European Committee of the Regions

Commission for Economic Policy

ECON

A territorial approach for the implementation of the SDGs in the EU – The role of the European Committee of the Regions

© European Union, 2019
Partial reproduction is permitted, provided that the source is explicitly mentioned.

More information on the European Union and the Committee of the Regions is available online at http://www.europa.eu and http://www.cor.europa.eu respectively.

Catalogue number: QG-04-19-331-EN-N; ISBN: 978-92-895-1005-9; doi:10.2863/11396

This report was written by François Levarlet, Michele Alessandrini, Pietro Celotti (t33) with contributions from Giacomo Salvatori and Frank Holstein (Spatial Foresight), Martyna Derszniak-Noirjean and Mailin Gaupp-Berghausen (ÖIR), Paolo Seri, Veronika Müller (t33). Language review by Timothy Wills.

It does not represent the official views of the European Committee of the Regions.

Table of contents

Executive summary **1**

Introduction **5**

1. SDGs, background and current context **7**

1.1 SDGs worldwide 7

1.2 SDGs and the eu 11

2 Roles of regions, cities and local actors in implementing sdgs **15**

2.1 Outlook from recent studies 15

2.2 Strategy and measures to achieve sdgs 17

2.3 Conclusions and recommendations for the analysis 31

3 EU level financial and technical support schemes **33**

4 Potential role of the cor in relation to sdgs **37**

References **41**

Annex I - EU initiatives and sdgs **45**

Annex II – List of interviews **51**

Annex III – Case studies **53**

Basque Country 53

City of Poznan 67

Lombardy Region 81

List of abbreviations

CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CoR	European Committee of the Regions
DG	Directorate-General (of the European Commission)
EC	European Commission
ECON	Commission for Economic Policy (of the CoR)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESI	European Structural Investment
ESIF	European Structural Investment Funds
EU	European Union
HLPFs	High-level Political Forums (on Sustainable Development)
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
LEADER	Liaison entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale (Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development)
LRAs	Local and Regional Authorities
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
nrg4SD	Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
VNR	Voluntary National Reviews

Executive summary

This report reviews the state of play for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) policies in the European Union (EU) and the role of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) in their implementation. In addition, it provides CoR members with information to feed into the discussion on the potential role of CoR in this relatively new area.

SDGs State of play

At the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Summit of September 2015, UN Member States adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)*. This is a plan to transform national policies and to develop cooperation strategies and systems in all countries to facilitate a better and a more sustainable future. At its core are 17 SDGs and 169 targets. There is also a follow-up and review process through annual High-Level Political Forums (HLPFs) on sustainable development. A cornerstone of each HLPF is the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) which also follow-up national and regional achievements.

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, the European Commission (EC) reacted through the communication '*Next steps for a sustainable European future – European action for sustainability'* published in 2016. This reviewed SDGs within the European policy framework, assessed the EU's position, priorities and actions and introduced EU efforts to address the 17 goals. To detail longer term scenarios for SDGs and feed-into the EU level debate with citizens, stakeholders, governments and institutions, the EC published 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030' in January 2019[1].

LRAs are very relevant in delivering the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, 65% of the 169 targets can only be reached through coordination and inclusion of local and regional governments.

Approaches for LRAs

In the EU, many countries have a policy for sustainable development at various levels. However, there are differences in defining and implementing SDG strategies between LRAs. Differences can be in terms of regional or local governance, sector and stakeholder involvement, as well as arrangements for multi-level governance and detailed definitions of indicators and targets.

Local and regional SDG strategy approaches differ, as do the policy fields they cover. The more ambitious adopt a completely new strategy, with specific targets, timing

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/reflection-paper-towards-sustainable-europe_en

and policy tools (e.g. the Basque country). Another approach is more adaptive, updating old practices and policies (e.g. City of Poznan). Some local approaches address SDGs through a specific sector view (e.g. energy polices, or promoting women), while others are more cross-cutting and develop instruments of governance (e.g. indicators) in different sectors and policy fields. The quality of stakeholder involvement also varies, however stakeholders are mostly public administration, NGOs and citizens.

Polices related to SDGs are found from global to local levels, including EU institutions, national institutions and ministries, regions, counties, cities and small territories. Coordination between the different levels can vary from a top-down approach (when a 'planner' gives 'instructions' to lower levels of governance), to more collaborative shared management (when coordination is more horizontal, based on competences, needs and capacity at various governance levels). Another approach follows subsidiarity principles by managing roles on a regulatory basis.

Defining a monitoring system makes SDGs more relevant by providing information on the whole implementation process to stakeholders and citizens, as well as providing instruments for better governance and accountability. In general, LRAs have developed indicators to accompany their strategy, although with different levels of detail (e.g. number of indicators) and different monitoring arrangements.

Challenges in designing and implementing a strategy under Agenda 2030

The case studies and interviews highlight many challenges for LRAs, which hamper effective and efficient planning at different levels of implementation. These include political commitments and awareness, multilevel governance, administrative capacity and financial resources:

- When local and regional political orientation and objectives change, there can be a **lack of continuity in political commitment to sustainable development**, with 'stop and go' effects in administrative processes.

- As awareness is a pre-condition for local ownership and engagement in SDG related policies, a **lack of awareness results in misunderstandings or under/overestimations of issues**. This reduces public support for policy initiatives and undermines the capacity of communities to achieve results.

- A **lack of coordination between different levels of governance increases uncertainty in defining and implementing SDG strategies**. It also raises the risk of overlapping policy interventions, increases inconsistency in approaches and inefficient allocations of human and financial resources.

- **Administration structures and how roles are assigned to different departments can create obstacles**. Competences and skills in LRAs are usually sector-based and departments often work in 'silos'.

- **Financial need is almost always mentioned** as a major obstacle. A more efficient use of resources is needed to address additional works and investments resulting from a new policy agenda.

- **Following up indicators is time and resource consuming**. In addition, the connection between **different systems and UN, Eurostat, national and regional indicators** is challenging. To be effective, indicators need to be consistent with issues identified by local stakeholders and measure local interventions, based on pre-defined targets.

Recommendations

- **Ensure better EU institutional commitment**, providing policy objectives and targets with clear connections to SDGs. SDG achievements should be integrated in budgetary and political agendas (e.g. the Multiannual Financial Framework or the European Semester), with monitoring and reporting requirements. This entails including SDGs in European Structural Investment (ESI) regulations, connecting objectives, investment priorities and related outcome indicators with each of the 17 SDGs and providing direct support to LRAs, especially local authorities with low capacity or severe financial constraints.

- To avoid confusion and inefficient uses of resources, **define priorities, keeping in mind the holistic nature of Agenda 2030**. For implementation, LRAs should define how to start and prioritise implementation actions.

- **Integrating the work internally and externally**, i.e. in the authority, supporting officials and department managers to empower them. Also involve external stakeholders and other levels of governance through communication and networking. This should enable better coordination and integration of activities.

- **Visibly involve people and civil society in general**, making them conscious that global goals are relevant at local level and encouraging participation in the whole process.
- **Set indicators and appropriate monitoring**. Indicators need to be defined at all levels and harmonised to enable comparison over time and territories. Their role in the whole process must be considered, especially measuring performance and publicising results.

- **Take into account budget and resource constraints**, when planning goals and potential actions. Resources should be allocated according to the priorities (see above) and the 'principle of economy'. This means using available funds (e.g. ESI Funds), making the decision-making process efficient (avoiding overlaps or negative policy impacts) and implementing zero cost or win-win measures, such as actions delivering benefits while reducing costs at the same time. Examples include promoting innovation in the circular economy and targeting disadvantaged groups of people.

Potential role of the CoR in designing and implementing SDGs

- The CoR could promote a **structured exchange between LRAs looking to identify SDG strategies with LRAs that have already started the process** ('first movers'). Local or regional seminars should be encouraged and facilitated by providing the format and indicating possible speakers and facilitators.

- The CoR should **promote training for LRAs to develop a complete methodology to SDGs and effective monitoring** to measure social development; and provide information contents by commissioning specific studies.

- The **CoR could develop a format to detail local implementation of SDGs** in towns, counties and regions, so experiences can be compared and promoted across the world and the added value of the European approach seen and measured. This could help with discussions and collaboration with the UN organisations.

