

# Localizing the SDGs in Colombian Cities Through the Cómo Vamos City Network

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April 2019



**TRENDS**  
Thematic Research Network  
on Data and Statistics

**Local Data Action Solutions Initiative 2018-2019 Microgrant Program**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Fundación* corona

## ABOUT

The Local Data Action Solutions Initiative (LDA-SI) was established as a joint effort between the Sustainable Development Solutions Network's Thematic Research Network on Data and Statistics (SDSN TReNDS) and the U.S.A. Sustainable Cities Initiative as a program with one primary objective: to identify and promote replicable methods for sub-national Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring that facilitate local action in support of the “leave no one behind” principle. A growing number of subnational actors are attempting to implement the SDGs locally and are confronting specific questions related to data collection and monitoring. With this has grown the need for real, practical lessons and guidance that can be applied to different contexts worldwide.

For this reason, LDA-SI launched a microgrant initiative to support learning from existing subnational SDG data initiatives, harnessing this tacit local knowledge and informing a learning exchange. In 2018, five grantees were chosen both for their proven ability to support SDG implementation in a specified location and for their model's relevance and potential benefit for other sub-national SDG initiatives in the world. Each grantee has prepared a guidance brief that describes SDG localization challenges in the place where they are operating and the data solutions they have designed to support efforts toward SDG achievement.

Learn more at [sdstrends.org/ldasigrants](https://sdstrends.org/ldasigrants).

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## **ABSTRACT**

“Localizing the SDGs in Colombian cities” is an initiative led by the Cómo Vamos Cities Network (CVCN) and its main partner Fundación Corona that seeks to contribute to the sustainable development of cities in Colombia. This effort, initially involving 16 member cities from CVCN, supports city-level Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) strategy and achievement efforts by developing data tools that can be adapted to their varying contexts, including a common list of city-level SDG data indicators and targets and an open data platform. These activities are built on the idea that if Colombia has a centralized information platform run by a legitimate institution—one that uses standardized indicators, compiles reliable data, tracks development goals for cities, and engages civil society and the public and private sectors through information—then Colombian cities will be better positioned to successfully localize and align development plans with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. This brief reviews a series of steps taken in this multi-year effort: the development of a common SDG indicator framework for cities, a common set of SDG city-level targets, and a model data dashboard. This initiative that CVCN is leading provides unique examples of how cities in a single country can unify their development strategies and achievement tracking efforts for the benefit of their own constituencies and in support of national government initiatives.

## **PROBLEM**

The overarching problem for SDG localization in Colombian cities is the lack of (1) a defined set of prioritized and viable indicators for local contexts; (2) reliable, comparable data, relevant for all local governments;

and (3) a set of goals tailored to city needs and interests that can help to motivate cities to progress toward the 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup>.

**Local data production, quality, access, and integration in Colombian cities.**

Currently, the majority of local governments do not possess sufficient data to evaluate how effectively they are meeting local SDG targets, how their activities align with national priorities, or their progress over time. This is mainly the result of lagging financial and technical capacities to develop data at the local level and the limitations that national data has in terms of territorial disaggregation. Both of these issues are especially evident in SDGs related to the built and natural environment (e.g. SDGs 11, 13, 14, 15). Usually, wealthier local governments are able to measure more indicators than governments with fewer resources. Currently, the private sector collects some indicators that align with particular SDGs; however, the lack of consistency in collecting the data across cities in Colombia makes long-term and sustainable monitoring and evaluation unreliable. In summary, the CVCN identifies four general problems regarding data and information for monitoring the SDGs: (1) a mismatch between SDG global indicators and available local data in Colombia; (2) a lack of unified local data sources, measurement methodologies, and criteria; (3) different levels of analysis that national data provide compared with local data; and (4) difficulty integrating other sources of information into official analysis and reports.

**Lack of institutions responsible for city-level monitoring.** A second challenge Colombia faces is that there is currently no single legitimate institution capable of compiling and organizing the data coming from all

local governments, let alone setting ambitious goals, monitoring and evaluating regularly, and conducting research and development. Implementing an SDG framework can help local governments follow up on their SDG localization and implementation efforts beyond each mayor's four-year development plan. The central government has attempted to establish national and regional goals; however, this framework is not suitable for a local city context and does not consider local municipalities' capacities and priorities. Finally, while there is a general acceptance of the SDGs from the private and public sectors and civil society, there is no platform to catalyze the synergies among the three categories of stakeholders, especially at the local level. These three stakeholder groups are eager to contribute to the SDGs, but there is a need for a platform that can tell them where they can join efforts to strive toward common goals.

**Local government knowledge and support for SDGs.** A third challenge local governments face is there is not enough buy-in from political leaders to push for the SDGs, despite existing momentum and positive feeling towards the preceding Millennium Development Goals. Significant interest in the SDGs has not yet percolated to the citizen level, and they are therefore not demanding alignment with the SDGs from local politicians. In addition to inadequate and insufficient data, not all local governments are meaningfully incorporating the SDGs into their four-year development plans. In addition, the way different municipalities set the goals is not consistent, with the net result that it is difficult to compare across local governments to assess progress and SDG achievement.

## SOLUTION

### *General Objective*

“Localizing the SDGs in Colombian Cities” is a multi-year initiative led by the Cómo Vamos Cities Network (CVCN) (Box 1) and its main partner Fundación Corona. The initiative aims to support the sustainable development of cities in Colombia through technical support and coordination of sustainability data and planning efforts. The initiative, launched in 2017, consists of a series of related components and activities that the CVCN leads across Colombian cities contributing to Colombia’s national government’s SDG achievement effort (see Annex A and CONPES 3918<sup>2</sup>) and that has been executed in two separate phases.

**Phase 1:** Developed during 2016-2017 and produced: (1) a proposed Urban Agenda for Colombian cities based on the SDG agenda; (2) the alignment of the global SDG framework with the urban context in Colombia; and (3) the development of a 2015 baseline for 10 selected cities<sup>3</sup>. This work underpins the second phase.

**Phase 2:** Is the focus of this brief and was designed and developed since early 2018 with the support of the School of International and Public Affairs of Columbia University in New York and SDSN’s LDA-SI. In this phase the following outputs were produced in an effort to support the main objective: (i) SDG City Indicator Framework roadmap; (ii) set of prioritized indicators for Phase 1; and (iii) target definition methodology.

Outputs from Phase 1 and Phase 2 are provided under “Additional Resources” at the end of this brief.

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## **Box 1.** The Comó Vamos City Network

The [Cómo Vamos Cities Network](#) is a private sector and civil society partnership focused on the generation and collection of reliable, comparable, and trustworthy city-level information to measure and track quality of life and urban sustainability in Colombian cities. By doing so, the Network contributes to the development of more transparent and effective local governments and informed, responsible, and participative citizenships, strengthening accountability. As of December 2018, the Network was comprised of 19 programs: 17 city programs, 16 of which are located in capital cities, and 2 regional programs aggregating small municipalities. In all, the CVCN coordinates a unified effort for more than 35 municipalities across Colombia. The Network has 20 years of experience working in and with cities across Colombia since the creation of the first program in Bogotá in 1998. The Network is led by the 16 city programs and Fundación Corona and is supported by over 130 local partners (Annex F) that finance and manage each local replica. The information collected and generated by the Network is published yearly on [Ciudatos](#), an open data platform.

