

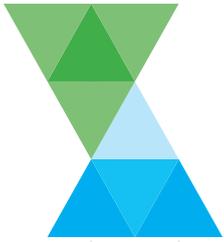


REFERENCE FRAMEWORK
FOR POLICY COHERENCE FOR
DEVELOPMENT IN
THE BASQUE COUNTRY

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Humanity, and the continuation of life itself as we know it on the planet, finds itself at a crossroads.

As stated in the Declaration of the United Nations, agreed in September 2015 to mark the approval of the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) and the 2030 Agenda:

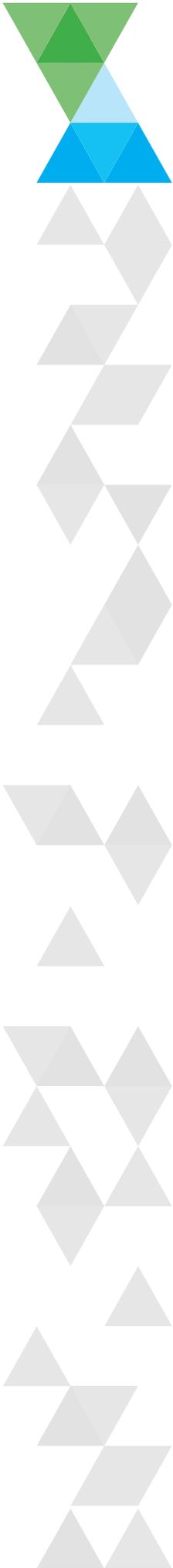
“Sustainable development faces immense challenges. Billions of our citizens continue to live in poverty and are denied a life of dignity. There are rising inequalities within and among countries. There are enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power. Gender inequality remains a key challenge. Unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, is a major concern. Global health threats, more frequent and intense natural disasters, spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades. Natural resource depletion and adverse impacts of environmental degradation, including desertification, drought, land degradation, freshwater scarcity and loss of biodiversity, add to and exacerbate the list of challenges which humanity faces. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development (...). The survival of many societies, and of the biological support systems of the planet, is at risk.”

The persistence of old problems, and the emergence of new ones, create a context of uncertainty and insecurity and of risks at all levels –from local to global– which oblige all governments in the world to rethink some aspects of political action to be able to face them. But the scope and importance of the problems and threats in point contrasts with the increase in the growing difficulties to combat them, which are derived from two extremely complex phenomena which are complementary and feed off each other.

On the one hand we find a globalised economy in which growing interdependencies are created in all areas, which, day-upon-day, limits the capacities of local, regional or state administrations to tackle and manage separately a good proportion of the challenges we must face.

And, on the other hand, there is an increasingly severe difficulty in establishing shared references which facilitate global agreements on said challenges, with the increase in cultural and religious clashes, conflicts over natural resources, and human rights abuses.

We are facing a challenge which is above all political and cultural, much more than technological. Humanity today has sufficient technical and scientific



knowledge and resources to ensure a dignified life for all people. However, we lack sufficient political and civilising consensus capacity to be able to organise human life in a more efficient way in the social and ecological aspect, and to treat people's rights with greater respect.

Within this framework, Policy Coherence for Development, understood as the integration of the perspective of human development and sustainability in the design, start-up and evaluation of public policies at different levels, as well as the coordination and complementarity between them, constitutes a fundamental challenge for political action. In our case, Policy Coherence for Development gains shape and expresses itself in a context such as the European one, in which multi-level governance challenges need consistent and agreed-upon action to face those common issues that affect all fields and which are the responsibility of all institutions, including those of a sub-state nature.

In these circumstances, the Basque Government assumes that Policy Coherence for Development must be a basic reference point for government action, insofar as it affects both domestic development strategies and refers to external action or the relationship between the two matters. For this reason, we subscribe to and publicise the following frame of reference about Policy Coherence for Development, so that it may be taken into account in the reflection on public policies and the elaboration of the same.



IMPORTANCE, SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The notion of Policy Coherence for Development arose at the headquarters of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) in the mid-90s, in the heat of the growing debate about the impact of international cooperation and its relationship with other policies which carry weight in the processes of development.