Introduction

The methodological approach of the study is based on identifying topics to be covered, as well as qualitative data and information sources to provide evidence of SDG implementation at local and regional levels. A literature review collected information at EU and national levels on SDG strategies in preparation or already in force. Selected interviews at international, national, regional and city levels complement the literature review and provide examples and best practices of how LRAs are implementing SDGs. Three case studies of LRAs (Basque country in Spain, City of Poznan in Poland and Lombardy region in Italy) analyse in depth the different steps in defining strategies and, where relevant, in implementing SDGs at local and regional levels. As a result of the analysis, the study identifies challenges and opportunities faced by LRAs.

The study is structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 sets the scene for SDGs at international and EU level, based on a literature review;
- Chapter 2 shows the state of play of SDGs at local and regional level in selected territories, based on key case studies and interviews (highlighted in boxes in the text), addressing both obstacles and opportunities for LRAs;
- Chapter 3 identifies sources of financing at EU level, as well as the technical support schemes already available;
- Chapter 4 concludes by analysing the potential role CoR could play in supporting LRAs with SDG implementation;
- Annex I summarises the EU initiatives and SDGs;
- Annex II lists the 12 organisations and stakeholders interviewed;
- Annex III provides a full description of the case studies.

1. SDGs, background and current context

1.1 SDGs worldwide

Launching on the international agenda in 2015

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit of September 2015, Member States adopted *the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*[2] *(2030 Agenda).* This is a framework for action to transform policies and develop cooperation strategies and systems in all countries to achieve a better and a more sustainable future[3]. At its core are **17 SDGs** and 169 targets which entered into force on 1 January 2016 and should stimulate action in the coming years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet (see list of SDGs in Annex I).

The SDGs

The 17 SDGs are integrated and indivisible and balance the three key dimensions of sustainable development[4]: economic, social and environmental. The SDG's integrated approach means ending poverty hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

These are encompassed by governance, supported by SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Global Partnership for Sustainable Development[5]). These aim at strengthening global partnerships and increasing cooperation between governments, civil society, the UN system and other stakeholders. Indeed, the breadth and complexity of issues embedded in the SDGs seek to respond to the worldwide social, environmental and economic challenges that can no longer be tackled with uncoordinated sector-oriented approaches. Instead, multiple goals and targets, embracing different areas and time horizons need to be achieved with coherent and structured strategies and well-integrated policies that are supported by multi-level governance approaches, multi-stakeholder participation and an efficient implementation, follow-up and review mechanism[6].

[2] United Nations (2015*a*).
[3] United Nations (2017).
[4] In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (United Nations) defined social development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. See United Nation (1987), p.37.
[5] The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda and relates to the engagement of multiple stakeholders in implementing SDGs and mobilising resources by governments, civil society, the private sector, the UN system and other actors. See: United Nations (2015).
[6] United Nations (2017), p.2.

SDGs in UN architecture

The UN's commitment to mainstreaming all dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system builds on increased intergovernmental guidance at the highest level, adequate institutional support and wide coordination within the UN system and with external partners[7]. Within the UN's architecture, the Division for Sustainable Development goals in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs is similar to a Secretariat of the SDGs. It provides support and capacity-building activities to national governments in relation to the 2030 Agenda and acts as the SDGs' main advocate, think tank/advisor and evaluator[8]. Further coordination and ongoing support are provided by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)[9]. The primary responsibility for implementing SDGs, however, lies with national governments which are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for achieving the 17 goals.

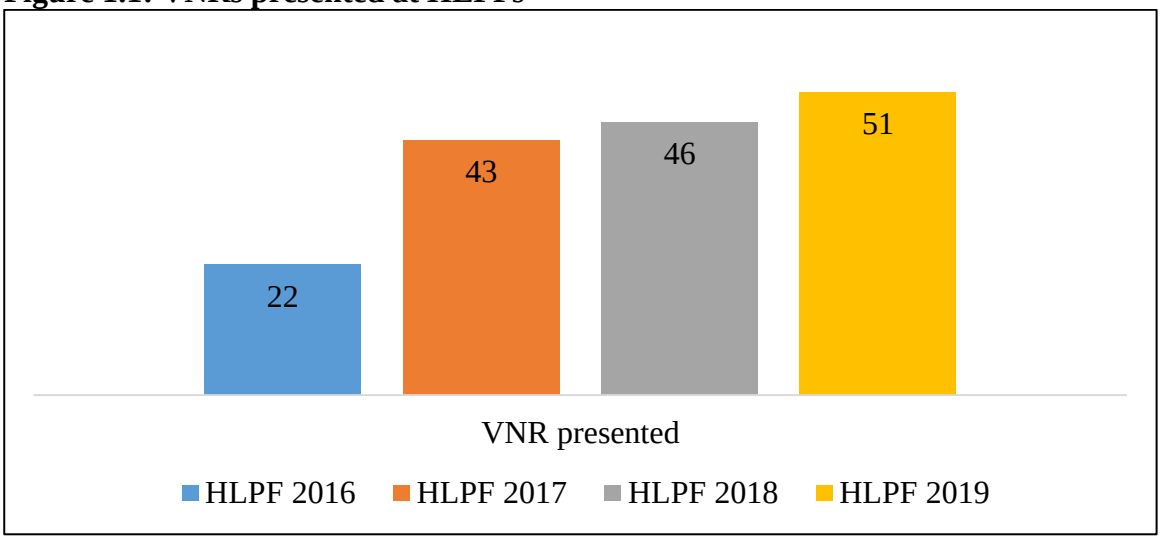
The 2030 Agenda's country-led approach and the focus on national governments is not only for implementation but also for the follow-up and review process. Follow-up and review are achieved through regular HLPFs on sustainable development. Here the implementation of sustainable development commitments is discussed at a global level[10].

The HLPF meets annually for eight days under the auspices of ECOSOC, including a three-day ministerial meeting, and every four years for two days with all national Heads of Government under the auspices of the General Assembly. It serves as a dynamic international platform where experiences and challenges of sustainable development with respective programmes and policies are exchanged and coordinated between UN bodies and national governments.

A cornerstone of the annual HLPF are VNRs which form the main national and regional review and follow-up mechanism. Even though they are conducted and presented on a voluntary basis, the UN strongly encourages governments to carry out these reviews (in a country-led and country-driven approach) to assess the progress and shortcomings of their efforts towards implementing the SDGs. Through presentations at a HLPF, experiences and best practices are shared and important lessons for sustainable development can be drawn and exchanged among countries. In the past, 111 VNRs have been presented by 102 developing and developed countries (22, 43 and 46 in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively, see Figure 1.1). At the HLPF in 2019, another 51 countries will present their national/regional progress towards SDGs, with ten countries[11] doing it for the second time[12].

[7] United Nations (2013).
[8] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/about
[9] Coordination mechanism uniting over 50 UN entities and research institutes.
[10] United Nations (2015*a*).
[11] Azerbaijan, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, France, Guatemala, Indonesia, Philippines, Sierra Leone and Turkey.
[12] United Nations (2018*b*), p.10.

Figure 1.1: VNRs presented at HLPFs



Source: United Nations (2018), p.10.