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### ***Building Blocks for Sustainable Development***

Through this initiative, CVCN identified a series of four foundational elements or “building blocks<sup>4</sup>,” imperative to achieve SDG localization in Colombian cities and to which this initiative aims to contribute, too.

#### **A legitimate institution to track city progress**

As global experience in SDG localization shows, it is important that there is one entity that oversees the localization process and continuously monitors

and evaluates the progress of cities. It does not need to be a public agency, but it must be an institution that has the legitimacy to be in charge of such an initiative and the resources and capacity to input data on a regular basis, and that can maintain updated and reliable information.

#### **A sound, multi-city indicator dataset**

The information available in the tool needs to be standardized across cities and different SDG indicators. Moreover, it is crucial that the data be updated on a consistent basis in order to track improvements regularly over time and to create a rich database that can be used to establish targets and track progress toward them over time.

#### **A digital open data platform**

The best way to have a tool where governments, the private sector, and civil society have access is by creating a digital platform that compiles all the relevant information for these stakeholders. The platform needs to be easily accessible, user-friendly—considering the different user profiles—and include an easy-to-understand language and visualization. Finally, a digital platform will also contribute to transparency and inclusive governance.

#### **Political participation**

For the data platform to be effective, it must gain the interest of relevant stakeholders and motivate action toward SDG localization. Through partnerships, the tool should generate commitment and transversal participation of society to reach SDG targets at the city level.

## ***Main Components***

Phase 2 of the initiative is divided in two components that aim to monitor and evaluate both the progress of cities towards meeting the SDGs and localization efforts carried out by local governments (and other actors).

### **1. Measuring city progress towards the SDGs and sustainable development:**

This component aims to measure the progress of selected cities<sup>5</sup> in reaching sustainable development and meeting the SDGs. This component has two main objectives: (1) serve as an indicator-tracking tool for each city, and (2) serve as a point of comparison among Colombian cities. The first objective will be fulfilled by a tracking tool, and the second objective by a “traffic light” system. The overall principle is that the tool can be adapted by each local government in CVCN cities across Colombia. This component and the building process behind it are the focus of this brief.

**2. Evaluating SDG localization efforts in Colombian cities:** This component aims to make an assessment of the state of localization of the SDGs in Colombian cities using a qualitative approach<sup>6</sup>. Via a questionnaire, each *Cómo Vamos* city program will evaluate the work of city administrations towards achieving the SDGs every two years based on an independent evaluation and dialogues with the local government and other local stakeholders. This component will deliver “Localization Reports” every two years and hopes to spur the interest of local government to present Voluntary Local Reports (VLRs)<sup>7</sup> to a higher-level institution<sup>8</sup>.

## BUILDING PROCESS

The following four steps were undertaken in 2018 (as part of Phase 2, Component 1 as described above):

1. Roadmap of SDG indicator framework for Colombian cities
2. Initial indicator framework and prioritized indicators
3. Proposal for target methodology
4. Design of visualization tool

The following section describes the process carried out for each of the steps.

### **1** Roadmap of SDG Indicator Framework for Colombian Cities

The CVCN designed a roadmap to guide the development of an SDG Indicator Framework, consisting of select targets and indicators to be used by Colombian cities (Annex C).

The team identified various data limitations that constrained the concept of a “general” set of indicators that would be used for all cities. For example, city-level data production is unbalanced across cities and SDGs (especially environment-focused SDGs), presenting enormous challenges to the concept of standardizing data measures for Colombian cities across all dimensions of sustainable development. To address this issue, the team established three different categories of indicators (Categories 1, 2, and 3)<sup>9</sup>, as explained in Table 1, and identified potential new sources of data and

indicators besides the national government. The categories are: (1) official SDG indicators defined by the national government<sup>10</sup>, (2) CVCN 2015 baseline<sup>11</sup>, and (3) a set of new aspirational indicators based on a benchmark analysis of international frameworks and other local exercises<sup>12</sup>, among others. These new indicators are specially related to SDGs 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17<sup>13</sup>. In total, the general set of indicators included over 400 indicators.

**Table 1.** Framework Phases and Indicator Categories

Framework phases	Number of Indicators per SDG (min.)	Type	Category	Data source
1st local admin under SDG agenda (2015-2019)	1-3	CONPES (National Level) indicators	Category 1	National sources and other sources
	1-2	Indicators for cities	Category 1	
	0-1	New indicators	Category 1-2	
2nd local admin (2020-2023)	5	New and local indicators	Category 2	National, local, and other sources
3rd local admin (2023-2027)	5	New and disaggregated indicators	Category 2-3	National, local, and other sources
4th local admin (2028-2031)	5	New and disaggregated indicators	Category 3	National, local, and other sources

The roadmap in Table 1 is divided into different stages, each of them aligned with the four-year administration periods of local governments in Colombia running from 2015 through 2030, looking to build processes of work with local administrations to strengthen the indicator framework. New indicators correspond to Category 2 and 3 indicators that currently cannot be collected across all cities due to data shortages, but that have calculation methodologies or could in the near future. The idea of having new indicators (that align with the essence of the SDG target) included in the framework invites local governments, the national government, and

other actors to work together to close methodological and data gathering gaps. The national, regional, and local governments can actually work towards developing the data and the capacity to measure those indicators in the future.

## **2** Initial Indicator Framework and Prioritized Indicators

Based on the guidance provided by the roadmap exercise (Step 1), the prioritization of aligning indicators to city progress was carried out in a step-by-step process explained below:

**2a. Building the general set of indicators:** See description of these indicators and their respective categories above.

**2b. Initial evaluation:** The general set of indicators was then evaluated by the CVCN team. Indicators with the following characteristics were prioritized: indicators developed by national sources that could guarantee periodicity and standardization, and available indicators that could be measured across all capital cities. Disaggregated indicators (by sex, race, age) were set aside in this first stage in order to establish an indicator framework that could be used by the highest number of cities due to data limitations. Further data disaggregation will be incorporated into the next stages of the indicator framework roadmap.

**2c. Expert evaluation and stakeholder socialization<sup>14</sup>:** After the initial evaluation, CVCN assessed the list of indicators in partnership with local stakeholders and experts via local workshops. These groups helped to identify indicators for each of the SDGs based on relevance and capacity to illustrate the objective and targets of all SDGs.

**2d. Pilot list of prioritized indicators:** Based on the expert evaluation and data availability, the pilot list of prioritized indicators was created. Data for these indicators have been gathered for the years 2015, 2016, and 2017, and will have yearly updates based on data availability (Annex C).

### **3** Creating a City-level SDG Target Framework

Once the indicators were prioritized, CVCN developed a city-level “SDG Benchmark Target Framework<sup>15</sup>” (Annex C) to help cities set their own thresholds for each target (i.e. the levels they are striving to achieve), aiming to be locally relevant, ambitious, and support the achievement of national targets set by the national government<sup>16</sup>. By creating a framework, CVCN also aimed to provide a tool for inter-city comparison and consequently motivate healthy competition to drive city progress.

