Sustainable Development Goals?](#), Focus 2030, updated 1 March 2023.

Spain (2023 general elections)

Parties with the highest scores at the last elections	Number of mentions of the SDGs or the 2030 Agenda in their manifestos
PSOE	6
Partido Popular	0
VOX	5 ¹⁹
Sumar (Unidas Podemos)	3
Total for the 4 majority parties in 2017	14

France (2017-2022 presidential elections)

Parties with the highest scores at the last elections	Number of mentions of the SDGs or the 2030 Agenda in their manifestos
Renaissance (En Marche, 2017)	0
Rassemblement National (2022)	0
Les Républicains (2022)	0
La France Insoumise (2017)	0
Total for the 4 majority parties in 2017-2022	0

4. RESULTS IN TERMS OF SDG IMPLEMENTATION

AN OVERALL SCORE WHICH REQUIRES A NUANCED INTERPRETATION

The differing results obtained by measures taken in France and Spain need to be put into context. At first sight, France has a slight lead in the implementation of the SDGs, mainly because of its better socio-economic situation²⁰. In 2023, France's SDG Index²¹ score was 82²², compared with 80,4 for Spain²³. However, these figures require a nuanced interpretation for two main reasons.

¹⁹ It should be pointed out that, in the case of VOX, Agenda 2030 is mainly mentioned to defend its abandonment. However, mentions of Agenda 2030, even to criticise it, show a certain presence in the Spanish public debate..

²⁰ In 2020, France's GDP per capita (in purchasing power standards) was EUR 30 800, compared with EUR 25 600 for Spain.

²¹ This is a score out of 100 (100 being the best and 0 the worst).

²² The SDG Index and Dashboards bring together available data for 149 countries to assess where each country stood in 2016 in terms of achieving the SDGs. The SDG Index ranks countries according to their performance on 17 goals. The SDG scorecard uses a traffic light diagram to assess where a country stands in relation to each of the 17 SDGs. It helps countries identify priorities for early action and shows that each country faces major challenges in achieving the SDGs.

²³ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). *Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023*. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

Firstly, Spain's progress since the launch of the 2030 Agenda reforms has been much greater than that of France at the same time, and this with less overall resources. Spain's score rose by 6,6% between 2018²⁴ and 2023²⁵, an increase of 5 points. Over the same period, France's score only rose by 1,9%, an increase of 1,6 points. In 2021, France's gross domestic product (GDP) was EUR 2 957.88 billion, compared with just EUR 1 427.38 billion for Spain. The two countries' resources for implementing the 2030 Agenda are therefore very different. In addition, in the period 2018-2021, Spain's GDP fell by 4.62%, while France's rose by 0.39%²⁶.

France's lag is also illustrated by the International Spillover Index (ISI). This tool measures the cross-border impacts generated by one country on others, which can in turn compromise the latter's ability to achieve the SDGs²⁷. In this respect, Spain has a much less negative impact on the achievement of the SDGs at international level than France, with a score of 70,9 in 2023, compared with 61,9 for France.²⁸ The gap between France and Spain is 0,8 points for the SDG Index, compared with 9 points for the ISI. While France has a slight lead over Spain domestically, it has a much greater negative external spillover impact in third countries than Spain, when considering the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

SPAIN IS A BETTER PERFORMER ACCORDING TO THE INDICATORS

The instruments for implementing the SDGs also take into account other aspects of national public policy. On these points, France seems to be a worse performer than Spain.

The SDGs and the 2030 Agenda featured prominently in Spain's 2021 national budget, as well as in the national recovery plan that followed the COVID crisis. Conversely, they were not in France²⁹. Again, in the report published in 2023 by the SDSN, the SDGs are present in the

²⁴ [SDG Index and dashboards 2018. Global responsibilities. Implementing the goals](#), Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Bertelsmann Stiftung, July 2018.

²⁵ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

²⁶ [World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files](#), World Bank, April 2023.

²⁷ The Spillover Index measures the cross-border impacts generated by one country on others, which may in turn compromise the latter's ability to achieve the SDGs. The Spillover Index covers financial spillovers (e.g., financial secrecy, profit shifting), environmental and social impacts embedded in trade and consumption (e.g., imported CO2 emissions, imported biodiversity threats, occupational accidents embedded in trade), and security and development cooperation (ODA, arms exports). ODA is an example of a positive impact. The scores should be interpreted in the same way as the SDG index score: from 0 (poor performance, i.e., significant negative spillovers) to 100 (good performance, i.e., no significant negative spillovers). To enable international comparisons, most of the spillover indicators are expressed in per capita terms.

²⁸ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

²⁹ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

Spanish annual budget, but are missing from the French budget³⁰. The 2030 Agenda is therefore much less integrated transversally into public policies in France than in Spain.

In 2023, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) developed a new tool, , which measures a country's commitments and efforts to achieve the SDGs. According to its ranking, France is in 32nd place with a score of 64.1 out of 100, far behind Spain, which is in 13th place with a score of 74.8, a difference of more than 10 points³¹.

Finally, monitoring of the SDGs is measured by the Statistical Performance Index³², based on World Bank data. According to this index, France (90,8) performs less well than Spain (91,4).

³⁰ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

³¹ Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. (2023). [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#). Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press, 2023. 10.25546/102924

³² The statistical performance index is a weighted average of statistical performance indicators that assess the performance of national statistical systems. It covers five pillars of statistical performance: data use, data services, data products, data sources and data infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

This report highlights the major differences between France and Spain in the way the SDGs are transposed into policy channels. The administrative bodies responsible for these tasks are much better developed in Spain than in France and there is also a glaring gap in terms of government accountability and responsibility. Accordingly, while France's overall score on the SDGs is better than Spain's, it must be put into perspective given the lack of ownership of the SDGs in French public discourse, and also given the significant shortcomings in the way France's foreign policy approaches the 2030 Agenda.

For this reason, and as a follow-up to the present report, Coordination SUD's SDG Working Group is also publishing a position paper which proposes a number of ways in which the 2030 Agenda can be better reflected in French public policy.

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