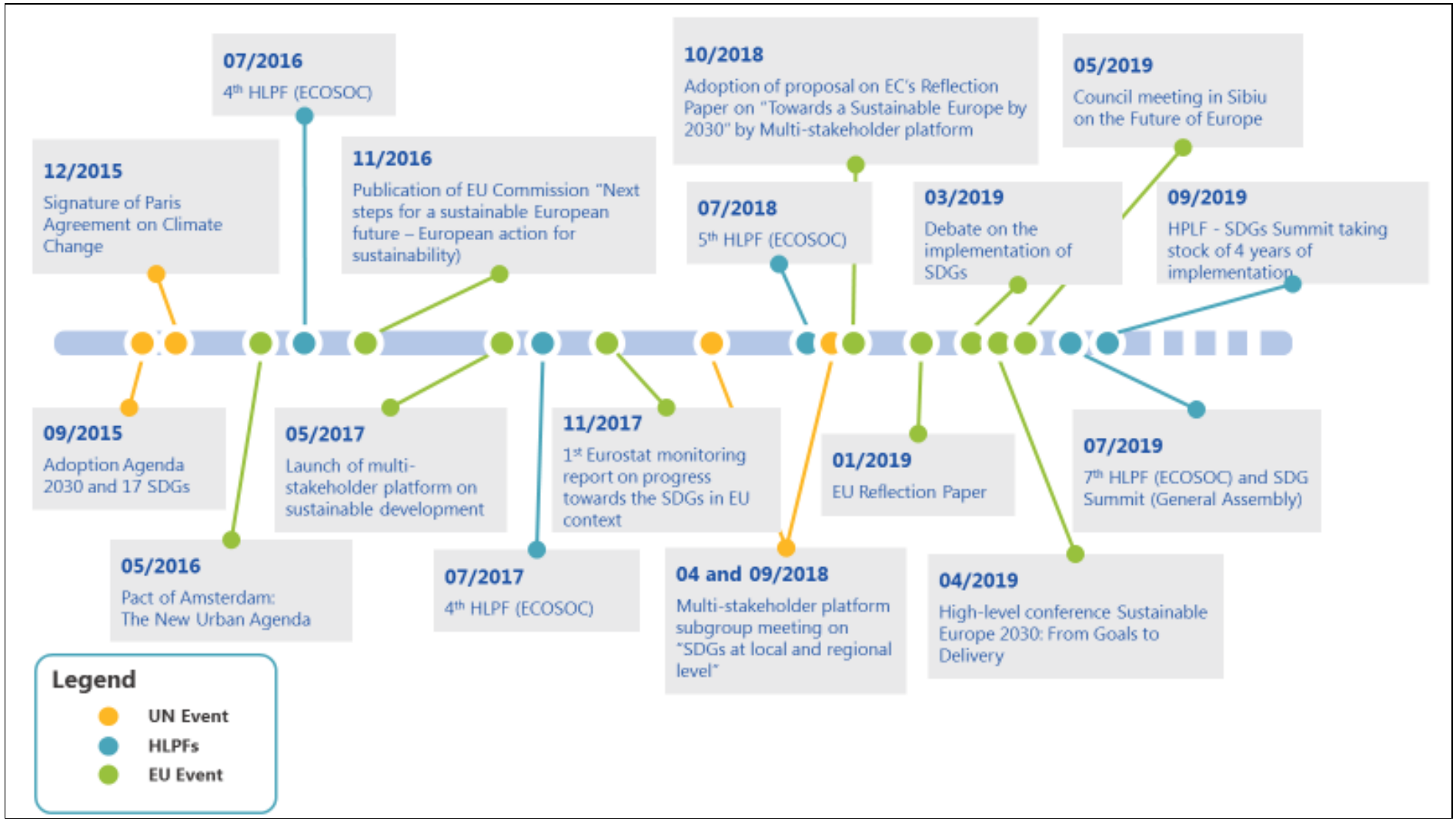
Monitoring progress toward implementation of SDGS

To monitor the implementation process, the UN SDG action online database was set up in 2017 as a regularly updated repository of actions and initiatives for sustainable development[13]. It is based on information gathered by UN system entities and is used as a reference for HLPF and General Assembly annual progress reports[14]. These reports summarise national and global challenges and achievements concerning the 2030 Agenda. The reports highlight global indicators where sufficient statistical data is available and makes interconnections across targets and SDGs. The latest annual progress report of 2018 stresses the current state of play. It shows that after three years of implementation, the shared vision has been translated into many national development strategies. For each SDG, core achievements and key facts and figures are listed[15].

Support for LRAs in the UN framework include the SDG 25+5 Cities leadership platform that shows full SDG implementation at local and regional levels is possible[16].

[13] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unsurvey/index.html
[14] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/unsurvey/index.html
[15] United Nations (2018*c*).
[16] https://www.ungsii.org/sdg-cities

Figure 1.2: Timeline of EU/international events relating to 2030 Agenda and SDGs



Source: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

1.2 SDGs and the EU

Sustainable development is a continuing story in the EU policy background

Sustainable development has been on the EU's agenda for decades. It has recognised the links between social, economic and environmental dimensions and noted that development must not compromise future generations. Especially since the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, in which sustainable development was promoted to an overarching objective of EU policies[17], the idea gained momentum. The EU Sustainable Development Strategy in 2001 was formulated in 'A sustainable Europe for a better world: a European Union strategy for Sustainable Development' (COM(2001)264 final). However, the strategy covers external EU actions and is limited to the relations with third countries.

Next steps for a sustainable Europe – EU action towards the SDGs

Following adoption of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs, the EC reacted through the Communication 'Next steps for a sustainable European future – European action for sustainability' published in 2016. This reviewed SDGs in the European policy framework, assessed the EU's position, priorities and actions and introduced EU efforts to address the 17 goals. The Commission aimed at streamlining all actions for sustainable development through cross-cutting projects, sectoral policies and initiatives. Moreover, it committed to becoming a forerunner for implementing the 2030 Agenda through two workstreams. The first fully integrates SDGs in the current European policy framework, while the second is more future-oriented and includes future visions and the long-term implementation of SDGs beyond 2020[18].

Figure 1.3: EU progress towards the SDGs

Source: Eurostat (2018), p.11.

[17] European Union (1997).
[18] European Commission (2016*a*), pp.2-3.

Key implementation actions of EU

Five key actions for implementing the 2030 Agenda are identified in the Communication[19]:

1) **Inclusion of the SDGs into EU policies and initiatives** with sustainable development being upgraded to an overarching guiding principle. However this could not be implemented as the European Commission had already defined its 10 priorities[20] for the mandate. This may explain why more than three years after the adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda, there are still no EU strategy to implement SDGs.

2) **Regular reporting of EU progress** (Figure 1.3). The EU pledged to play an active role in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda. Since 2017, annual Eurostat publications have supported the regular monitoring of SDGs in the EU with 100 indicators for the 17 SDGs[21]. The latest Eurostat report on the EU SDG indicators shows that in the last five years, the 100 indicators have been realised. However, clear quantitative targets for each SDG have not been set yet and the quality of matching between SDGs and indictors may need improvement. Some indictors show progress (especially SDGs 3, 4 and 7), while others, e.g. SDG 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries) have deteriorated in the last half decade. Moreover, some indicators within individual goals also show negative trends, thus moving away from sustainable development[22].

3) **A multi-stakeholder platform to follow-up and exchange best practices** of SDG implementation across sectors at Member State and EU-levels[23]. This platform includes stakeholders from civil society, NGOs and the public, private and corporate sector. Their knowledge is also used for advising the EC and for preparing the annual sustainability award. Moreover, there are meetings of the multi-stakeholder platform management committee and subgroups[24].

4) Preparation of a long-term post 2020 vision document, and

5) Diffusion of 2030 Agenda implementation to other European institutions, national governments, international and civil society organisations, citizens and other stakeholders.

[19] *Ibid*.
[20] 10 European Commission priorities for 2015-2019: (1) Jobs, growth and investment; (2) Digital single market; (3) Energy Union and climate; (4) Internal market; (5) A deeper and fairer economic and monetary union; (5) A balanced and progressive trade policy to harness globalisation; (6) Justice and fundamental rights; (7) Migration; (8) A stronger global actor; (9) Democratic change.
[21] European Commission (2017*a*). See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/276524/7736915/EU-SDG-indicator-set-with-cover-note-170531.pdf
[22] Eurostat (2018).
[23] European Commission (2016*a*), p.18.
[24] European Commission (2017*b*).

EU at HLPF

Already at the first HLPF in 2013, the EU was well represented as Commission President Barroso spoke on the EU's role in achieving the SDGs[25]. Since then EU institutions have participated on a regular basis. The 2019 HLPF will pay special attention to the EU approach to the 2030 Agenda and the EC has been invited to present an EU level SDG implementation report similar to a VNR[26].

Figure 1.4: Proposal for a Sustainable Europe 2030 Strategy

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/reflection-paper-sustainable-europe-by-2030-infographic_en.pdf

Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy

Concerning the second track, for long-term inclusion of SDGs, the EC has published a long-term Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy to guide all EU policies and programmes before the start of the upcoming programming period. For this, a Commission Reflection Paper '*Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030'* was published in January 2019[27]. This will be part of the debate on the Future of Europe launched by current president Juncker[28] and discussed at the European Council Meeting in May 2019 in Sibiu. Moreover, it will impact the political agenda and priorities post 2019.