The framework is meant to assign a color (progress classification) to each of the selected indicators based on the data collected and the benchmark ranges established for each individual indicator. Benchmark ranges are built based on aspirational and minimum reference points and were assigned one of three different colors: green, yellow, and red. Based on this classification, the progress of each indicator is evaluated with the following criteria:

**Green** – indicator is above the aspirational benchmark

**Red** – indicator is below the minimum benchmark

**Yellow** – indicator is between the aspirational and minimum benchmarks

This “traffic light” color system defines the progress levels each indicator falls into, allowing cities to locate their current progress and use the benchmarks ranges to set the levels they are striving to achieve by 2030.

The traffic light system is hence a reference point that can help cities establish their own 2030 city targets.

The following criteria were used to define the different benchmarks for each indicator. Annex C includes the list of all prioritized indicators and the specific benchmarks defined for each, color-coded in green, yellow, and red. A combination of two of these criteria was used to define the aspirational and minimum benchmarks for each indicator<sup>17</sup>.

(i) “UN targets”: Where available, global, UN-endorsed targets were used as benchmarks (e.g. Target 1.1 on the eradication of extreme poverty).

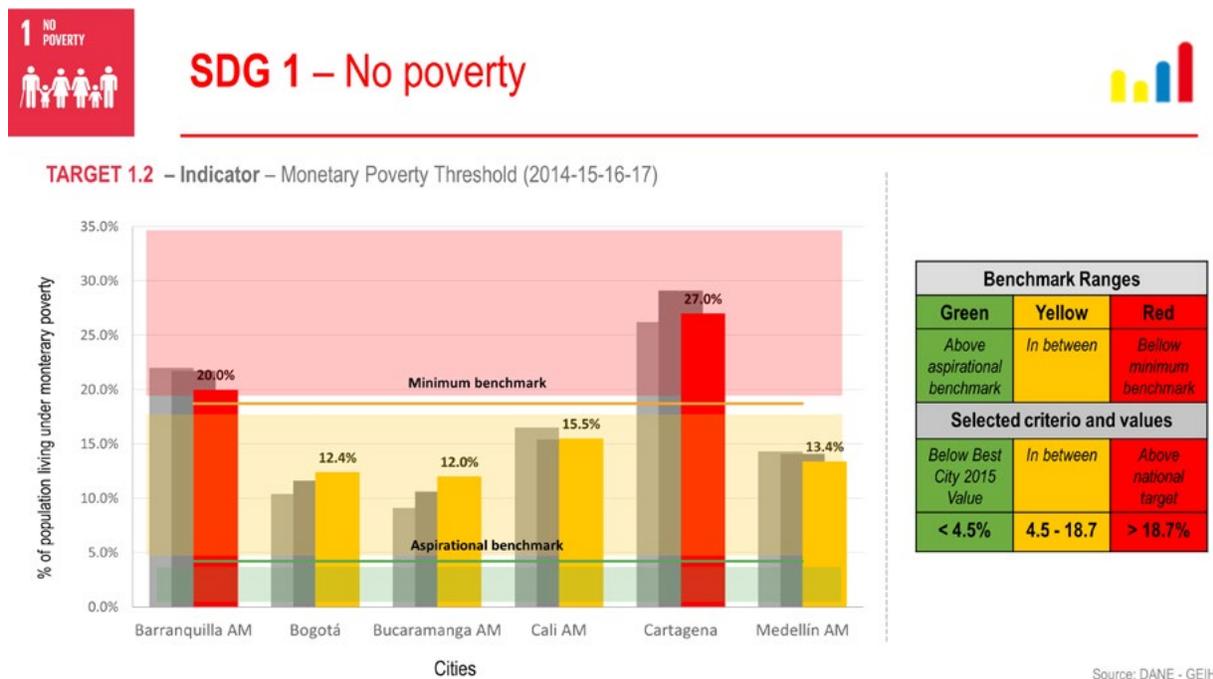
(ii) International targets: When there was no “UN target” set, the indicator benchmark was calculated by identifying international standards set by organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), or Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (e.g. public space per inhabitant).

(iii) National targets: Where there were no “UN targets” or international standards, the target established by the national government was used. These targets are fundamental since they give a context-specific reference point to cities; however, in some cases, cities have already surpassed the national target, making a more ambitious, city-focused target necessary.

(iv) “Best city” value: When the national target has already been achieved by one of the cities, the city with the best value toward progress as of 2015 was used as the aspirational target value.

Figure 1 illustrates how the SDG Target Framework works using one specific indicator as an example. In this case, Target 1.2 is being evaluated across cities in Colombia, using the selected indicator by the CVCN.

**Figure 1.** Target Definition for Indicator



**Additional Information**

1. The graph shows six cities and their “Monetary Poverty Levels” for three separate years, 2015 through 2017; each year is a column progressing from left to right.
2. The key on the right shows the benchmarks defined for this specific indicator using the criteria described above. In this case, based on the progress

levels of this group of cities, the two criteria used to define the aspirational and minimum benchmarks were (i) national target and (ii) “best city” value.

3. Using these criteria, the specific values for the aspirational and minimum benchmarks were defined, illustrated by the two horizontal lines in the graph.

4. Based on the two horizontal lines, the three color levels are defined and cities can locate their current progress and the aspirational level they are striving to achieve.

5. In this case, four out of six cities are designated as “yellow” and two are designated as “red.” “Yellow” cities are well positioned to reach “green” level, while “red” cities have to make a larger effort.

## **4** Building a Data Visualization Tool

In order to present and socialize the progress of Colombia cities in achieving sustainable development and contributing to the SDGs, CVCN developed an Urban Dashboard for SDGs<sup>18</sup> that allows citizens and decision-makers to visualize, explore, and consult SDG city progress and SDG progress separately<sup>19</sup>. The dashboard has been carefully designed to be user-friendly and allow for in-depth analysis and comparisons, and is organized as follows:

### ***Visualizing SDG Progress by City***

1. SDG City Comparison (per year): The user will have the opportunity to select a city of choice, a specific SDG, target, and indicator, and see progress compared to other cities. The idea is that users can use a city that is

performing well as a point of reference and comparison for different SDG indicators and assess their city performance based on this.

2. SDG City Progress Comparison (historic): As the information is updated year by year, it will be possible to evaluate the progress of each city. For this, the dashboard includes a section to compare city progress among groups in relation to specific SDGs, targets, and goals.