From then until now, Policy Coherence for Development has evolved its concepts at the same time as increasing its relevance as a consequence of the new challenges in point. At present, the threats hovering over the future, expressed as violence and rights abuses, ecological crisis and climate change, economic insecurity and precariousness, inequality and loss of social cohesion, continuing gender discrimination, cultural and religious tensions, etc., paint a picture in which the quality and efficiency of public action acquire a special relevance.

The challenges in point are of such magnitude that no territory can feel itself apart from them. Neither can any public administration, at whatever level they consider themselves. Now, the interconnection and interdependence of the different phenomena that must be confronted mean the sectoral specialisation of politics should be partly reconsidered from the perspective of coherence.

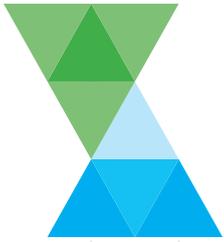
At the present moment there is no room for opposing logics to confront the problems of each territory itself and the global problems that are common to all societies. In a context characterised by interdependence, the traditional division between domestic and external or international policies makes less and less sense. Policies until now considered domestic have a growing international projection, and vice versa.

Meanwhile, in the international arena, the traditional divisions between North and South are slowly becoming blurred as a consequence of the ever greater role of the new merging powers on different continents, as well as the growing deterioration of the living conditions in countries and territories until now considered developed. In addition, and although their manifestations continue appearing in the territorial field, development problems are often generated within the framework of transnational logics, all of which means we have to act from a logic of global governance and from a more integrated vision which refers to policy coherence.

In this context, even though the preoccupation with Policy Coherence for Development initially arose as a challenge associated with the politics of



cooperation, it also constitutes an unavoidable reference point in confronting overall public policies. We are conscious that the plurality of society and the variety of interests and existing conflicts make it extremely complicated to achieve full policy coherence. However, from acknowledgement and respect for said plurality, we want to underline the need to advance towards a greater Policy Coherence for Development as the route to achieving a more just, equitable and sustainable society.



SCOPE OF THE CURRENT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES

The stated challenges have different expressions in the economic, political, social, ecological and cultural spheres, which are related to each other, and which affect human security and the sustainability of life itself.

In the economic sphere there is a noticeable ever-growing contradiction between the growth model and its capacity to deliver living means to all people, and guarantee them a dignified level of life. Joining the growing financial insecurity or the precariousness of employment is the difficulty of institutions to regulate and order economic life and the running of markets in a world ever more open and globalised.

In the social sphere we are faced with an increasingly unequal and polarised world, in which cohesion is weakened and conflicts are on the increase. A world in which, in addition, social protection and employment rights are being eroded against narrow and unilateral visions of competitiveness. It is necessary to draw attention to persistent gender inequality and discrimination, and to the problems of employment and family conciliation, which threaten the sustainability of life itself.

In the ecological sphere there is a growing deterioration of the baseline of resources on which the continuity of life depends, which translates into considerable short, medium and long-term threats. Health problems associated with air, land and water pollution, deforestation and the advance of desertification, the loss of biodiversity, the scarcity of some resources and conflicts over them, and climate change represent serious warnings and put the future of human life at risk.

In the cultural sphere, we are presiding over a change which is unprecedented in human history, in which cultural identities are being blurred and reaffirmed in a single contradictory process. A process loaded with uncertainty, in which cultural clashes and even religious clashes acquire a growing relevance, which as well as generating violence and insecurity, impedes the generation of the necessary consensus –based on shared values– to confront some of the current challenges.

Finally, in the political sphere, there is a palpable difficulty in channelling public opinion in a context in which the decision frameworks do not always correspond to the field of incidence of the problems. The fact that different phenomena exceed the capacity of governments –local, regional or state– to tackle them with efficiency and rigour, harms the systems of representation and questions basic aspects of political action as it has functioned until now.



THE RELEVANCE OF PUBLIC POLICIES

The context of risks and threats superficially described above, contrasts with the fact that never before now has there existed a greater knowledge of the problems to which we must find an answer, not greater technological capacity to tackle them.