To feed into the Reflection Paper and inspire the Commission, a multi-stakeholder platform is chaired by the European Commission Secretariat General, and involves the CoR ECON. It includes 30 members from EU and global institutions, NGOs as well as public, private and civil society organisations. In October 2018, the stakeholder platform adopted a common proposal, *Europe moving towards a sustainable future*. The proposal includes recommendations for setting-up the Sustainable Europe 2030 strategy including interim and long-term targets, amendments to the EU's sustainable development toolbox and specific sectoral recommendations on five key policy areas[29]. The members also advocate a multi-

[25] See: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-731_en.htm
[26] European Parliament (2018).
[27] Reflection Paper 'Towards A Sustainable Europe by 2030'.
[28] European Commission (2017*c*).
[29] Key policy areas identified: Sustainable Consumption & Production; Research, Innovation, Employability & Social Inclusion; Climate & Energy policy; Food, Farming and Land-use (CAP); Cohesion policy.

level/-stakeholder and, above all, territorial approach to deliver the SDGs that prompts action at regional and local levels[30].

Territorial approach for a Sustainable EU

A territorial approach is strongly pursued by a subgroup of the SDG multi-stakeholder platform which met in April and September 2018. Its focus is a topic of growing importance: local and regional implementation of SDGs. In its recommendations to the EC, the subgroup recently underlined the relevance of LRAs in delivering the 2030 Agenda, emphasising the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's statement that **'65% of the 169 targets that form the base for the 17 SDGs can only be reached if coordination with and inclusion of local and regional governments is assured'**[31]. Successful implementation of SDGs requires integrated policies that take into account the specificities and social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions of the territories and that follow a community-based service approach. As LRAs are the levels most aware of specifics in rural, urban and natural areas and are closest to the community, they need to be the primary government tier to implement this approach.

In terms of *Governance*, the subgroup advises increasing vertical and horizontal cooperation and dialogue. All policies, interventions and processes from design and shaping to implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation need to be viewed as a shared responsibility between different tiers of government. These must not only ensure coherence in terms of actions but also need to involve other stakeholders from civil society, social partners, business and industry, academia and science. Finally, the relevance of LRA involvement in monitoring and reporting and in exchanging experiences are highlighted[32].

The following chapter will focus on the role of regions and cities in implementing SDGs and include multi-level governance concerning the 2030 Agenda.

[30] SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform (2018).
[31] UN Sustainable Development Solution Network (2016) Getting Started with the SDGs in Cities. A Guide for Stakeholders http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/9.1.8.-Cities-SDG-Guide.pdf
[32] Subgroup on 'Delivering SDGs at local and regional level' (2018), *Recommendations to the European Commission by the subgroup on SDGs at local and regional level of the Multi-Stakeholder on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU.*

2 Roles of regions, cities and local actors in implementing SDGs

This chapter illustrates the experiences of EU regions and cities implementing SDGs. The first part of the chapter provides an overview of the state of play based on a literature review. The second part details different governance profiles adopted by LRAs and is based on a survey and interviews. It also covers LRA strategies to pursue SDGs, implementation arrangements and multilevel governance to coordinate planned activities. In the third part of the chapter, key SDG opportunities and challenges for LRAs are analysed in more depth. This is based on recent studies as well as the three case studies and interviews. Recommendations for effective and efficient planning conclude the chapter.

2.1 Outlook from recent studies

Within the many studies on UN SDGs, a few have focused on implementation at subnational levels and on multilevel governance.

As mentioned in the first chapter, 65 UN member states and agencies submitted VNRs to the 2016 and 2017 HLPFs. These were recently **analysed by United Cities and Local Governments and the Global Taskforce** for local and regional government involvement.

Only 38 VNRs mentioned subnational government engagement in the reporting process while only 27 involved LRAs in the decision-making or consultation process. For two VNRs – Italy and Guatemala – information was not yet available. Moreover, awareness varies between regions with diverse political systems, past commitments such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or Local Agenda 21, and any institutional mechanisms for dialogue between governments. The lack of engagement is because national governments such as Venezuela, Belize, El Salvador, Slovenia, Monaco and Afghanistan refused to allow and acknowledge decentralisation to subnational tiers. However, local government perception of SDGs needs to change. Few local and regional governments have understood that the 2030 Agenda is ‘a once in a generation opportunity to trigger a true universal transformation’.

Most local governments currently feel that the Agenda is detached from their local policy strategy, an external imposition that brings additional burden with inadequate resources. LRAs and local stakeholders need to consider it an opportunity to achieve a sustainable vision of the future through concrete local actions and initiatives with adequate financial support and assistance. This calls for increased policy coherence and harmonisation between local, regional, national and global development plans

and extended dialogues between the different levels of government. A more integrated approach with both horizontal and vertical coordination would reduce policies in silos and enable multiple SDGs to be addressed simultaneously at local level. In addition, inclusive partnerships need to be set up with multiple stakeholders to increase the success of LRA implementation. Moreover, enhancing connections with other LRAs to increase international exchange and inter-regional learning would contribute to SDG achievement.

A **report conducted by the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development** (nrg4SD) analyses the role of subnational levels, particularly regions, in implementing the 2030 Agenda[33]. Built on mapping survey results with 47 regional governments, it identifies common trends, practices and difficulties. It also presents clear policy recommendations for regional governments looking to incorporate SDGs into their regional governance mechanisms.

Moreover, the report provided input for the 2018 HLPF. According to nrg4SD, the principal challenges included difficulties with prioritising SDGs in subnational agendas, a lack of capacity and human capital (trained staff) as well as financial resources. To tackle these, many regional governments turn to multi-level governance and engage stakeholders from various sectors. The main added-value of regional governments is their capacity to realise a territorial approach while simultaneously integrating multiple SDGs. This requires national and global frameworks, as well as adequate indicators to follow-up on the process.

The involvement of LRA's is further underlined in a **recent study by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions** (CEMR) and **PLATFORMA**[34]. This is based on a survey of 18 European national associations of local and regional governments and provides key information on work by local and regional governments (with links between SDG implementation and multi-level collaboration, awareness-raising and local government capacities). These lead to four recommendations: increase LRA and citizen participation through awareness-raising initiatives, ensure coherent local and regional approaches through EU-/national design mechanisms, build local and regional capacities through national and European support (technological knowledge and tools), and support Local and Regional Government Associations to assist LRAs with SDG implementation and international partnership development.

A **significant OECD contribution to HLPF 2018 was the report on policy coherence in SDG implementation**[35]. The focus is on policy coherence for sustainable development, which calls for integrated development across all policy areas (see boxes), domestic and international objectives as well as current and future

[33] Messias R., Grigorovski Vollmer J. and Sindico F. (2018).
[34] Platforma and CEMR (2018).
[35] OECD (2018).

generations. Importantly, it also investigates the role of LRAs in delivering the social, environmental and economic transformations necessary to achieve SDGs. The report notes that the subnational government share of total public investments in 2015 was 40% worldwide and over 59% in OECD countries. So, subnational bodies carry a great responsibility for investments in response to sustainable development needs and gaps. This is seen in six examples of subnational involvement in SDG implementation[36].

A **recent study published by Nordregio** shows that some LRAs in the Nordic region have already started taking responsibility for achieving the 17 SDGs[37]. These 'first movers', despite significant geographical and political differences, have already identified success factors and challenges for municipalities in this field. Success usually depends on political support at local level as well as networking and collaboration with other authorities along with citizens, companies and civil society organisations. Moreover, relating SDGs to ongoing activities, as well as tangible and local actions are crucial. Lastly, changes take time, so strategies and actions must be planned and implemented over a reasonable period of time and include intermediate targets and milestones. Nordic municipalities mentioned that integrating work on SDGs into the agenda of a local authority was the biggest challenge. Furthermore, they struggled with breaking down global goals and priorities to the local level and noted the lack of support from higher tiers of government.

2.2 Strategy and measures to achieve SDGs

More than 90% of the regional governments that responded to the worldwide survey by nrg4SD[38] were familiar with the SDGs, while 87% have a specific policy and/or action plan. In the EU, almost all Member States have a policy for sustainable development at some level of governance. However, there are significant differences between LRAs when it comes to defining and implementing SDG strategies.