3. SDG City Comparison Heat Map: Presents the level of progress of all prioritized indicators for one specific city.

### ***Visualizing SDG Progress by Goals, Target, and Indicators***

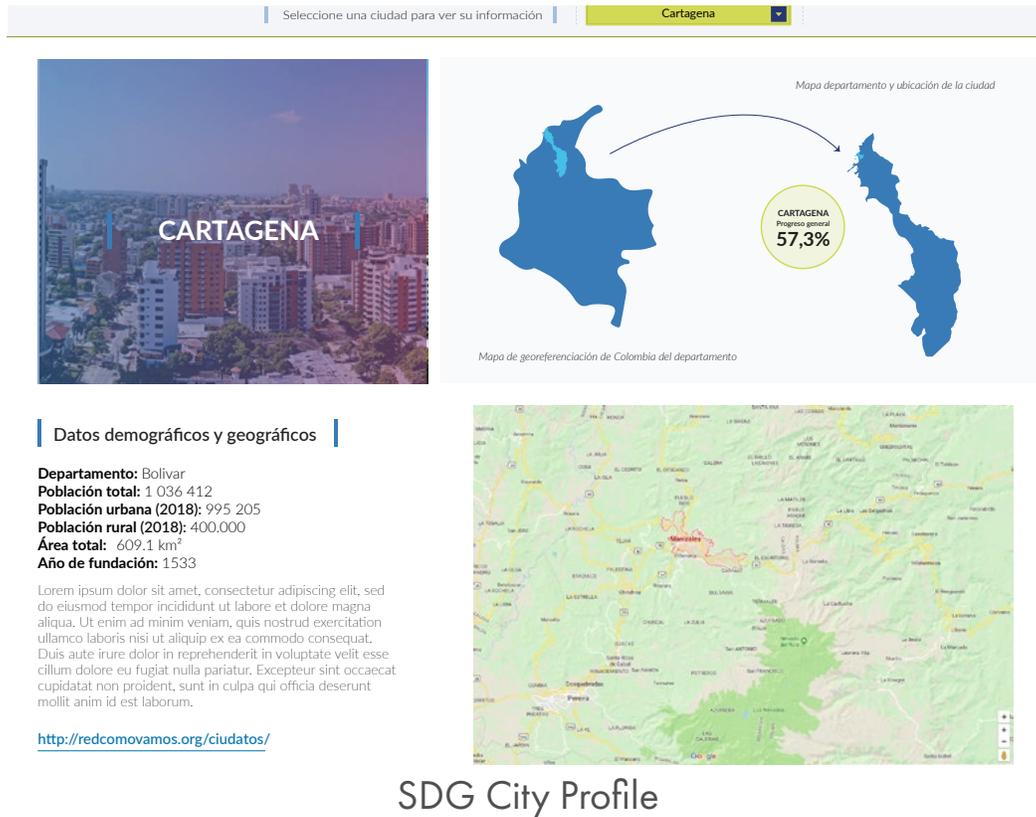
1. SDG Progress (per year): The user can select either one or up to four specific SDGs, targets, and indicators in order to visualize the progress of different SDGs and different groups of cities.

2. SDG Historic Progress: The user can evaluate the historic progress of any city in relation to any SDG within the 15-year period between 2015 and 2030.

3. SDG Heat Map: Based on any given indicator, the dashboard will allow users to compare the state of any city and any SDG (based on the state of the main indicator) in a heat map. This heat map will be particularly useful to make an overall evaluation of SDG progress in cities in Colombia.

A mockup of the dashboard is provided in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Mockup Draft of SDG Urban Dashboard Visualization**



**Comparative SDG City Progress**

Figure 2 continued

Seleccione una ciudad para ver su información | Cartagena

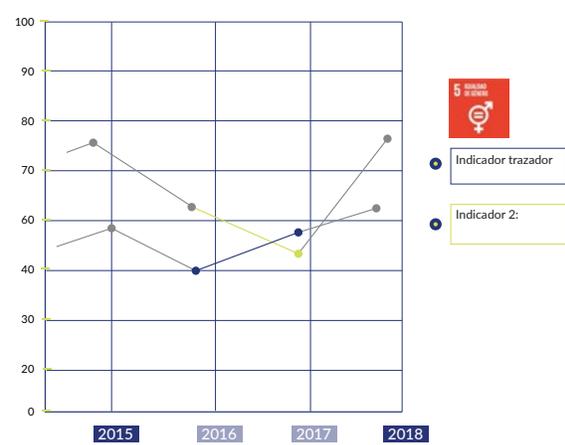
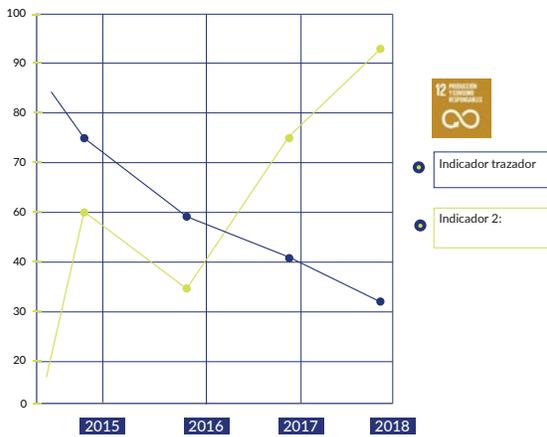
Seleccione uno o varios ODS para ver su información

12. Producción y consumo | 5. Igualdad de género | ODS | ODS

12. Producción y consumo  
13. Acción por el clima  
14. Vida y ecosistemas  
15. Otro ODS

12. Producción y consumo  
13. Acción por el clima  
14. Vida y ecosistemas  
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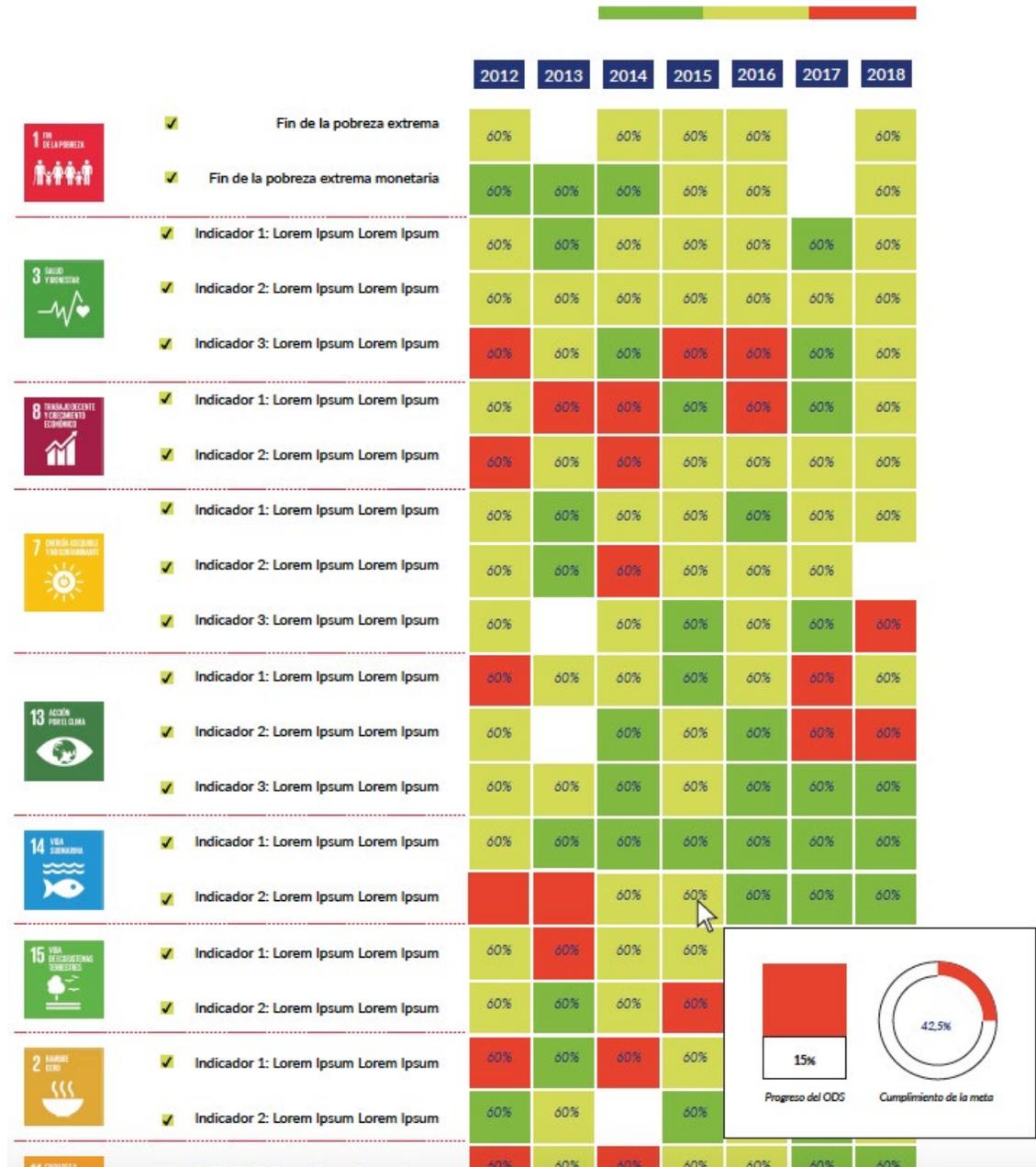
Progreso histórico ODS en Cartagena