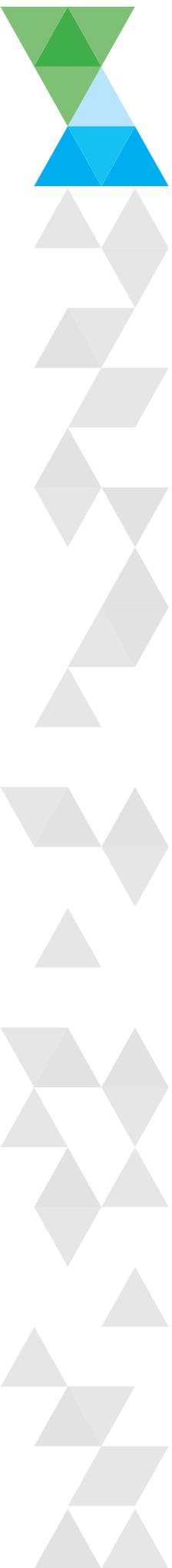
Over the last few decades detailed studies and analyses have been generated about the diverse questions affecting human life and the future of development. Currently there are ever-more sophisticated statistical systems and measuring instruments which allow us to discover the scope and evolution of different variables in very diverse spheres. As a result of this, diagnostics and action plans have been devised which are underwritten by a great number of countries at different international meetings and conferences, and also analysis and proposals in different state and local spheres. However, a large part of said texts have not been translated into effective strategies, as a consequence of the difficulties and contradictions existing in the political sphere.

Some public policies tend to approach their objectives and design their instruments from a sectoral perspective, starting out from considerations based on increasingly specialised diagnostics. However, the reality shows that the starting up of these prepared plans, and their real impact, often clashes with exogenous difficulties, derived from different conditioners –social, cultural, ecological– which had not been incorporated into the analysis. This obliges us to take into account the transversality of some especially relevant questions and the necessity of incorporating them into the preparation processes of the different policies.

We are fully conscious that the contradictions and conflicts between different objectives will always be present in public action, above all in a context like the current one of growing complexity and interdependency of economic and social processes, all of which conditions and limits work in the sphere of PCD.

However, and from the acknowledgement of the difficulties and obstacles pertaining to this task, it is necessary to advance towards greater public policy coherence when it comes to promoting development that allows the satisfaction of the needs of Basque society and which is compatible with the satisfaction of human needs in other countries and territories.

As stated in the United Nations declaration in favour of SDGs, the above will demand –for certain– the promotion of changes in the current production and consumption guidelines and models which, at the same time, affects very diverse aspects of the economic and social life and requires an agreed political action where the Policy Coherence for Development will play a relevant role.



THE COOPERATION POLICY AND THE POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

As has been pointed out, the Policy Coherence for Development has, amongst its foundation and objectives, the necessity to make compatible the development processes and to meet human needs in all countries. Showing respect for the forms of economic and social organisation of each of them, the aim is that decisions that are taken in a territory do not damage the possibilities of others to move towards higher levels of well-being.

The relevance of this matter is directly linked to the debates that arose over the last few decades about the effectiveness of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and cooperation in general. In these debates, indications could be found that the impact of the cooperation policies for development has been limited oftentimes by the action of the countries providing assistance, whose decisions in different aspects (commercial, financial, environmental, political, etc.) have damaged development processes in countries with whom they were supposedly cooperating. Therefore, from the beginning of the 90s, the OECD has been claiming the need for greater coherence, avoiding the waste of the potential contribution of the ODA through other policies.

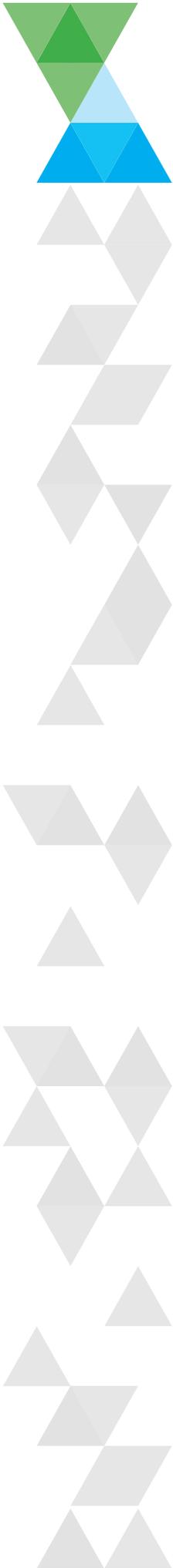
These considerations must be taken into account in the cooperation policies for development of all countries, and Euskadi cannot stand apart from them. This is why the strategies of the Basque institutions in the cooperative field –and the plans derived from them– must increasingly incorporate the PCD perspective as a basic reference. And, at the same time, it is necessary that the government's whole action, and not only the strategies of the AVCD (Basque Agency for Development Cooperation), must take into account the potential impact of different policies on the development processes in other places and, in this case, in those countries and territories with which it cooperates.

