

ONLINE

20 FEB 2024 - 19 MAY 2024

# Policy Coherence and Systems Thinking for Sustainable Development

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE SDGS



**LANGUAGE**  
English



**DURATION**  
5 weeks



**ENROLL BY**  
12 Jan 2024



**PRICE**  
Free



**LOCATION**  
ONLINE



**TARGET**  
Everyone

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An engaging online course designed to equip participants with an understanding of why a focus on system interconnections is key for achieving sustainable development. The course explores concepts related to policy coherence and systems thinking, country examples, as well as specific tools and mechanisms.

## Introduction

Conventional approaches to development often focus on sector-specific economic results, working under the assumption that markets function perfectly. Such approaches do not adequately consider externalities and their impact on society, equity or the environment. They also often ignore the transboundary and inter-generational effects which results in siloed, contradictory policies that can undermine one another.

This course explores ways to uncover system interconnections and foster integration across the Sustainable Development Goals, against a backdrop of political economy analysis. It explores the concept of systems thinking, as well as a cross-organizational and cross-sectoral policy coherence at the national, regional and international levels. It aims at equipping participants with an understanding of why a focus on system interconnections is key for achieving sustainable development, what coherent policymaking entails, and what are some specific tools, mechanisms and approaches that can be employed to foster both.

This course was originally designed by the UN System Staff College, in coordination with the National University of Singapore acting through its Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and the Hertie School – The University of Governance in Berlin, and in collaboration with the OECD Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development Unit in Paris.

# Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, participants will be better able to:

- Describe the vision and principles underlying the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the evolution of the concept of policy coherence for sustainable development;
- Recognize systems thinking as a framework of thought, and its importance when dealing with complexity;
- Explain the relevance of policy coherence as an approach and a tool to achieve sustainable development outcomes;
- Use specific tools, mechanisms and approaches that can be employed to foster systems thinking and policy coherence for sustainable development, including partnerships and multi-stakeholder engagement.

## Course methodology

UNSSC online courses are designed to deliver maximum learning outcomes through carefully chosen high-quality learning materials. Our facilitated online courses combine self-paced study modules with applied learning components, such as case studies, interactive exercises, specially tailored to the needs of the professional interested in deepening their knowledge on a particular subject matter.

Participants will benefit from live moderated webinars which feature valuable input from renowned subject matter experts and allow real-time dialogue with high-level speakers. Webinar recordings are made available to ensure that participants have a flexible and seamless learning experience.

An expert facilitator guides and assists participants throughout the course and provides real-time feedback on activities and exercises. Our user-friendly social online learning platform provides participants with the opportunity to connect with peers from diverse organizational backgrounds, fostering peer-to-peer learning.

UNSSC online courses give learners the opportunity to complete activities when it best fits their schedule. Participants are largely free to determine their own weekly study plan. Lasting five weeks and demanding six hours of study per week, UNSSC online courses incorporate the same high academic rigour as any UNSSC face-to-face programme.

## Course contents

**Week 1** provides an introduction to the vision and principles of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the framework of systems thinking.

**Week 2** discusses the political economy of sustainable development and introduces the concept and evolution of policy coherence for sustainable development, and elaborates upon vertical and horizontal coherence, as well as the different mechanisms that enhance policy coherence across the policy cycle.

**Week 3** discusses the importance of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on the different approaches towards understanding the concept of PCSD and the importance of policy coherence at national, regional, and international levels.

**Week 4** looks at the importance of partnerships and stakeholder engagement for PCSD, introducing tools and review mechanisms to assess integration of the 2030 Agenda at the national level. It examines the significance of tracking progress on policy coherence, through a systems thinking lens.

**Week 5** focuses on the synergies, trade-offs and strategic interventions for the future when applying systems thinking in order to foster policy coherence for sustainable development.

## Target audience

UN staff, government representatives, development practitioners as well as members of civil society, the private sector, academia and foundations.

# Cost of participation

This online course is offered **free-of-charge**.

UNSSC adopts a concrete methodology in its selection process that considers the scope, objectives, and expected outcomes of the course as well as specific selection criteria for its course participants to increase course impact. The criteria include quality of motivation, professional experience and knowledge, organizational commitment, diversity, the potential for future work, and willingness to contribute to the course.

Interested individuals are encouraged to sign up for the course and provide a clear and well-crafted motivation statement in the online application form, with a short explanation of the benefit they can derive from the course as well as their possible contribution to enriching the course.

Participants will enjoy the following benefits from the free online course:

- 3-months access to course materials (including exclusive video material and key readings, recording of webinars and speakers' presentations).
- Participation in live webinars with renowned subject matter experts.
- Exclusive access to the UNSSC online social learning environment with training and supporting background materials, and the opportunity to stay connected with colleagues.

Certificates from the United Nations System Staff College will be awarded to participants upon completion of the course.

UNSSC fosters collaborative peer-to-peer learning among its course participants. To achieve this, UNSSC adopts a rigorous methodology in its selection process that considers the course's scope, objectives, and expected outcomes. UNSSC utilizes specific selection criteria for its course participants to promote cohort-based learning and increase course impact. Interested individuals are encouraged to sign up for the moderated online course and be **ready to complete an additional comprehensive selection survey after the course registration closes**.

*Selection criteria:*

The selection criteria include quality of motivation, professional experience and knowledge, commitment, diversity (gender, geographic region, sector, etc.), and willingness to contribute to the course.

*Selection process:*

1. Register for the course by clicking on the sign-up button. Please provide a clear motivation statement and a short explanation of the benefit you can derive from the course as well as your possible contribution to enriching it. Course registration closes on 12 January 2024.
2. After the deadline for registration, you will receive a link to a survey to confirm the necessary conditions for course completion (technical requirements and time availability), as well as to answer course-specific questions.