Based on a literature review, three case studies and interviews with stakeholders, the approaches depend on:

- The **type of LRA involved**, mainly regions, municipalities and cities or authorities in rural/isolated areas, which affects the competences, roles and views on SDG governance;

[36] The OECD is developing a programme to support cities and regions in developing, implementing and monitoring SDG actions. This includes progress measurement through tailored localised indicators, learning exercises through multi-level dialogue as well as sharing best practices. For this, eight pilot cities and regions have already been selected to be covered in the report: A Territorial Approach to the SDGs: A role for cities and regions to leave no one behind, due in February 2020.
[37] N. Sánchez Gassen, O. Penje and E.Slätmo (2018).
[38] Grigorovski Vollmer J. and Sindico F. (2018).

- The **approach to formulating the strategy**, i.e. a new strategy defined nationally or by the LRA (starting from scratch) or re-labelling existing approaches (e.g. in terms of Agenda 21) or local policies;

- Sector involvement, i.e.: a strategy focusing on **policy sectors**/intervention fields or a more **cross-cutting approach**;

- The degree and **type of stakeholder involvement/commitment:** implementation can be more or less centralised, involving different stakeholders;

- The decision-making process, i.e.: **top-down** where a planner or institution decides the strategy, actions and targets or a **bottom-up approach** where NGOS, citizens and local players define actions and objectives;

- How LRAs define **operational indicators** with targets (over a specific period), and monitoring systems.

Approaches based on the role of LRAs

LRA categories depend on their competencies/roles, capacity and location (rural or urban). These differences significantly impact their approach to SDGs.

The **role of local authorities** is to deliver public policies and services to people, at a capillary scale, taking into consideration the needs and socio-economic characteristics of the local population. Case studies and interviews highlight that local authority approaches to SDGs focus on a limited number of goals, close to local needs and related to services already provided through local policies. The experiences of cities (or villages in rural areas) with Agenda 21 shows that local sustainable development policies cover a limited number of themes or sectors. These are strictly related to the local context and focus on public participation to integrate sustainable development in the decision making-process.

The role of **regional governments** usually concerns planning, funding and evaluation/control of policies at a larger territorial scale. Currently, regional governments are more engaged than local authorities in developing multi-level, integrated and long-term strategies through planning tools (e.g. regional development plans) and setting monitoring systems. This is not only related to the function of regions in policy delivery but depends on the capacity and resources (human and financial) at regional level, which are probably more consistent with the requirements for defining and monitoring sustainable development strategies[39], covering multiple SDGs.

[39] With some exceptions, e.g. a metropolis with significant financial and human capacities.

The SDGs covered by LRA strategies also depend on the rural or urban context. Less populated areas are more concerned with transport connections, access to basic public services and nature conservation. Richer metropolitan areas are more affected by environmental issues (pollution and waste management) and quality of life in general[40].

New versus old or re-labelled strategies

LRAs have so far used two schemes. The first and the more ambitious is to adopt a completely new strategy based on SDGs, with specific targets, timing and implementing policy tools. The second is more adaptive, updating old practices and policies to meet SDGs from a new perspective. The latter approach usually covers fewer SDGs and reinterprets existing development strategies to make local development paths more consistent with the global targets of Agenda 2030 (see box 2.1 and 2.2).

Box 2.1: Utrecht strategy to address SDGs

The municipality of Utrecht explicitly aims at actively contributing to the global goals, so it does not re-label or rebrand existing policies in favour of the SDGs. The strategy will be developed 'along the way' depending on community initiatives and public awareness. Increased political attention to SDGs could promote a clearer link between local strategies and policies with SDG initiatives.

In Spain, for the **Basque country**, the regional strategy 'Agenda Euskadi 2030[41]' closely follows Agenda 2030 objectives, develops them coherently with the local context, and links them to topics and objectives of the 2017-2020 Programme of the Basque Government (Basque Government, 2016). The strategy is aligned along both the 15 overarching goals defined by the Basque Government's programme and the 17 SDGs. For each of the SDGs, 100 specific targets are detailed which translate into 93 commitments. Selection criteria include the proximity of commitments to SDGs, focusing on issues of common interest rather than merely domestic problems. The range of actions is very broad, spanning from legislative acts in different fields, to specific interventions, or general political orientation. Each programme action is defined up to the end of the Basque Government's term in 2020. The strategy's target group is vast and encompasses beneficiaries related to all SDGs. The main focus is on improving living conditions for all citizens, with particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and migrants.

In the city of Poznan, the current local strategy was updated in 2013[42], some years before the national sustainable development strategy was published. City authorities have ensured their priorities are coherent with the strategy and aligned with the

[40] With some differences across regions and Member States, i.e. poverty is higher in some rural areas than in urban areas, while in others it is the opposite (Eurostat, …).
[41] Basque Country (2018).
[42] City of Poznan (2013).

SDGs. Therefore, city authorities fully endorse the SDGs in the local development strategy and are committed to meeting them.

In Italy the strategy for sustainable development (NSDS) was defined at national level and approved in 2016[43]. The NSDS is organised around the five core areas of Agenda 2020: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Each area identifies priorities addressing National Strategic Choices and delivering SDGs.

Regional governments should implement their own strategy based on national objectives, considering their specific needs as discussed with the local partnership.

Box 2.2: Styria approach to address SDGs

The Austrian province of Styria has not yet defined a clear strategy but is working on an impact report ('Wirkungsbericht') to integrate SDGs into the province's management and documentation on impact-oriented budgetary management ('Wirkungsorientierte Haushaltsführung'). This report includes a graph of the SDGs and their direct assignment to provincial departments and their respective budgets.

Implementing effective policies requires checking SDGs are consistent with local policy priorities, whatever the LRA approach to defining its own sustainable development strategy. Local policies rarely embrace all SDGs, for different reasons including missions, competences, political choices, commitment and resources. The approach is determined by the territorial level, role and competences as well as the authorities' capacity to tackle the challenges and specific SDGs. It is difficult to say which approach is more appropriate, also because implementation of the strategies and SDG-related actions is still at a very early stage.

Sector versus cross-cutting approach of SDGs

Local and regional strategy approaches to SDGs can also be distinguished by the policy fields they cover. Some approaches address SDGs through a specific sector view (e.g. through energy polices or promoting women's rights), while others are more cross-cutting and relate to developing instruments of governance (e.g. indicators) in different sectors and policy fields.

In **Basque country**, the strategy is both integrated and transversal. It covers the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated and indivisible way. At the same time, it addresses all areas of public policy, including cross-cutting issues of inequality and environmental management. Social protection, health, education, nature conservation, climate change and cooperation policy complete the key fields of intervention.

[43] Éupolis Lombardia (2017).

Box 2.3: The key policy objective of Utrecht Municipality

The municipality of Utrecht strategy focuses on making the population more aware about SDGs. By developing the strategy 'along the way' and depending on community initiatives, the aim is for awareness and knowledge about SDGs to generate more projects and gradually relate or develop policies linked to them.

Local authorities neither focus on specific SDGs nor use them explicitly to address the city's main development challenges or opportunities. They are rather viewed as global goals and a framework or source of inspiration for local initiatives to support the city's objectives. Ongoing and supported activities would, however, most likely relate to SDG 11 – sustainable cities and communities.

In the city of Poznan, strengthening economic competitiveness is the first priority. However, economic and social development should mutually reinforce each other. Improving the quality of life for citizens is the main imperative of the strategy and this depends on multiple factors in different areas of development including economic performance, the environmental state and social conditions.

In **Lombardy region,** the partnership first considered climate and energy issues, in line with the regional priorities. SDG indicators cover broader topics, including socio and economic aspects. The national NSDS covers all socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. These include decreasing poverty, inequality, discrimination, unemployment (particularly among young people and women), ensuring environmentally sustainable economic development, increasing the opportunities for training, education and social progress, as well as restoring the competitiveness of Italian companies through a 'fourth industrial revolution' based on innovative and sustainable technologies.

Box 2.4: SDGs in Styria

Federal department in Styria for 'Water Management, Resources and Sustainability' supports SDGs in three sectors:

- Sector Water management: SDGs 6, 11, 12, 15, 17;
- Sector Waste and resource management: SDGs 9, 11, 12, 17;
- Sector Sustainable Development: SDGs 4, 8, 12, 17.

The case studies and interviews highlight that SDG implementation ranges from including all (Basque region) to including none (Utrecht). Even without a clear theoretical background on the SDGs to be addressed in a specific strategy, Agenda 2030 calls for integrated, multi-target and multi-stakeholder approaches in policy design that go beyond sectors.