Descargar

Comparative SDG City Historic Progress

Figure 2 continued



SDG City Progress Heat Map

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

**Having an adaptable SDG localization framework will enable diverse cities to align their development plans with the SDGs.** This solution has the potential to become an important management tool for local governments to use not only in aligning their development plans with the 2030 Agenda, but also in measuring their progress toward achieving important goals. Because the tool accounts for differences in resources, capacity, and development level across the cities, it supports a framework that each of the municipalities can adapt to their local context. Recognizing differences and similarities across cities in a nationwide effort for localizing the SDGs is instrumental, particularly since capacities vary so much across territories.

**This tool can ensure the sustainability of local development efforts despite government turnover.** This framework will be useful for both current and future political leaders at the municipal level as guidance for structuring their development plans and navigating the 2030 Agenda. Since the SDG framework works beyond the limitations of cities' four-year development plans, leaders will be able to refer to a municipality's past performance and evaluate where they should invest effort and resources, and candidates will be able to frame their proposals based on the SDGs. In this way, the municipalities can be aligned with regional, national, and international development priorities.

**It can drive the creation of coalitions of local organizations with various capacities.** The public sector, private sector, and civil society have expressed interest in localizing the SDGs. In Colombia and across the CVCN cities, there is demonstrated interest from the public and private

sectors and civil society to implement the 2030 Agenda at the local level. Their experience with the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs' predecessors, was positive and there is a strong interest in pursuing the SDGs more actively. This initiative is an opportunity for all sectors to collaborate on building sustainable development solutions to address key challenges facing Colombia, and offers a valuable tool that other cities can use to engage in discussions and dialogue related to monitoring and evaluation systems that track targets and indicators influenced by different actors.

**Introducing a new SDG monitoring tool for local governments requires resources and capacity.** To successfully collect and compile reliable data from all participating municipalities, maintain an updated baseline, and disseminate information and results consistently and regularly, moderate capacity within the managing institution is required. As a result, the project relies on a centralized institution to collect and update the data and manage the list of prioritized indicators. In addition, the tool requires local leader buy-in through raising awareness and framing the SDGs as a relevant development issue across sectors, all of which requires time and resources. At this point in time, CVCN will take on this responsibility as the centralized institution in charge of managing the project and engaging civil society, while exploring opportunities for another organization with a high level of resources and capacity to undertake the management of the tools and framework in the future.

**Local level data for many indicators is still not available or accessible.**

While many of the selected indicators for this project were prioritized by CVCN cities, the current level of data availability at the local level is limited,

creating a challenge for actually tracking those indicators. As a result, not all indicators can currently be measured or are using data that is not the most up to date. To address this weakness, a first set of mandatory indicators has been developed and prioritized with a set of aspirational indicators that will be used in the second phase of the project when data capacity can be increased, particularly in relation to the more environmentally-focused SDGs where there is a critical gap in municipal-level data.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following documents correspond to different products developed during the process of building this initiative since 2016. All documents are written in Spanish; English language resources on this project are limited.

### **From Phase 1: Diagnosis and 2015 Baseline for 10 Colombian cities**

1. [The 5 Urban Challenges](#) (en español)
2. [Presentation on The 5 Urban Challenges](#) (en español)

### **From Phase 2: Project reports provided at related events**

3. [First Colombian Civil Society Light Report](#), presented during the 2018 High-level Political Forum (en español)
4. [Challenge 1 Report – Poverty and inequality in Colombia Cities Informe de Pobreza](#) (en español)

## ANNEXES

### **Annex A.** The Government of Colombia's Efforts to Achieve the SDGs

Colombia is frequently cited as one of the leading countries in the implementation of the SDGs in Latin America and globally. Although the national government has achieved important milestones in the implementation of and follow-up to the SDGs, the panorama changes at the subnational-municipal level. Because not all of the targets and global indicators of the SDG are applicable in cities, it has become necessary to adapt some indicators and metrics to each context and, as a result, a large number of indicators have been developed by the cities to align with the targets and indicators of the SDGs.

In this context, in 2016 an alliance between the Cómo Vamos City Network and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted the first prioritization of SDGs indicators for cities, and raised the first baseline to be socialized to local public actors in 14 cities. This civil society-led initiative produced a useful overview for the status of each city in the 17 objectives and helped identified the five main urban challenges of the SDGs.