Meanwhile, it is important to point out that the demands imposed on cooperation policies for development –their contribution to gender equity, to sustainability, to respect for people's rights, etc.– must also inform the public policies addressed to our own development as society. We cannot build our future by damaging –albeit unintentionally– that of other societies or territories, and we cannot think about our cooperation or our assistance from the defence of some references that we then will not demand from ourselves as society.

Also, until very recently, it had been assumed that the questions related to development only affected certain types of countries –those that needed help– since others were already developed. However, currently there is broad agreement, academic, social and political, about the reversibility of development



processes and about the existence of important issues –environmental, social, gender and other types– in countries that, until now, were considered developed. This forces us to think about cooperation for development in a much wider dimension, which transcends traditional aid policies, and in which PCD must occupy a central place, promoting the generation of synergies between the different strategies which are boosted or promoted by the government.



POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE EXTERNAL ACTIVITY OF THE BASQUE GOVERNMENT

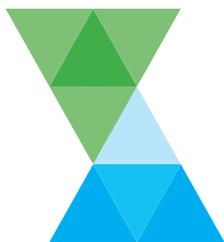
Regarding the external activity of the government, this must, as a whole – and not only the strategy or the cooperation plans for development– keep in mind the PCD perspective. This is in line with the concerns emanating from the European Union, as stated in the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992, which stated that *“The Union shall in particular ensure the consistency of its external activities as a whole in the context of its external relations, security, economic and development policies.”*

The importance of PCD in external activity as a whole is also linked to the problems derived from a globalisation process which has been forming independently of public policies, when not against them. This has generated an increasing fragility of the international cooperation mechanisms in very different fields, a progressive weakening of the different organisation of the UN systems, and greater difficulty to agree on solutions to the different problems in point.

The setback experienced by public policies and areas of cooperation have also supported some tendencies that operate negatively at an international level, such as the defence of competitiveness as an absolute value, without specifying or clarifying the content of said notion, or without explaining its relationship with other values, such as collaboration or solidarity. From this perspective, we consider that it is necessary to promote a competitiveness notion based on the defence of social and ecological efficiency as identifying marks of the model that we wish to promote, rather than as a dispute of markets sustained, sometimes, by the reduction of rights, the precariousness and insecurity of people, or the destruction of natural resources.

From this perspective, the Basque Country Strategy, and the external activity of the Basque Government as a whole, must promote, at the same time, an adequate insertion of Euskadi in the global economy and the defence of a coexistence framework based on the rights of people and the conservation of resources for future generations. And all that requires, once more, regarding PCD as a central concern when establishing policies.

In this framework, public institutions must also promote dialogue in the private sector so that the internationalisation strategies of Basque companies assume human development and sustainability requirements, proposing those principles as necessary references when it comes to supporting these references.



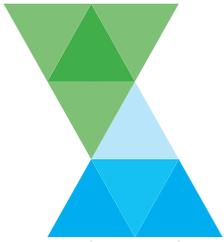
TRAINING IN VALUES, EDUCATION POLICY AND POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Basque Government considers that the promotion, both at internal and international levels, of human development and sustainability must also be projected in the educational field and the training of new generations in the values of sustainability and social justice –synchronic and diachronic, that is, at the present time and also with those who have not been born yet– and respect to human rights.

Institutions have great responsibility when it comes to promoting policies whose objective is to achieve the aforementioned aims, but in a society with no values, politics can end up collapsing due to the absence of a solid commitment which, necessarily, must be rooted in the first stages of the training of people. Initially, education for development was conceived as a tool to make society –in this case Basque society– aware of the problems of other societies suffering from problems related to general poverty, violence, or lack of opportunities for people. It was about achieving the adhesion of our society to the cooperation policy for development, from a position of better knowledge and understanding of the problems of others.

