

Supplementary Information:

This Supplementary Information has not been peer reviewed.

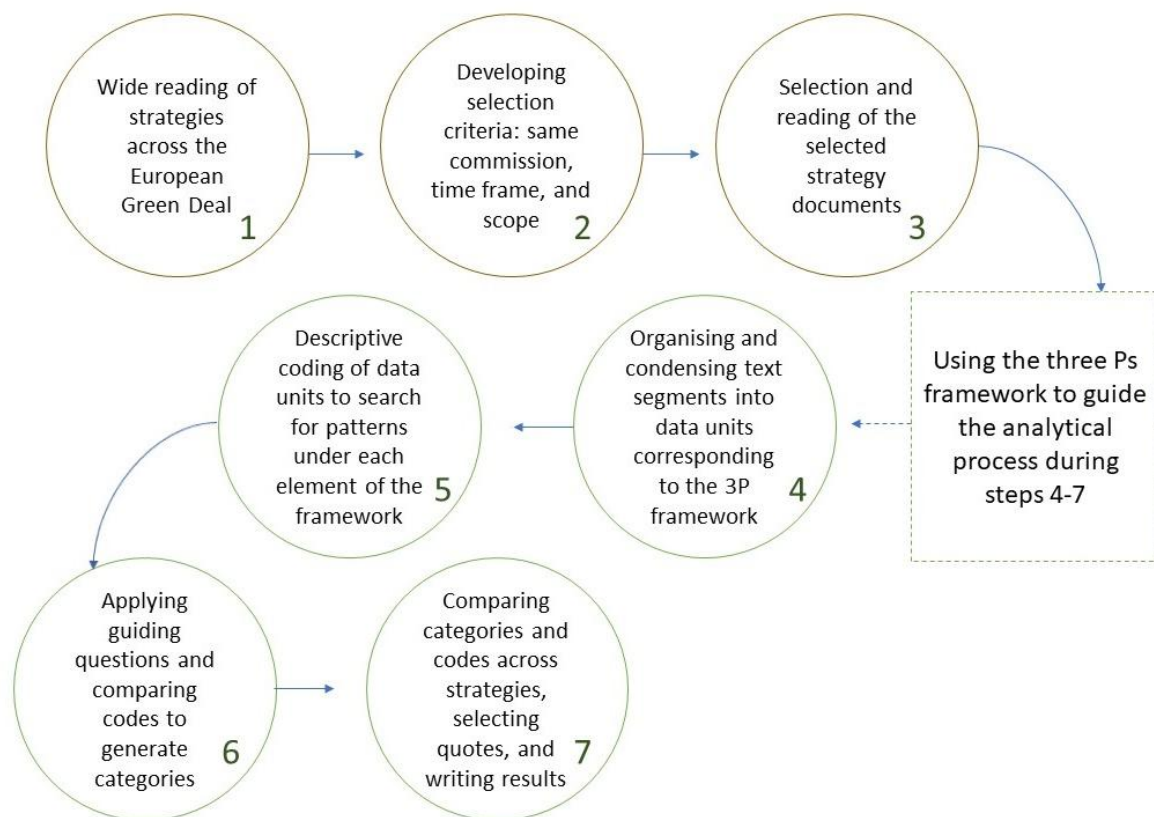
Title: Supplementary material S2 Analytical process.

This material supplements the article entitled: Governing environmental complexity: Exploring coherence across EU climate and biodiversity strategies

S2. Analytical process

These supplementary materials provide additional information on the analysis of strategy documents for the article **Governing environmental complexity: Exploring coherence across EU climate and biodiversity strategies**. The analytical process consisted of nine steps which are illustrated in Figure S1. This includes information about the selection of materials and application of the analytical framework.

Figure S1. Flow of the analytical process



Steps 1-3 describe the sampling process, including the development of the selection criteria. Steps 4-7 are conducted in line with the three-part framework presented in the main article.

All steps were led by the lead author, with co-authors contributing regularly to the process through reading of the strategies and discussion of the selection criteria, coding process, and generation and comparison of codes and categories. In addition, a coding log was kept throughout the process, to keep track of the process and also facilitate guidance from the co-authors when questions of ambiguity emerged concerning, for example, interpretation of the data or application of the framework.