Building upon this process, in 2018 Fundación Corona and the CVCN, in partnership with Columbia University, designed a tool for tracking and monitoring useful and actionable to achieve land targets and national indicators defined in the document CONPES, the particular realities of local contexts. The aim of this tool is to achieve greater ownership by local authorities, the private sector, and the civil society of the SDGs, encouraging them to

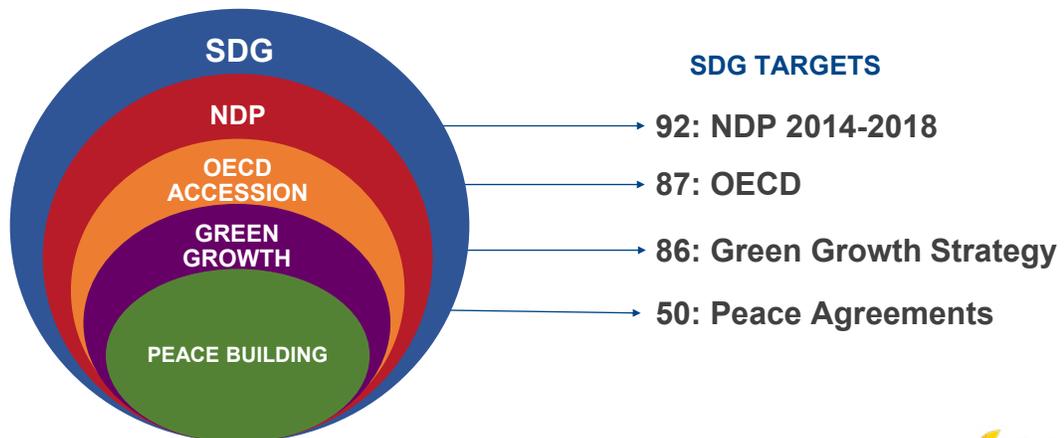
contribute to the definition and prioritization of local objectives and relevant policy decisions relevant to sustainable development.

Colombia is frequently cited as one of the leading countries in SDG implementation in Latin America and the world in general. The main reason for its success has been the highly active participation of the public and private sectors, as well as civil society<sup>20</sup>. This led to the early adoption of the SDGs framework as part of the national development plan even before it was universally accepted in September 2015 and therefore an accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** Level of alignment between the 2030 Agenda and other key development instruments of Colombia<sup>21</sup>

## 2030 AGENDA & THE SDGs AS A LONG-TERM ENVELOPING AND INTEGRATING TOOL

ACTIVE NATIONAL AGENDAS DETERMINE ACTIONS RELATED TO AT LEAST 146 SDG TARGETS - 86%

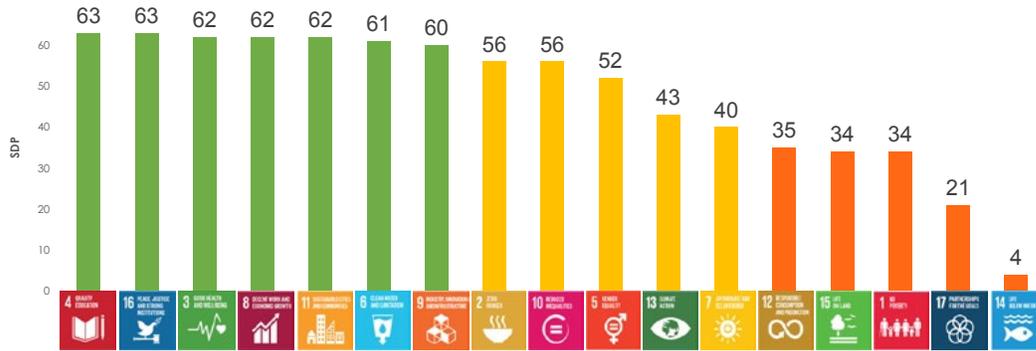


One of the key initiatives implemented in 2015 was the establishment, through an Executive Order of then President Juan Manuel Santos, of the High-level Interinstitutional Commission for the Preparation and Effective Implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs. This is a multi-sectoral political platform that includes all relevant national ministries—mainly lead by the Department of Statistics (DANE) and the Department of Planning (DNP)—and the Office of the President; local and regional governments; and civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector (Figure 3)<sup>22</sup>. All formal SDG implementation actions are coordinated through this commission, most notably the Voluntary National Review of 2017.

Regarding SDG localization, the national government (through the Commission) has worked with 32 departments and 31 departmental capital cities across the country in the adoption and creation of SDG-based territorial development plans<sup>23</sup>. Nonetheless, due to the great diversity in challenges and opportunities each department and city possesses, together with their distinct geographical characteristics, the Commission assessed each territory individually, and therefore no universal consensus has been developed (Figures 4 and 5)<sup>24</sup>.

**Figure 4.** Number of SDGs covered by the development plan of Colombia's departments and capital cities<sup>25</sup>

## ALIGNMENT: SDGs & SUBNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS 2016-2019



Source: NPD, 2016



**Figure 5.** Number of targets and indicators currently being evaluated by Colombia's government<sup>26</sup>

## AVAILABLE INFORMATION TO MEASURE GLOBAL INDICATORS

### 240 GLOBAL INDICATORS

- Information is available: 130
- Partial information, need of improvements: 72
- No data or methodology: 38

### CHALLENGES

- Frecuencias: 12,4% of indicators have frecuencies above 1 year.
- Disaggregations available for 55% of the 53 global indicators whose definitions include disaggregations



Aside from the work being done directly through the Commission, there have been many side projects developed with different partners to further contribute to the establishment and strengthening of the 2030 Agenda at the national and local level, including the development of a joint report with UNDP on SDG localization for the Colombian context<sup>27</sup>; various reports on the importance of the participation of the philanthropic and business sectors (mainly developed with the SDG Philanthropic Platform and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, or AECID, respectively); a pilot project launched to measure the private sector's contribution to the SDGs in four cities (Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, and Barranquilla); and, with UNDP, four regional meetings with civil society in the second half of 2017<sup>28</sup>.

Finally, according to the latest report of DANE<sup>29</sup> and DNP<sup>30</sup>, the main challenges that Colombia currently faces for the 2030 Agenda are:

- Improving available information (Figures 4 and 5)
- Closing regional gaps
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- Developing a long-term policy framework
- Working toward the participation of all stakeholders

After months of planning and delivering, in March 2018 the national government released the National Council of Economic and Social Policy (CONPES) guidelines to measure the progress of the country in relation to the most relevant indicators they identified for the national and regional

Colombian context. The commission selected a total of 174 selected indicators; 158 have a goal at the national level (the remaining indicators do not have goals due to a lack of data) and 132 have disaggregated regional goals. Furthermore, the information is publicly available through the portal [ods.gov.co](https://ods.gov.co), together with other SDG-related resources.

However, despite advancements, there is a sentiment that civil society is not involved as much as it could be. Based on this many organizations and local entities, such as Fundación Corona, have started developing their own bottom-up approaches. Additionally, independent from the national government, the cities of Medellín and Montería have also worked with the World Bank and UNDP to further strengthen their local development plans to fit the SDG framework.

## **Annex B.** Foundational Efforts Supporting SDG Localization in Colombia

In 2013, the United Nations set up the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF)<sup>31</sup>—a coalition of subnational governments’ networks lead by UN-Habitat, UNDP, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)—which has become one of the most important references worldwide on local development. One of the most important outcomes for the GTF has been the recognition of a framework that facilitates the localization of the SDGs. As shown in Figure 6, this framework consists of three major parts: (1) initializing the SDG process; (2) enabling institutional arrangements for SDG implementation and; (3) strengthening the capacity for Parts 1 and 2, with additional guidance on their respective implementation. Part 3 is a transversal section that should be considered at every phase of the localization process. Each subpart is supported with specific templates, examples, and methodologies that can guide their implementation efforts<sup>32</sup>.