Nowadays, however, it is about making citizens advance towards a better understanding of the problems of everybody, including our own society, whose vicissitudes are not removed, at all, from global dynamics and events. And in this new framework, the role of the educational system gains great transcendence when creating citizens who are more aware of development problems and who, therefore, can behave in a responsible way towards global problems, demanding or supporting those changes that are necessary in public policies. In the current situation, we cannot advance towards the PCD without contemplating educational policies, more so in a situation like that in Euskadi, with important responsibilities and competences in this matter.

Therefore, we consider it to be very important to promote the dissemination, at all levels of the education system, of the principles that inspire a human development model which is sustainable and equitable. Therefore the Basque curriculum favours the cosmopolitan training of new generations, in order to interpret current world issues better, and to face responsibly and with solidarity the challenges posed for the well-being and dignity of people, both in Euskadi and in the rest of the world.



POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT ACTION AND INTERINSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION

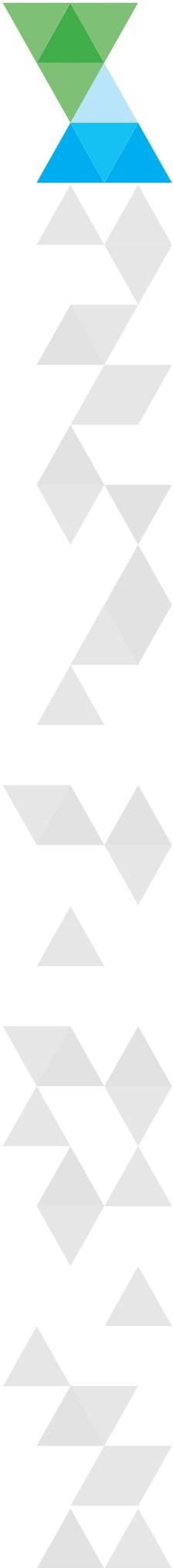
The Basque Government understands that the advance towards a greater Policy Coherence for Development must be based not only on the definition of the objectives to be achieved and the tools utilised to this aim, but also in the synergies and complementarity that relationships can generate between them all. That said, PCD also depends on governance, which affects the structures and culture of the government, the training of civil servants, and other administrative and political issues.

We live in the paradox of an increasingly complex world which requires very specialised knowledge about a great variety of matters and policies addressed towards the solution of ever more diverse problems, but which at the same time is a more interdependent world where proposals and alternatives cannot be created without thinking about their effects on other fields. This generates an added difficulty for government action, in which specialised knowledge of the different problematic issues in point must be combined, necessarily, with transversal treatment of the same.

We are completely aware of the difficulties posed by the integration of some transversal questions in the whole of the government action. However, it is necessary to overcome these tendencies towards the compartmentalisation of policies. To do so, we believe that it is necessary to advance in the operability of the existing interdepartmental commissions, which will undoubtedly contribute to a greater coherence between sectoral policies and all of those policies in conjunction with the principles that inspire the advance towards human development and sustainability.

In addition to interdepartmental or intersectoral dialogue, the particular institutional structure of Euskadi requires an additional effort in the area of coordination between administrations. In this regard, the PCD should also take into account this dimension, favouring dialogue and collaboration when confronting common objectives or creating general policy frameworks about some questions. For this purpose, the administrations of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country should advance in certain specific aspects such as sharing diagnostics, harmonising information systems, or favouring more efficient areas of coordination.

Likewise, a culture of government favourable to the PCD requires people conscious of the problems and trained in some especially relevant matters which affect global governance and the challenges of development. For this, the Basque Government will adopt, in accordance with the IVAP (Basque Institution for Public Administration), measures which favour the continued training of Basque civil servants and some matters relating to the challenges of human development and sustainability.



CONCLUSION

Policy coherence to advance towards a more human and sustainable development is a challenge for all governments and administrations, from which the Basque Government cannot absent itself. We are fully conscious of the difficulties involved in adopting this work perspective, but we believe that it is necessary for a greater understanding of the problems which affect us, and for an improvement in the carrying out of our responsibilities.

For this reason, the Basque Government is publicly committed to promoting government action which takes as its frame of reference the considerations put forward herein, proposing the necessary changes so that PCD can be not only a principal source of inspiration for public policy, but also an operative formula to confront current challenges under better conditions, both at domestic and international levels.



GARAPENERAKO
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EUSKAL AGENTZIA

AGENCIA VASCA DE
COOPERACIÓN PARA
EL DESARROLLO



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