

## **Romanian Transectoral Governance through the Network of Sustainable Development Hubs in Romania**

**Dr. Ștefania-Elena DEÁK<sup>1</sup>**

Senior Adviser, Department for Sustainable Development, Government of Romania

Email: [stefania.deak@gov.ro](mailto:stefania.deak@gov.ro)

**Dr. László BORBÉLY**

State Counselor, Department for Sustainable Development, Government of Romania

E-mail: [laszlo.borbely@gov.ro](mailto:laszlo.borbely@gov.ro)

**Ilena Luminița BĂLĂLĂU**

Director, Department for Sustainable Development, Government of Romania

Email: [luminita.balalau@gov.ro](mailto:luminita.balalau@gov.ro)

*Keywords:* SD Hubs, expert in SD

### *Abstract*

Romania has received UN DESA recognition for increasing the efficiency of institutions in pursuing the SDGs, emphasizing the links between the SDGs through integrated policies and development plans.

The institutional framework, developed by the Department for Sustainable Development (DSD) - Government of Romania, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level, emphasizes that all segments of society must be involved in achieving sustainable development goals, from political actors to civil society, private sector, academic environment and so on.

Establishing a Network of Sustainable Development Hubs (NSDH) in line ministries it's an innovative approach of DSD for ensuring coherence in governmental action and for professionalizing the competences in strategic planning and sustainable development of the central public administration. These hubs consist of staff who are tasked with implementing the SDGs while also acting as liaisons between their own institutions, different departments, National Institute of Statistics and DSD. Currently, with support of ESF funding, DSD formalizes the collaboration with SD Hubs and supports their civil servants to become Experts of Sustainable Development, a new professional figure in Romania.

### *Extended Abstract*

Institutional collaboration to strengthen policy coherence for sustainable development is a major challenge in implementing the 2030 Agenda in Romania. The establishment of the DSD in May 2017, as the national coordinator for the implementation of the SDGs, was the time to accelerate

---

<sup>1</sup> Contact person

the process of adapting the 2030 Agenda to the national context, through the *Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030* (RSDS 2030), and the creation of the institutional framework for coordinating and monitoring implementation.

An institutional scan of governance mechanisms to support the SDGs in Romania was conducted by the OECD in 2018. The OECD report aim was to provide policies and budgets recommendations for achieving Romania's targets for 2030. SDGs governance models, applicable in different countries were presented in the report<sup>2</sup> and subsequently analyzed by DSD.

Following the OECD recommendations, RSDS 2030<sup>3</sup> defines the institutional framework to support the SDGs, summarized in Figure 1, and refined in the National Action Plan that facilitates its implementation.