Stakeholder involvement/commitment to implementing SDGs

Identifying stakeholders to be involved in implementation and defining their responsibilities and information needs is key to ensuring effectiveness and efficiency for local and regional strategies. The case studies identify:

- LRA internal staff, directly involved in implementation (i.e. public servants, NGO staff, people committed in the action plan);

- partnership stakeholders (i.e. NGOs, trade unions, organisations and associations) involved during the decision-making process (e.g. in forums or co-financing and promotion activities);

- civil society which includes citizens and consumers as the main contributors to long-term change (e.g. through behaviour or preferences).

In **Basque country**, the strategy is participatory and open to contributors at all levels. The Basque Internationalisation Council fosters debates on the localisation and implementation of the SDGs. In addition to contacts with the private sector, academia, the third sector, NGOs, and organised civil society, there is also coordination and involvement with political parties and legislators. In this regard, the Basque Parliament recently created a Working Group on the Agenda, to strengthen alliances and work with other organisations, institutions, agents, regions and networks.

Other actors range from charitable organisations and public service providers, third sector foundations, think tanks and business support organisations, to industrial and commercial enterprises. These are involved in SDG implementation through Agenda Euskadi 2030, such as the 17x17 initiative promoted by the regional UNESCO office (UNESCO Etxea). Moreover, the local third and private sectors, as well as municipalities and other bodies involved in the Udalsarea network[44] have been proactive in promoting SDG initiatives.

UNICEF has played a fundamental role in bringing together actors not previously involved in SDG topics, such as news outlets. To address the information needs of stakeholders, the regional government launched communication campaigns integrating SDGs into public events and areas or spaces managed by the region. These include disseminating best practices and good experiences to the general public. Training and capacity building exercises have also been run within Basque public administrations to raise awareness in all government departments.

[44] This network links 183 Basque municipalities, the three provincial councils of Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa, departments of the Basque Government, and the Basque agencies for water and energy, to promote coordination and co-responsibility for integrating sustainability in municipal policies.

Box 2.5: Stakeholder involvement in the Municipality of Utrecht: the role of the foundation

In Utrecht, the department of European and international affairs is responsible for SDGs, interacting and sharing experiences with other local authorities through several networks. Additionally, a foundation (NGO) was established by the local authority to coordinate SDG implementation initiatives. This NGO is responsible for the day-to-day management of Utrecht's contribution to SDGs and:

- creates awareness of the goals through promotion campaigns,
- manages the website: www.utrecht 4globalgoals.nl,
- facilitates initiatives,
- promotes ongoing initiatives,
- finances initiatives via small grants,
- concludes agreements with partners, including enterprises, to contribute to SDGs.

Links to other stakeholders are mostly at the local level.

The local authority set up a dashboard which is supported by the University of Utrecht and encompasses different initiatives and actions of partners from civil society, large enterprises (banks), entrepreneurs, etc.

The strategy development in **Poznan** is based on a participatory approach. Implementation involves co-management with various actors and simultaneous leadership from the Poznan City Council. Projects to realise SDGs in the city of Poznan are initiated by local authorities, NGOs and businesses in the city. The Voivodeship governments are responsible for sustainable development at the regional level including programming regional development activities, creating cooperation networks, coordinating pro-development activities as well as monitoring progress and evaluating development policies. Moreover, voivodeships coordinate supra-local measures and investments in the region and its functional areas. However, the role of citizens is central in the strategy. Currently, the city of Poznan tries to co-create policy with citizens, as opposed to consultations. The authorities believe that the residents understand their city best and their involvement in creating policy will be reflected in their engagement in its implementation.

In Lombardy region, the approach is participatory. All the structures and staff involved in defining and implementing sustainable development in the regional government take part in a round table of discussion. However, some departments have less experience of this approach. At sub-regional level, hundreds of sustainable development initiatives have been developed by local players. These initiatives are almost always independent from the regional level and involve stakeholders such as local authorities (municipalities), private and public bodies, foundations (e.g. Enrico Mattei) and NGOs. The themes vary broadly and include migrants, poverty, urban development, environmental issues and consumer rights.

To better coordinate these initiatives, the region co-organises 'European Sustainable Development Week' ('Settimana della sostenibilità') each year, involving civil society, local organisations, schools and public bodies. In January 2019, an information campaign for local authorities was launched, following the presentation by Eupolis – the regional development agency - of 'Lombardy 2018' reports to the Regional Council.

Box 2.6: The LAG 21 association in North-Rhine Westphalia

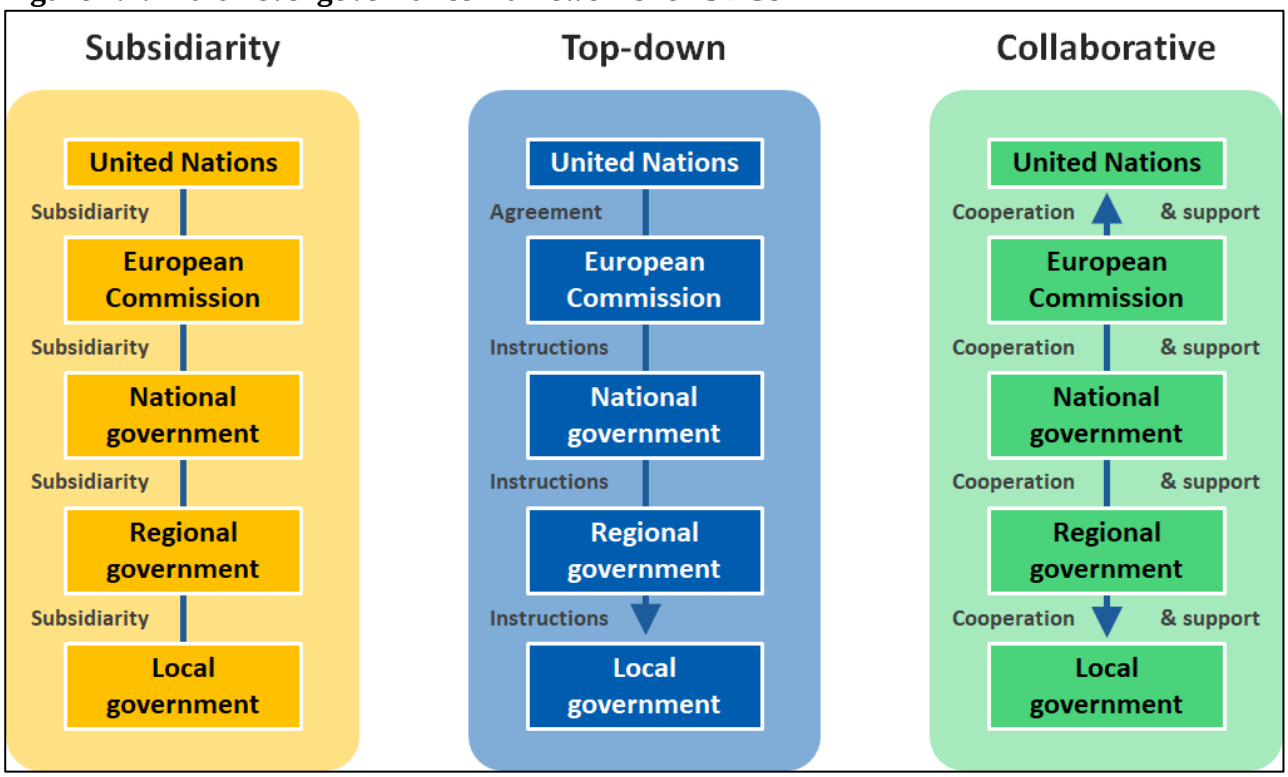
In the German Bundesland North-Rhine Westphalia, broader stakeholder involvement is facilitated by LAG 21, a kind of 'meta-NGO'. In addition to public actors, it includes NGOs in the region. It is also closely linked to national ministries and other actors such as the Federal-Länder working group, the council of sustainable development, the inter-ministerial working group, cities through national networks. LAG 21 is an umbrella organisation that functions as a universal and interdisciplinary intermediary for sustainability, offering different support for different players. Within Germany it is also unique and bridges the gap between municipalities and civil society.

