

Hungarian sustainability bodies – framework for SDGs activities of EO and GI sector

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When the EO and GI sector and infrastructure is providing services of monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) one has to be familiar with the sustainability bodies – institutions, forums and financial arrangements. They form framework for the SDGs activities of EO and GI sector. Hereby I summarize the Hungarian status on that topic.

The below discussed Sustainability Bodies in Hungary are fully described in publication of the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) in Hungarian¹. A shorter description in English is available in Voluntary National Review of Hungary on the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies 2018²

1. Hungarian policy on sustainable development

Besides its general importance, Hungary had increased commitments when implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for the next significant reasons. First, prior to 2030 Agenda, a well elaborated strategy, namely the Hungarian National Framework Strategy for Sustainable Development has been introduced in 2013. Second, Hungarian ambassador to UN, Mr. Csaba Körösi was acting and negotiating as co-chair of the Open Working Group on 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development from 2013. Third, the 2013 Budapest Water Summits sponsored by the President of the Hungarian Republic János Áder promoted that the topic of water and sanitation be emphasized as a standalone goal, namely the goal 6 of SDG.

The Hungarian Parliament adopted a new strategy called the **National Framework Strategy on Sustainable Development** for 2012–2024, in March 2013 (NFSSD)³. Its task is the preservation and enhancement of national resources, categorized as human, social, environmental and economic priorities.

The analysis of the NFSSD carried out after adoption of the 2030 Agenda presented the four priorities of the NFSSD. Their targets are in compliance with the 17 Goals of 2030 Agenda.

Biennial progress reports on the implementation of the NFSSD are presented with the involvement of the National Council for Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the NGOs, and other stakeholders. Already three biennial reports have been issued in 2015, 2017 and in 2019.

The Fundamental Law of Hungary is one of those few laws in the world clearly formulating the principles which obligates the State and everyone to protect and maintain the natural resources, the biodiversity and the cultural artefacts (therefor sustainability) and to preserve them for future generations [The Fundamental Law of Hungary, foundation, *Article P*], paragraph (1)]⁴.

2. Hungarian Institutions and Forums of Sustainability

The main body to protect the Fundamental Law and therefor sustainability is the independent institution of **Constitutional Court** which judges the violations of fundamental rights as presented by

¹ https://www.parlament.hu/documents/1238941/0/1905_NFFT_intrend_A4_beliv_final.pdf

² https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20137Voluntary_National_Review_of_Hungary_v2.pdf

³ <https://eionet.kormany.hu/akadalymentes/download/1/26/71000/NFFT-HUN-web.pdf>

⁴ http://www.njt.hu/translated/doc/TheFundamentalLawofHungary_20201223_FIN.pdf

the Ombudsman. If necessary, this Court can annul laws and decrees that are in contradiction with the principles of sustainability.

In 2008 Hungary established the **Office of the Ombudsman for Future Generations**, *an exceptional institution in comparison worldwide*. The Ombudsman is responsible for protection of the constitutional right to a healthy environment, the right to the preservation of physical and mental health in connection with sustainable development, and the protection of environmental and cultural heritage of the nation. It is a unique body advocating the interests of the future generations at the national level from the sustainable point of view.

For the issues related to environmental and nature conservation, sustainable land use, and the sustainable management of natural resources a **permanent Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD)** at the Parliament has been established in 2010⁵. This Committee is a body for proposing, judging, selectively probating and collaborating in audits of governmental processes.

In 2008, the **National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)**⁶ was set up by the Parliament as a consultative and advisory body in the overall field of sustainable development. Its main tasks are to promote advance the attitude of society in ways that encourage and support sustainable activities on a wide scale for strengthening greater social engagement. The NCSD has about 30 members representing key national stakeholders, including political parties, representatives of the academia, the private sector, civil society and church organizations. Chairman for the NCSD is the current Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament.

The **Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MIT)** is the main governmental responsible for implementation of the Hungarian portion of SDGs. Their task is to coach society and improve the economy. As a line ministry, the MIT is responsible for the Environmental and Energy-Efficiency Operative Programme.

The **Agricultural Ministry** has the sustainability tasks for all land related matters, food production, hunt, fishery, forest and land administration, as well as mapping and environmental sustainability overall. This Ministry is the governmental integrator of the goals related to the NFSSD.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFA)** represents the Hungarian sustainability to UN, and coordinates Hungarian implementation of the sustainable development goals such that each line ministry is responsible for its sectorial task. The external tasks and actions with respect to SDGs are in the responsibility of MFAT as well.

The President's Office established **Directorate for Environmental Sustainability of the President of the Republic** on January 1, 2015. The directorate headed by Csaba Kőrösi, former UN ambassador is responsible for long term sustainability issues, which arch over governing cycles. The directorate holds contact to national and international bodies, educational institutions and organisations related to sustainability. It prepares background information and supports the President's Office in sustainability related issues.

As proposer, advisor and judgement of the Government the **National Council of Environmental Protection (NCEP)** makes declaration for law proposals, for national and regional conceptions, plans, impact assessment and economical regulator means in connection with environmental protection.

⁵ <https://www.parlament.hu/web/fenntarthato-fejlodes-bizottsaga/>

⁶ <https://www.parlament.hu/web/ncsd/national-council-for-sustainable-development>

The **Hungary Helps program** is acting partly for realization of the humanitarian type sustainable development goals, mainly abroad.

The **Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO)**⁷ has a fundamental role in the national implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by collecting data related to the SDGs and working out the national indicator system. The Office started the data collection on sustainable development framework already in July 2015. Since 2007, the HCSO has also published the national indicators of SD every two years with the latest in 2019.

Important supportive roles are also being played by the **Hungarian National Bank**, the **Fiscal Council of Hungary** and the **State Audit Office of Hungary** as well.

Business Council for Sustainable Development in Hungary (BCSDH) has been found in 2007⁸. It promotes economical adaptation, innovative solution and competitiveness and contributes to the economic efficiency, ecological balance and our society's quality of life.

The **Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals** has been established by 11 national organisations in October, 2017 with the following objectives:

- promoting the SDGs and raising public awareness,
- monitoring the implementation of SDG in Hungary, and making recommendations,
- promoting dialogue between the governmental and non-governmental organisations,
- exchanging information in connection with SDGs.

The Visegrad for Sustainability, **V4SDG** is the only initiative which is managed by young people for sustainable development purposes and is harmonized in countries of the Four Visegradians – Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary.

3. Governmental Financial Arrangements Promoting Implementation of SDGs

In Hungary programmes on developments and society transformation are continuously being implemented, most of which serves the NFSSD and SDGs. They are harmonized with and financed by both the EU and Hungarian objectives. Stakeholders of the sustainable development strategy are using these strategies and funds for their sustainability goals.

The priorities for Hungary are defined in a support framework referred to as "Széchenyi 2020 (2014-2020)" which consists of the following operative programmes (OP)⁹:

- Competitive Central-Hungary OP, VEKOP,
- Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme, GINOP,
- Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP, KEHOP,
- Human Resources Development Operational Programme, EFOP,
- Integrated Transport OP, IKOP,
- Public Administration and Civil Service Development, KÖFOP,
- Territorial and Settlement Development, TOP
- Operative Programme for Regional Development, VP
- Operative Programmes for Indigent Persons Support, RSZTOP and
- Hungarian Fish Farming Operative Programme, MAHOP.

⁷ <https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=en>

⁸ <https://www.wbcd.org/Overview/Global-Network/Regions/Europe/Hungary/BCSD-Hungary>

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/