



30 October 2018

E-Discussion on SDG localization

*“Financing the local implementation of the SDGs”*

Concept Note

## BACKGROUND

Localizing development means taking into account local contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress. It also means bringing the territories and their peoples' priorities, needs and resources at the centre of sustainable development.

Sixty five per cent of the SDG targets are already a responsibility of local and regional governments. That's why the achievement of the SDGs depends, more than ever, on the ability of local and regional governments to promote integrated, inclusive and sustainable territorial development. Local governments are policy makers, catalysts of change and the level of government best placed to link the global goals with local communities. Localizing development empowers all local stakeholders, making sustainable development more responsive and relevant to local needs and aspirations.

**To happen locally, Agenda 2030 needs to be sufficiently funded.** A clear financial strategy is needed at all levels, including the local one. Localizing finance means not only to assign funds for the local level, but also to create the enabling space for economic development at local level.

To think about how countries and cities can fund Agenda 2030 at local level, [UNDP](#), [UN-Habitat](#), [UNCDF](#) and [United Cities and Local Governments](#) are organising the [Venice City Solutions 2030](#), an international event hosted by the [Italian Association for the Council of European Municipalities \(AICCRE\)](#) and financially supported by [Platforma](#) and [UNACLA](#), with the technical contribution of [FMDV](#). The event will take place in Venice (Italy) on 16-17<sup>th</sup> November 2018, bringing together representatives of central governments, local and regional government associations, Mayors, Governors and other governmental representatives and selected partners with the objective to think ahead about how **to finance the implementation of the SDGs at local level.**

## PURPOSE OF THE E-DISCUSSION

To kick start the discussion, the [LocalizingTheSDGs Platform](#) is launching an e-Discussion to engage stakeholders, experts, practitioners and policy-makers in a global dialogue on the themes to be addressed in the Venice's event. The debate will inform the final report of the activity, to be submitted to the 2019 [High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF).

The e-Discussion is expected to provide the HLPF with ideas, suggestions and recommendations for financing the local implementation of the SDGs, including how local and regional governments can take the lead and support central governments in achieving the 2030 Agenda, starting by the local level. It is also expected to identify financing gaps and diverse strategies that could be used by countries and communities facing different challenges, also in terms of capturing and analysing data related to budget alignment.

The discussion will focus on:

- i) National strategies for financing the SDGs at local level**
- ii) Measuring impact at local level: the importance of data on budget alignment and tracking indicators**
- iii) City Solutions, how local governments are making the Agenda 2030 a reality at local level**
- iv) Dynamic local economies to achieve Agenda 2030**

## ORGANIZATION, FORMAT AND OUTCOME

The e-Discussion will take place from 1 November to 30 November 2018 around the four proposed areas, with specific questions for each topic.

Members of the SDG localizing community will be invited to contribute through their active engagement in the discussion. Several stakeholder networks, including from the private sector (e.g., Global Compact), civil society (e.g., United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) and Division for Sustainable Development), global associations of local and regional governments (e.g., Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments) and ECOSOC Civil Society Network (CSO-Net), will be approached to publicize the e-Discussion and promote participation of relevant stakeholders. The debate will also be opened to the participants registered for the Venice event.

Upon completion of the e-Discussion, UNDP and UN-Habitat will prepare a summary report that: describes the background and structure of the e-Discussion; provides a general overview of participation; and synthesizes key findings, messages and recommendations from participants on each of the topics of discussion. This summary report will serve as an input into the reports to be submitted to the HLPF in 2019.

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The e-Discussion will address the theme in the context of the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the following four thematic windows and accompanying indicative questions to guide the discussion.

### Thematic Window BLUE:

#### National strategies for financing the SDGs at the local level

Governments in many countries have already approved a national strategy to implement the SDGs. We need to know if such strategies are considering (or not) the question of funding the 2030 Agenda at local level.

Some countries may allocate specific resources to implement Agenda 2030, maybe some will open specific budget lines opened for local governments to apply to central funding, some others will use the SDG as an occasion to present new projects to international cooperation, or will adapt already existing funding lines to align them to the SDGs.

- In your country, is there a dialogue between central and local governments about how to finance Agenda 2030?
- What are the biggest challenges to define a financial strategy for financing the SDGs at local level? What could be done differently?
- How can a local government finance the SDGs implementation? Should central government add a new line of budget to be accessed by local governments to implement Agenda 2030? Or should another mechanism be considered?
- What is the added value of aligning international funding opportunities with the SDGs? Has your institution allocated any specific budget line to help countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda?

### Thematic Window GREEN:

#### Measuring impact at local level: the importance of data on budget alignment and tracking indicators

One of the key challenges of Agenda 2030 is how to measure the progress we are making. The Agenda 2030 includes: 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 Targets and 232 indicators that have been agreed, at the moment, by Member States.

Financing the SDG is essential, but we also need to think about measuring the impact of the actions the public sector, at all levels, is making. The Agenda 2030 is also an unique occasion to plan for the next decades, and to think about sustainable investments, new ways of decision making, and innovative solutions for funding strategic actions that can change opportunities for people at country or territorial level.

- Has your country undertook any reform process of the national statistics system to monitor the SDGs? In particular, has your country established any particular follow-up mechanism regarding financing the SDGs?

- Has your city established a methodology to measure progress on SDGs locally? Alternatively, how do you plan to measure the impact of public actions to achieve the SDGs locally?
- What is the mechanism that your country/ institution has put in place to measure the impact of public policies? Is your institution aligning its budget with the 2030 Agenda?

### **Thematic Window YELLOW:**

#### **City Solutions, how local governments are making the 2030 Agenda a reality at local level**

Local and regional governments all over the world are already committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many of them have understood how the SDG provide a framework for better delivery of services, more strategic decision-making and monitoring impact of their own actions over time.

Local government have their own budgets, although in most parts of the world they are never sufficient to cover the needs of the population. One big question being the unfunded mandates, namely the services that municipalities provide to their citizens even if they do not have a specific mandate to do so, and therefore without any financial allocation. This is often the case of social services, assistance to migrants, and transport of people with special needs, just to give some examples.

- What are the specific SDGs and indicators that you have considered as a priority in your city? How have you planned to fund these SDG priorities?
- Have you initiated a budgetary exercise specifically focused on the SDGs?
- What are the relations with regional or central governments related to funding the 2030 Agenda? Is there any opening? What are the difficulties?
- Do you think that the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity for your city to obtain more financial resources? How so?

### **Thematic Window RED:**

#### **Dynamic local economies to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

The localization of the SDGs require a collective effort of all societal actors, spanning from central to local governments, from the private sector to civil society and the academia. In this context, it is considered that the local economic development approach, understood as an integrated and inclusive territorial process aimed at enlarging equal opportunities and fostering a socio-economic development that can benefit all in a sustainable manner, can be a vehicle for localizing the SDGs. Local Economic Development relies on the active leadership of local governments to tap into the endogenous potential of a territory by creating spaces for dialogue and consultation, and forms of coordination between public, private, civil society and academic actors.

- How can the social and economic actors of your city contribute to the 2030 Agenda?

- Is central government opening the debate and involving the private sector in 2030 Agenda related discussions?
- Is there any public sector strategy at national or local level to make sure than the private sector, with a special focus to Small and Medium Enterprises including Social and Solidarity Economy actors, feel part of the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda? What are the main challenges for their involvement? And how could they be addressed?