Training and capacity building are necessary to support stakeholders in charge of local and regional SDG implementation. Some players (citizens, local businesses, civil society organisations, etc.) need to develop new and specific competences. In addition, supporting activities are key to empowerment and a prerequisite for adopting more sustainable approaches in the long term.

Multi-level governance arrangements: top-down vs bottom-up

Polices related to SDGs involve different levels of governance from global to local, including EU institutions, national institutions and ministries, regions, counties, cities and small territories. Coordination between these levels is necessary to make interventions effective and efficient. However, coordination between the different levels can vary from a top-down approach (when a 'planner' gives 'instructions' to the lower levels of governance), to more collaborative shared management (when coordination is more horizontal, based on competences, needs and capacity at various governance levels). Another approach follows subsidiarity principles, managing roles from a regulatory basis (see figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Multi-level governance frameworks for SDGs



Source: Meuleman (2018*b*).

The **Basque country** makes no reference to the national action plan for sustainable development, as the national strategy was published later. Moreover, the Basque country is an independent region, with great autonomy in defining and implementing development strategies. The Basque Government is encouraging Basque provincial and municipal governments to sign up for Agenda Euskadi 2030 within their areas of authority and respective forums or governance bodies. Consequently, a working group has been set-up through the existing Interinstitutional Commission, with members from all levels in Basque Public Administration - 3 provinces, the 3 main municipalities and the Association of Basque Municipalities-EUDEL.

The first version of Agenda Euskadi 2030 is led and coordinated by the Office of the President. The General Secretariat of the President's Office and the General Secretariat for External Action take coordinated leadership in the Agenda's implementation. The General Secretariat of the President's Office coordinates the action of the Government, while the General Secretariat for External Action fosters and promotes coordinated external action in connection with the 2020 Internationalisation Framework Strategy of the Basque Country.

Various other areas of government are also involved through the Interdepartmental External Action Committee. Civil society and other external stakeholders contribute through the External Action Department's Advisory Committee, chaired by the Basque President.

Box 2.7: Multi-level governance in Austria

In Austria, both national and regional policies include SDGs. An example is coordination through the annual environmental expert conference ('Landes-Umwelt-Referentinnen-Konferenz (LURK)'), where all national sustainability coordinators can exchange ideas and experiences. LURK 2018 highlighted the need to exchange regularly and develop joint activities to exploit synergies and existing resources regarding SDGs.

Another example of coordination between different levels of government and non-government stakeholders is Climate Alliance Austria. This is a nationwide network connecting communities, companies, universities, schools, etc. to spread knowledge and practices concerning the SDGs.

Governance **in Poland** is based on the subsidiarity principle, thus, policy-making is at three levels of governance. Local and regional authorities in Poland are often referred to as self-government (samorząd). The national level is generally in charge of setting the country´s strategic orientation and development. It offers comprehensive guidance through multiple strategies, such as the national sustainable development strategy (SRD), which explicitly sets out implementation of the SDGs in Poland and initiates various projects and programmes. While the self-government-approach bestows local and regional levels with some independence, lower level strategies still need to be coherent with higher level strategies.

Multi-level governance is evident in the competences for each administrative level laid down by regulation. Consequently, several bodies in the SRD provide a platform for multi-level integration and strategy implementation. The Voivodeship Social Dialogue Councils is a regional forum for dialogue between representatives of employees, employers and local as well as central authorities. The Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee defines economic and social priorities supporting territorial development in cities (*gminas*), counties (*powiats*) and regions (*voivodeships*).

In **Italy**, the approach is more top-down than for Poznan and the Basque country. In December 2017, the Italian NSDS became law by formally updating article 152/2006 of the national environmental code. Regional Strategies for Sustainable Development have to refer to this document. The National Strategy should refer to the National Reform Programme on Government action, for long-term socio-economic goals. Each year the Economic and Financial Document defines national targets and outlines actions and instruments to achieve these. Afterwards, the Strategy is shared with Regional Authorities. The Italian Ministry of the Environment activates national funds to support regional strategies through activities and workshops for capacity building in local governments. Since March 2018 there has also been a round table discussion between the state and all regions. This round table meets twice in a year within the well-known 'Conferenza delle Regioni'. These round table discussions cover special needs for support in the regions and exchanges of views and information.

Box 2.8: Multilevel governance in Utrecht

There are limited links with other government levels in the Netherlands. Representatives from Utrecht regularly meet the national coordinator for SDG from the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, the objectives and measures are different at national level. National level instruments do not cover the actions in Utrecht. Cooperation is mostly in international networks with peers and allows the city to learn from other practices and strategies aimed at the same challenges. The local authority embraces mutual learning, sharing ideas and practices with cities such as Ghent (Belgium), Bonn (Germany) and Malmö (Sweden) and also seeks cooperation and opportunities for mutual learning at national level. The local authority is particularly keen on cooperating with other local authorities that have an active approach to SDGs such as Oss and Rhenen, rather than with authorities re-labelling existing policies.

Indicators, monitoring and evaluation

A key challenge in programming and implementing SDG strategies is to define operational indicators with time-based targets along with monitoring systems to ensure follow-up of the strategy. Defining a monitoring system makes the SDGs more relevant by providing information to stakeholders and citizens on the whole implementation process, as well as providing instruments for better governance and accountability.

Under Agenda Euskadi 2030, in the **Basque country**, each SDG is monitored by two or three indicators. The Agenda sets out 50 indicators covering targets for the 17 goals, considering the availability of data. In many cases, these indicators closely reflect EU and UN indicators, though sometimes they are significantly adapted to the local context and available information. An annual monitoring report on Agenda Euskadi 2030 will showcase the contribution to UN Agenda 2030 and contributions to the SDGs.

In Poznan each strategic goal has targets for 2020/2030 and indicators for these.

In Lombardy region, in 2018 the regional development agency (Eupolis) presented 'Rapporto Lombardia 2017' which proposes sustainable development indicators. The original idea behind 'Rapporto Lombardia 2017' was to link SDGs to the Regional Development Plan to measure (and evaluate) political decisions and actions with respect to the SDGs. As a result of discussion, considering data availability and the regional needs, 21 sustainable development indicators related to Agenda 2030 have been quantified.

Box 2.9: Municipality of Utrecht indicator dashboard

The local authority is establishing a dashboard to support data collection on the city's contribution to SDGs. The dashboard is a participatory platform where initiatives can be submitted with associated data and indicators. So far 110 indicators have been defined for Goal 11, to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Obstacles to effective and efficient planning of SDGs

The case studies and interviews highlight many challenges which hamper effective and efficient planning of SDGs at different levels of implementation. These include political commitments, multilevel governance, administrative capacity and financial resources.

In the **Basque country**, a major challenge during set up has been the different speeds at which organisations and institutions work. In addition, there are different degrees of knowledge and awareness about UN Agenda 2030 and what it entails. These difficulties are mainly rooted in a lack of specific training, as well as the tendency of the organisations to work in silos. For this reason, awareness-raising, training and dissemination are given special emphasis by the Basque Government.

Another challenge is institutional and political continuity, as the strategy links SDGs to the Government political programme of the time. This facilitates accountability and avoids duplicated targets. On the other hand, the time frame for the strategy is limited, with the 2030 goal only a strategic horizon, while implementation stops in 2020. Although the commitment to SDGs was high from the start of the government's term at the end of 2016, the strategy was only adopted in mid-2018.

In Poznan city one challenge is the poor environmental and social awareness of citizens. As an example, residents find it difficult to be open and inclusive to visitors and newcomers. Another example is the use of cars and reluctance to use public transport. Part of the solution is to improve public transport. Nonetheless, a lack of environmental awareness and ingrained habits make it difficult to develop more sustainable behaviour. Another challenge relates to integrating policies defined at different levels of governance. The authorities of Poznan and Poznan district launched a difficult process of integrating the local governments. Due to the diversity of participants, lack of funding and national regulations, this process is very difficult but essential. Integrating metropolitan area communes will require greater cooperation and implementation of the development strategy, based on their own resources and financial support from EU funds (City of Poznan, 2013).

In Lombardy region, a major challenge is the lack of quantified national targets which hampers the quantification of regional indicators. Another challenge is the environmental bias of the approach and difficulties to involve all governance structures covering different policy fields in the discussion. A lack of stakeholder and internal regional staff awareness or basic information on Agenda 2030 slows down the process of defining and implementing SDGs. In addition, there is a risk of resources and energy being thinly spread, considering the number of themes, sectors and stakeholders involved in SDG implementation.