Within the proposed framework, UCLG has identified four crucial steps that cities interested in implementing the SDGs can follow. These guidelines have also been adopted by the SDSN and remains the only universal guide on the subject today. The four proposed stages of SDG implementation are: Raising Awareness, Diagnostics, Strategies and Plans, and Monitoring and Evaluation. Beyond the four steps, the GTF has also identified four enabling conditions that need to be developed by the involved stakeholders in order to guarantee the successful implementation of the SDGs at the local level (Table 2).

**Figure 6.** Localizing the SDG Framework<sup>33</sup>



**Table 2.** Enabling Conditions for Successful Implementation of the SDGs at the Local Level

Urban Context		Context: 78% urban population, 80% GDP, System of cities (50 cities > 100K)
Multilevel Governance	This condition considers the vertical policy coherence among the international, national, regional and municipal governments, in addition to the established mechanism of collaboration among them. As a consequence of this integration, policy design, planning, implementation, and monitoring are strengthened.	
Territorial/ Multi-stakeholder Approach	For this condition, the alliance highlights the importance of articulating the efforts of government, civil society, and the private sector.	
Accountability	Managing and monitoring specific data locally will increase awareness and ownership of the 2030 Agenda. This will bring accountability closer to the people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalized civil and private accountability</li> <li>• The role of civil society and citizens in city accountability</li> <li>• Existing open data platform – third-party data</li> </ul>



Table 2 continued

<p>Development Cooperation Effectiveness</p>	<p>This condition will develop strong frameworks that will stop the proliferation of independent development initiatives by different stakeholders. In addition to the aforementioned conditions, SDSN suggests the following elements required to enable and manage a proper localization of SDGs. In contrast to the steps mentioned above, implementation of these conditions needs to be championed by the local governments.</p>	
<p>Decentralized Government</p>	<p>This condition refers to the level of decentralization of a country in reference to the national government and its local and regional governments. In other words, this is the way in which decision-making process/topics, policy management, and resource allocation happen, as well as the level of autonomy local and regional government have in relation to the national government.</p>	
<p>Integrated Municipal Government:</p>	<p>This is related to the level of cohesion that exists within a government—particularly inter-ministerial work—as well as with outside partners.</p>	

Table 2 continued

Municipal Finance	<p>Besides internal and technical capacity, local governments need strong financial capacity in order to implement impactful development projects. Sustainable development projects usually require large investments in the short term due to technology adoption and major changes in operating systems. Based on this, it is crucial that city governments have access to financial mechanisms that help them alleviate their expenses, as well as the enabling elements that are required for these mechanisms to function.</p>	
Government capacity development for the SDGs	<p>Similar to the previous condition, this refers to the capacity of the government to actually implement projects from a technical perspective or alternatively partner with someone to carry out the project.</p>	
Policy Framework	<p>This last condition refers to the in-place legislation and regulations framed in a policy framework that provide direction to long-term commitments and actions.</p>	<p>Weakened national urban policy and weak linkages with other key agendas (rural).</p>

Finally, both the GTF and UCLG recognize the importance of capacity-strengthening as a transversal phase that should be applied to each stage and condition. Capacity-strengthening will foster the development of individual, organizational, and societal capabilities and capacities to achieve their objectives in coherence with the SDGs. This is not limited to governments but includes all the various stakeholders.

## Annex C. SDG Indicator Framework for Colombian Cities

SDG	Target	Indicator name	Units	Source	Type of source	Benchmarks		
1	1.1	Incidence of extreme monetary poverty	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National	< 0%	0-4,8%	>4,8%
1	1.2	Incidence of monetary poverty	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National	< 4.5%	4.5-18,7%	>18,7%
	2							
2	2.2	Death rate by malnutrition in children under the age of five	Rate	DANE - Estadísticas Vitales (EEVV)	National	< 0%	0-13,9%	>13,9%
	2							
3	3.1	Maternal mortality ratio	Rate	DANE - Estadísticas Vitales (EEVV)	National	< 32	30-53,7	> 53,7
3	3.2	Under-five mortality rate	Rate	DANE - Estadísticas Vitales (EEVV)	National	< 15	15-18,7	> 18,7
3	3.2	Infant mortality rate	Rate	DANE - Estadísticas Vitales (EEVV)	National	>95%	95% - 90%	< 90%
3	3.6	Death rate due to road traffic injuries	Rate	Forensis Medicina Legal	National	<3.5	3.5-8.3	> 8.4
3	3.8	Percentage of one-year-old children with MMR vaccine	Percentage	Ministerio de Salud y Protección Social- Programa Ampliado de Inmunización (PAI)	National	< 3.35	3.35-14	> 14
	4							
4	4.1	Net enrollment rate	Percentage	MinEducación - Sistema Integrado de Matrícula (SIMAT)	National	>70%	51% - 70%	< 51%
4	4.1	Synthetic Education Index	Percentage	Ministerio de Educación	National	> 10	10-3	< 3
4	4.3	Gross coverage rate in higher education	Percentage	MinEducación - Sistema Nacional de	National	< 75%	75-50%	> 50%



8	8.6	Proportion of youth not in education, employment or training	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National	<12%	12% - 22.5%	>22.5%
8	8.7	Child labor rate	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National	<6	6 y 9	>9
	4							
9	9.c	Number of fixed broadband subscriptions per 1000 inhabitants	Rate	(ECV)	National	>93%	93% - 60%	< 60%
9	9.5	Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP	Percentage	Observatorio Colombiano de Ciencia y Tecnología (OCyT)	National	>70%	51% - 70%	< 51%
	2							
10	10.1	GINI index	Number	DANE-GEIH	National	< 0,35	0,35 - 0,45	>0,45
10	10.1	Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40per cent of the population	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National	>3.5%	3.5% - 2.1%	< 2.1%
10	10.2	Poverty gap index (urban- rural)	Percentage	DANE-GEIH	National			
	3							
11	11.1	Quantitative housing deficit	Percentage	DNP - DANE - Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH)	National	< 10%	10-25%	>25%
11	11.1	Qualitative housing deficit	Percentage	DNP - DANE - Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH)	National	<10%	10-14%	>14%
11	11.2	Transportation mode distribution (sustainable transport)	Percentage	EPC -RCCV	CVCN	>65%	50%-65%	<50%
11	11.2	Transportation mode distribution (bicycle)	Percentage	EPC -RCCV	CVCN	>5%	5%-2%	<2%
11	11.3	Percentage of urban population living in slums or informal settlements	Percentage	DNP	National	<20	20-30	>30