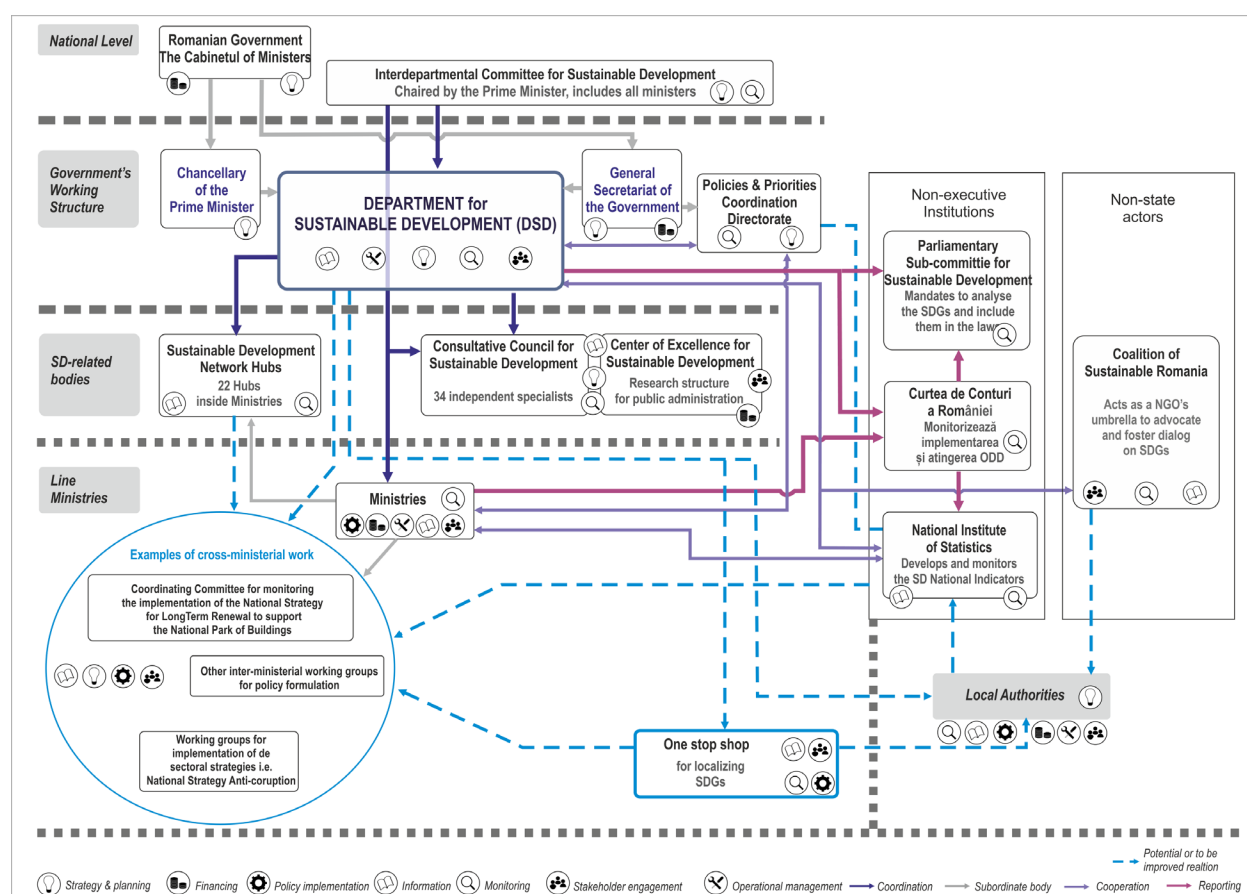


Figure 1 National Governance Framework for SDGs<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ROMANIA: OECD Scan of Institutional Mechanisms to Deliver on the SDGs, <http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/romania-oecd-scan-of-institutional-mechanisms-to-deliver-on-the-sdgs>

<sup>3</sup> Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030, <http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/files/public/10000001/Romania-Sustainable-Development-Strategy-2030-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> National Action Plan for the implementation of RSDS 2030 - draft, [http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/files/public/10000001/planul\\_national\\_de\\_actiune\\_pentru\\_implementarea\\_snddr\\_2030\\_hg.pdf](http://dezvoltaredurabila.gov.ro/files/public/10000001/planul_national_de_actiune_pentru_implementarea_snddr_2030_hg.pdf)

For the effective implementation of RSDS 2030, DSD has undertaken concrete actions for setting up and operationalize the Romanian institutional framework that ensures policy coherence to reach all 17 SDGs:

- the Interdepartmental Committee for Sustainable Development, established by Government Decision No. 272/2019, comprises all ministers headed by the Prime Minister and represents the key institution for policy coherence for sustainable development.
- the Consultative Council for Sustainable Development, established by Government Decision No. 114/2020, comprises 34 members representing academia, scientific community and civil society, who advise DSD regarding the Action plan of RSDS 2030, national indicators of sustainable development and tracking the results of policies implementation in the field of SD,
- Sustainable Development Hubs (SD Hubs) as a national network of experts at the level of each ministry, who pursue SDGs implementation in their field, acting as liaisons between their institutions and the DSD and the National Institute of Statistics (implementing, monitoring, reporting),
- Coalition of Sustainable Romania as a national network of relevant stakeholders representing civil society, acting as communication channel between governors and citizens (DSD launched the invitation for it's establishment), since 2020,
- National Action Plan for the implementation of RSDS 2030, the main instrument for the coordination of actions aiming at the creation, consolidation, functioning and development of specific governance structures directed towards the implementation, during the decade 2021-2030.
- Support actions for the establishment of the Center of Excellence for Public Administration in the field of SD, to support public sector innovation. The Center will be established and operationalized as a center for research, education and dialogue on sustainable development, in support of public policies for sustainable development, with a focus on the perspective and opportunities of digital transformation. The center will serve exclusively the public sector, will be a specialized consulting hub dedicated to the public sector, which will support administrative and legislative activity.

In order for this structure to be effective for implementing RSDS 2030, a very important element is the transectoral cooperation through the Network of the Sustainable Development Hubs (NSDH). The SD Hubs are created at the level of ministries, by specialists in sectoral fields, who follow the policies and strategies in the field and provide statistical data specific to their fields of activity. These data must be aquired and transmitted to the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) which is the coordinator of the National Statistical System and the main producer of official statistical data at national level. The collaboration of DSD, NIS and NSDH aims to dynamically correlate the indicators for sustainable development with the evolution at European and international level.

The functioning of the NSDH requires staff trained to fulfill the specific tasks of its role: to analyze sectoral policies in relation to RSDS 2030 and Agenda 2030; collection, processing, analysis and reporting of statistical data specific to each sectoral field; participation in cross-sectoral thematic working groups, ensuring communication channels between institutions at central and local level.

In support of the professionalization of NSDH, SDS initiated a request to update the nomenclature of the Romanian Classification of Occupations (COR) for the introduction of the occupation "sustainable development expert". Thus, in February 2018, in Romania, the occupation "sustainable development expert" code 242232 was created, Basic group 2422 - Specialists in the field of administrative policies. Furthermore, SDS coordinated the elaboration of the Occupational Standard for the occupation "sustainable development expert", as a tool that establishes the link between the requirements related to the implementation of RDSD 2030 and the real conditions existing at the level of central and local public institutions. The occupational standard allows the education and professional training of the staff at the level of public authorities in the field of sustainable development to be achieved in a unitary way at the level of national.

Identifying and establishing the legal framework for collaboration between DSD, NIS and NSDH, the purpose and object of collaboration and communication activities is an important stage in the effort to support policy coherence for sustainable development, which must be continued with the localizing of SDGs.

The challenge of DSD is to formalize the NSDH, in the sense of recognizing the importance of the hubs inside of ministries and the way of working with DSD and NIS. The action of setting up the hubs started in 2019, when the network was structured in 22 domains, which can be found in the ministries. However, due to the high frequency of changes in the structure of ministries, inconsistencies in institutional memory and the migration of civil servants to other areas of activity or institutions, there is a real threat to the efficiency of NSDH.

This paper will present challenges and a detailed analysis of the situation so far and ways to strengthen the NSDH structure, as a key element in the implementation and monitoring of progress in achieving the SDGs.