



This situation, where many parties are responsible for a commitment, but lack the overall authority, or will, to act effectively, is a common governance challenge. The EU presents itself as a leader in global sustainability, yet the published documents analysed within MAGIC do not make it explicit by whom, when and how these governance challenges will be resolved.

## Policy Coherence

During the MAGIC data collection process (2016-2020) the lack of an implementation strategy for the SDGs was observed – the 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme ends in 2020 and the Sustainable Development Strategy, refreshed in 2010, seems to have been superseded by the proposed Green Deal. In the interim, the SDGs have been implemented through the existing external and domestic EU policies. Much of the EU's attention to SDG implementation has focused on helping 'less developed' countries through international cooperation and development policy. Externally facing, the focus is on development policy coherence.

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CAP TO THE SDGs

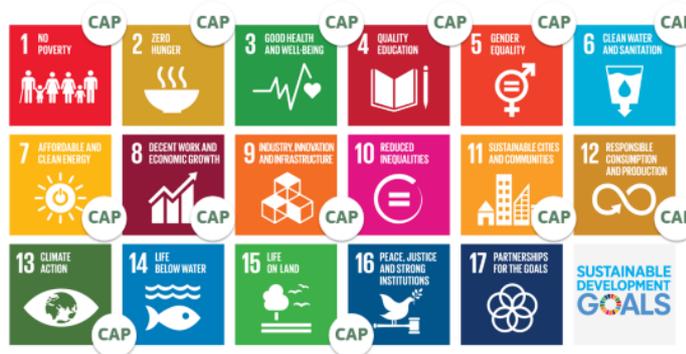


Figure 2: European Commission view of connections

However, progress towards the SDGs within Europe also requires an internal perspective. MAGIC analysis suggests that domestic policy coherence remains problematic. Despite rhetorical claims that individual policies support multiple SDGs (see Figure 2), the report<sup>[3]</sup> on progress to SDG2 (Zero Hunger) highlights problems. These include a lack of coherence between the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Energy policy beyond biofuels, and the limited success of agri-environment measures to deliver Water Framework Directive and Biodiversity Strategy outcomes. Therefore, the assumption -that progress towards the SDGS could be made using existing domestic policy implementation processes - seems problematic.

## Conclusion

The EU plays a welcome role in helping Member States on the global journey towards sustainable development. However, challenges in implementation remain – navigating shared competencies whilst ensuring subsidiarity; and ensuring policy coherence across all policy domains and various Directorates General. Therefore, it is important that the EU recognises and articulates an implementation approach or strategy that goes beyond the status quo. Given that progress towards the SDGs remains slow, globally and within the EU<sup>[2]</sup>, there is an urgent need to prioritise SDG delivery, within or as a complement to the Green Recovery Deal. Given the climate, biodiversity and Covid-19 crises, a radical, rather than incremental, response to implementation is needed.

## Key sources for further information

More Policy Briefs are available from <https://www.magic-nexus.eu/policy-briefs>

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1. European Parliament, *Europe's approach to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: good practices and the way forward*. 2019.
2. Montéville, M. and M. Kettunen, *Assessing and accelerating the EU progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2019, a briefing to inform the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the SDG Summit in New York (9 –18 July and 24 –25 September 2019)*. 2019, IEEP.
3. Matthews, K.B., et al., *Report on EU sustainability goals: insights from Quantitative Story Telling and the WEF nexus. MAGIC (H2020–GA 689669) Project Deliverable 5.1, 31st July 2020*. 2020: Online. p. 136.
4. Waylen, K.A., et al. *Europe's contribution to the SDGs via Sustainable Agriculture: The need to better account for 'spillover' effects in other countries*. Magic Policy Briefs, 2019.