11	11.3	Average annual urban expansion growth rate	Rate	DNP - Atlas urbano	National	0 y 4%	3 y 6%	> 6%
11	11.5	Urban population located in high risk areas	Percentage	MADS - ICAU	National/ Local	<7	7 a 3	>3
11	11.5	Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population	Rate	UNGRD	National			
11	11.5	Risk Management Index	Number	DNP - UNIGRD	National	<25	25-75	>75
11	11.6	Percentage of urban solid waste regularly collected and well managed	Percentage	SUI - SSPP	National	100	100-90	>97.2
11	11.6	Average concentration of PM10 and PM2.5	Number	IDEAM	National	<30 PM10	30-100	>100
11	11.7	Square meters of public spaces per capita	m2/hab	MADS - ICAU	National/ Local	>10	7-10	< 7
12	12							
12	12.3	Per capita food waste generation at household level		DANE - Encuesta de Ingresos y Gastos	National			
12	12.5	Average of daily per capita solid waste generation	kg/day/per capita	SUI - SSPP	National	>10	5-10	<5
12	12.5	Recycling rate	Percentage	DANE-Cuentas ambientales	National	<16.2	16.2-32.4	>32.4
13	13							
13	13.1	Existence of Action Plan for Climate Change in the Municipality	Binary	RCCV	CVCN			
13	13.2	Annual reduction of total greenhouse gas emissions with respect to the baseline scenario	Percentage	IDEAM	National	Existencia of Action Plan	Existencia of Plan with no funds	No Action Plan
13	13.2	Existence and monitoring of a greenhouse gases inventory	Binary	RCCV	CVCN	Existencia of inventory with periodic monitoring in place	Existencia of inventory with no up to date monitoring	No inventory or monitoring system



16	16.1	or very safe in the neighborhood where they live	Percentage	EPC - RCCV	CVCN	<209	209-263	>263
16	16.2	Number of cases of violence against children and adolescents per 100,000 children under 18 years of age	Rate	Forensis Medicina Legal	National	85-100	89.4-60.0	59.0-0
16	16.10	Transparency of Public Entities Index	Percentage	Transparencia por Colombia	National	85-100	85-50	50
	6							
17	17.1	Tax collections per capita	Number	FUT	National			
17	17.1	Fiscal performance index	Percentage	Observatorio de Transparencia y Corrupción	National			
17	17.1	Own income as a percentage of total revenues	Number	FUT	National	80	80-60	60
17		Open Government Index	Percentage	IGA - Procuraduria	National	70	70-40	40-0
17	17.19	Social progress index	Percentage	RCCV	RCCV	>54,75%	23,98% - 54,74%	< 23,97%
	4							

## **Annex D.** Cómo Vamos Cities Network: City Coordinators and Partners

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Cámara de Comercio Aburrá Su

Comfama

Comfenalco Antioquia

Corporación Empresarial ProSUR

Corporación Universitaria Lasallista

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Cámara de Comercio de Armenia y  
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Diario El País

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Periódico La Patria  
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Efigas  
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Universidad Cooperativa de Colombia  
Universidad EAFIT  
Universidad Libre - seccional Pereira  
Frisby

Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira Prodensa

Hacer ciudad



Compensar

ProBogota

Accenorte

Cámara de Comercio

Diosisis

Cocomacia

Producciones Estrella TV

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Universidad del Magdalena

Fundación Cavelier Lozano

Universidad Sergio Arboleda

Fundación Milenium

Findeter

Aesabana

Tras la Perla de la América



Fundación Empresarial para el Desarrollo de Yumbo (FEDY)

ANDI - seccional Valle

Cámara de Comercio de Cali

Cervecería del Valle

Fundación Smurfit Kappa Colombia

Fundación Universidad del Valle  
Yumbo

## ENDNOTES

1. More information about this diagnosis and the overall context that frames CVCN's project can be found in Additional Resources (“The 5 Urban Challenges”) and Annexes A and B.
2. More information: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3918.pdf>.
3. The results of Phase 1 are presented in Additional Resources, “The 5 Urban Challenges.”
4. The identification of these foundational blocks for SDG localization in Colombian Cities is based on the research carried out by students from the Master's in Public Administration from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. See more in Annex B.
5. Armenia, Barranquilla, Bogota, Bucaramanga, Cali, Cartagena, Cúcuta, Ibagué, Manizales, Medellín, Monteria, Pasto, Pereira, Quibdó, Riohacha, and Santa Marta.
6. The proposed questionnaire is based on “Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs,” developed by the Global Task Force and UCL “SDGs in the municipal map” framework, and incorporates feedback from local stakeholders.
7. Reports on SDG progress that mimic the VNRs being presented to the UN. For more information see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs>.
8. Although instrumental to the overall initiative, Component 2 is not detailed in this brief.

9. Category 1 – Methodology and data available. Category 2 – Methodology available, data not available across all cities. Category 3 – No methodology or data.

10. Document CONPES 3918 identified a total of 140 indicators to monitor and evaluate the progress of Colombia in achieving the SDGs. Although a fundamental guide, these indicators are not fully aligned with the local context of Colombian cities since they are meant to guide national government efforts only and provide guidelines to other actors. The document can be accessed here: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3918.pdf>.

11. See Additional Resources, “The 5 Urban Challenges.”

12. Local indices and monitoring initiatives include: Crecimiento Verde, ICAU, TerriData, Antioquia Sostenible, and the Consejo Privado de Competitividad.

13. As explained in “The 5 Urban Challenges,” these SDGs present the biggest challenges in terms of data production.

14. Socialization efforts of Fundación Corona and the CVCN were focused across six cities in Colombia: Bogotá, Cali, Cartagena, Manizales, Medellín, and Quibdo. By engaging with various stakeholders across the public sector, private sector, and civil society, efforts have aimed to include diverse perspectives in the development of actionable tools and encourage citizen participation as a way to push for local governments to pursue SDG localization more actively.

15. The methodology to define this framework is based on the benchmark analysis of different experiences across the world, particularly from SDSN's U.S.A. Sustainable Cities Initiative target definition methodology, which included a set of criteria based on each type of indicator (similar to the work of the IDB for its Sustainable and Emergent Cities Program).

16. National targets were defined by CONPES 3918 as part of the national strategy for the implementation of the SDGs. National-level targets guide the national government's effort to fulfill their promises with the SDG agenda, and represent national averages that include targets for the country as a whole.

17. The proposed targets will be designed to account for variation across groups of cities in order to set fair and appropriate targets for the varying levels of development across cities. These groups were defined based on city size, capacities, and development conditions.

18. This SDG Dashboard builds on CVCN's current open data platform, Ciudadatos.

19. An initial version of the aforementioned visualization models was presented to different stakeholders during the workshops carried out in

20. It is important to mention that it is frequently argued that Colombia's status as a "recovering nation" also greatly influenced the attitude of the Government toward the urgency to implement sustainable policies that could help support the establishment of better trust and lasting peace.

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30. Marazzani, Claudia Vásquez. 2017. “Keeping the Momentum up: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Colombia. Lessons Learned and Challenges.” [https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Sinergia/Documentos/2017\\_07\\_14\\_Presentacion\\_HLPF\\_Side\\_Event.pdf](https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Sinergia/Documentos/2017_07_14_Presentacion_HLPF_Side_Event.pdf).
31. Furthermore, since 2015, one of the main objectives of this coalition has been to increase awareness of the importance of subnational governments in the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda, as well as to identify ways in which local actors can engage in sustainable development.
32. This framework can be further consulted here: <https://www.localizingth-esdgs.org/discover-tools>.
33. Screenshot taken from the Localizing the SDG initiative website on February 15, 2018. At: <http://localizingthesdgs.org/discover-tools>.