Step 1: Wide reading of strategies across the European Green Deal

We started by mapping strategies from the EGD related to climate and biodiversity action to get a wider overview of the strategy landscape. This included taking note of the structure of different strategies, how they interact across policy areas, and what time frames they operate within. In addition to mapping strategies pertaining to the EGD, we also scanned for older strategies to get a wider understanding of how strategies had been used within European Union (EU) environmental policymaking over the past decade and mapped how strategies succeed each other.

Step 2: Developing selection criteria

Next, we developed more specific selection criteria. We structured the selection criteria around strategies' similar features, building on the assumption that similar strategies are more likely to overlap and either show synergies or conflicts than strategies with less similarities in terms of scope. Our first selection criterium was therefore that the two strategies should be developed under the same Commission, to ensure they shared the same overarching policy framework. Secondly, we wanted the strategies to align temporally, meaning that they shared a similar time frame, to ensure that processes were likely to take place during the same period and broader budget. Thirdly, we were interested in strategy documents that had an overarching function within the two domains of climate and biodiversity policy, meaning that we searched for documents with the functions of strategies as outlined in our article, meaning that they linked together multiple goals, instruments, actors, and related policy areas.

Step 3: Selection and reading of the selected strategy documents

Based on the criteria, we selected two strategy documents for our analysis, namely the Biodiversity Strategy (European Commission, 2020a) and the Climate Target Plan (European Commission, 2020b) from 2020. Both strategies had been presented by the same Commission and under the EGD, and both strategies presented the EU's upcoming ambitions for biodiversity and climate policymaking from 2020 to 2030, covering a range of related policy areas and presenting key goals and instruments for the enactment of the ambition. The selection process also involved deep reading of the two strategies, which helped us prepare for the analytical process that is presented below. During this third stage, we discussed whether it was pertinent to our analysis that one of the documents was called a plan and not a strategy. In practice, the Climate Target Plan (European Commission, 2020b) is an implementation strategy for the policies and ambitions to come under the EGD's raised climate ambitions for 2030. However, our conclusion was that the difference in names was not of concern, because both documents shared the structure of a strategy.

Step 4: Organising and condensing text segments into data units corresponding to the 3P framework

We organised segments of the text into data units under the elements of the analytical framework presented in the main article. This organisation was of a manifest nature, meaning that the level of interpretation was close to the actual text. This step was inspired by Graneheim and Lundman's (2004) condensation of meaning units, which the authors describe as "a process of shortening while still preserving the core" (p.106). Here, the three elements of the framework were used to organise condensed data units – as corresponding to premise, prescription and/or politics. This step allowed us to extract the content of the strategies into more easily analysed units. In practice, we read the strategy documents and selected chapters, paragraphs, sentences that corresponded with different elements and condensed their meaning into data units for later analysis.

Step 5: Descriptive coding of data units to search for patterns under each element of the framework

We compared the data units under each separate element to create our codes. During this step, we worked both digitally in Excel, and on hard copies of the compiled data units, to group the text segments and look for patterns across the data. This step was also of a manifest nature, meaning that the codes captured a meaning of the data units that was close to the original text and content of the strategy.

Step 6: Applying guiding questions and comparing codes to generate categories

In this step, we used the guiding questions in the analytical framework (Table 1 in the main article) to support the construction of aggregate categories that captured the overall meaning of the codes. In essence, this meant trying to answer the question “what” as Graneheim and Lundman (2004) explain, keeping our analytical questions in mind, and searching for the red thread among the codes to answer these. The categories were therefore constructed at a higher level of abstraction than the codes, but the interpretation was still close to the content of the strategies.

Step 7: Comparing categories and codes across strategies, selecting quotes, and writing results

After having condensed, coded, and categorised the strategy documents in steps 4-6, this next step consisted of an iterative, cross-comparison of the two datasets. Our goal here was to interpret the overarching priorities of the strategies and understand how the functions were weaved together in the documents to support these priorities. This allowed us to assess to what extent the strategies displayed potential synergies through similar ambitions, or potential trade-offs and dissimilar priorities. During this step, we sought to answer the question: ‘what does it all mean?’ and focused on the governance of climate and biodiversity-related action at the EU-level, which meant excluding emphasis on governance in third countries. The comparative step resembles the creation of themes described by Graneheim and Lundman (2004), where the aim is to interpret the meaning across the condensed units, codes, and categories. We then compared how the functions and elements were intertwined across the strategies, and identified key quotes from the strategies that could be used in the final presentation of the results.

References

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