Box 2.10: Challenges for Austrian LRAs implementing SDGs

A great obstacle for LRAs is the lack of resources to implement content related tasks such as SDGs, along with the additional administration. Reducing administrative burden for communities is essential to supporting implementation of SDGs locally.

Box 2.11: Challenges for German LRAs implementing SDGs

In Germany, budgets of LRAs where sustainability objectives have played a subordinate role will be a challenge. This includes LRAs where sustainability measures were seen as 'add-ons'. The move towards sustainability or SDGs implies that LRA priorities and actions must fundamentally change and this needs to be reflected in their budgets. Sustainability will be a major goal and purpose of public action, resulting in fundamental changes to the allocation of funds.

Another major challenge for LAG21 with SDGs and sustainability in general is the awareness of local decision-makers. Local decision-makers often propose measures and actions towards sustainability based on the election lifecycle'. Additionally, decision-makers may not always be certain how everyday politics can contribute to sustainability. Finally, policy is still rooted in sectoral thinking. When working with municipalities, it is important to run integrated processes involving local decision-makers, administrations and civil society to create the political mandate to promote sustainability.

Based on the literature, survey and interviews, obstacles hindering effective and efficient SDG implementation are illustrated below.

- ***Discontinuity in political and administrative commitment.*** The political cycle is often short or medium term (up to 5 years), while SDGs are designed over a longer term (10 years and more for environment objectives). When the political orientation and objectives change, there can be a lack of continuity in commitment to sustainable development, with 'stop and go' effects in the administrative processes as well. When objectives and targets change with every political cycle, the consequences are underinvestment in the long term, higher transition costs, disorientation of public officers and confusion in citizens' minds.

- ***A lack of public awareness.*** The multi-stakeholder dimension of SDGs requires the involvement of stakeholders and citizens through active support. Many environmental and social issues are connected to citizen and consumer behaviour (e.g. waste production and recycling, use of sustainable transport, social acceptance of requests from disadvantaged groups). As awareness is a pre-

condition for local ownership and engagement in SDG related policies, a lack of awareness results in misunderstandings or under/overestimations of issues at stake. This reduces public support for policy initiatives and undermines the capacity of communities to achieve results.

- ***Need for multilevel governance.*** A lack of coordination in defining and implementing SDG strategies between different levels of governance increases uncertainty in policy design. It also raises the risk of overlapping policy interventions, increases the risk of inconsistency in approaches and inefficiency in the allocation of human and financial resources. For example, the EU subsidiarity principle means that decisions are made at the most efficient level of governance, based on competences assigned by treaties. The principle also entails each level of governance setting its own strategy and objectives in coordination with the upper/lower levels. In this framework, the lack of an SDG strategy at EU level makes it difficult to define clear objectives, identify clear targets, allocate resources and coordinate actions at national and regional levels.

- ***Administrative organisation to implement public policies.*** The structure of administrative works and roles of different departments within organisations can create obstacles. Competences and skills in LRAs are usually sector-based and departments often work 'in silos', addressing few objectives with exclusive competencies and resources. So, an SDG can be covered by different departments, without well-designed coordination mechanisms. People may not be clear how actual work can contribute to the SDGs or the decision-making process is not clear. Resources are inefficiently allocated as efforts and investments can be duplicated. There may also be counterproductive or negative effects when actions are not closely coordinated.

- ***Financial support.*** Financial need is almost always mentioned by LRAs as a major obstacle to defining and implementing SDGS. More resources, as advocated, are needed to address additional works and investments resulting from a new policy agenda. However, financial support depends also on how (far) the SDGs have been mainstreamed in the policy framework, as well as the degree of ownership of the objectives by LRA staff, and the capacity of LRAs to implement efficient policy interventions in a broader sense.

- ***System of indicators.*** Following up on indicators is time and resource consuming. The connection between different systems and UN, Eurostat, national and regional indicators is challenging. To be effective, indicators needs to be consistent with development issues identified by local stakeholders and must measure the performance of local interventions, based on pre-defined targets.

- ***Need for capacity building.*** Lack of capacity in LRAs is also mentioned as a significant obstacle for effective and efficient planning of SDGs. Lack of capacity has various origins including poor awareness or empowerment of people within the organisation (i.e. Agenda 2030 is perceived as external not related with the current activity), a lack of knowledge and skills (people ignore integrated and multi-stakeholder approaches), or it can be rooted in the administrative process. This can lead to a process that is not proportional or consistent with SDG implementation. Such a lack of capacity is in the mission, structure and management process rather than in individuals.

2.3 Conclusions and recommendations for the analysis

The experience of EU LRAs in implementing SDGs is still very limited, as the process was launched at the UN only in 2016 and even more recently in some Member States. Many regions have limited experience of planning and implementing sustainable development strategies. However, experience from implementing Agenda 21 for cities or authorities in rural areas, from addressing regional and national environmental policies, or from setting-up sustainable development indicators, can be actively replicated. At this stage, some recommendations for effective and efficient planning and implementation of SDGs at local/regional level[45] are:

- **Clearer communication by EU/national governments** on 2030 Agenda priorities is needed, as well as guidance on implementation, monitoring and evaluating performance by setting sustainable development indicators;

- To avoid confusion and inefficient use of resources, it is necessary to **define priorities**, keeping in mind the holistic nature of the 2030 Agenda. LRAs should define how to start and what actions are needed first. Potential conflicts between SDGs must also be addressed internally at the outset of the process. This should help identify and quantify the effort and capacity building required;

- **Integrating work internally and externally**. Firstly, in the local authority, supporting officials and managers to empower them and help them take responsibility. Secondly, communicating and networking with other stakeholders and levels of governance to enable better coordination and integration of activities at various levels of governance;

- **Involve people and civil society in general in visible actions**, making them conscious that global goals are relevant at local level and giving them reasons to participate in the whole process;

[45] Consistent with recommendations in Sánchez Gassen, N., Penje, O. and Slätmo, E. (2018).

- **Set indicators and a monitoring system**. Indicators need to be defined at all levels of governance and harmonised. They should allow for comparison over time and territories while keeping in mind their role in the process. This is to measure the performance of organisations involved in the process and give visibility to the results.

- **Take into account budget and resource constraints**, given the number of goals and the actions needed. Resources should be allocated according to priorities (see above) and the 'principle of economy', using available funds (e.g. ESIF), improving the decision-making process (avoiding overlaps in interventions or negative policy impacts) and implementing zero cost or win-win measures. These include actions that deliver benefits and reduce costs at the same time such as promoting innovation in the circular economy, or the social economy targeting disadvantaged people.

3 EU level financial and technical support schemes

The Commission Staff working document 'Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable development goals'[46] lists existing European domestic policies and external actions in connection with SDGs (see Annex I). The document points out that some policy areas are exclusive competences of the EC, but many are under shared management. Financing and technical support often need to be coordinated at various levels of governance and sustainable development objectives can only be achieved through policy coordination with Member States and LRAs.

At European level, **specific attention is given to promoting integrated and multi-goal development policies in urban areas** with direct reference to social development. Article 7 of ERDF Regulation 1301/2013 established that at least 5% of each Member State's allocation shall be devoted to actions for sustainable and integrated urban development. The support can be allocated through tools such as Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI)[47], or directly supported through a programme axis.

ITI is a placed-based and integrated approach, which fits very well with the SDGs, covering all development issues from social inclusion to pollution in a specific territory based on an integrated approach. Key elements of Integrated Sustainable Urban Development are an urban area, urban authorities responsible for implementation, a method of implementation (e.g. through an ITI) and an integrated sustainable urban strategy developed by stakeholders[48].

Article 8 of ERDF Regulation 1303/2013 foresees Urban Innovation Action[49] providing financial support to cities for sustainable development. This instrument is under the direct management of the European Commission and is related to implementation of the EU Urban Agenda[50]. The two Urban Innovation Action calls in 2017 cover air quality, climate adaptation, digital transition, housing, innovation and responsible public procurement, sustainable use of land – nature-based solutions, integration of migrants and refugees, energy transition, jobs and skills in the local economy, urban poverty, circular economy and urban mobility. By the end of 2018, 55 projects had been funded, in 17 countries.

[46] European Commission (2016*b*).
[47] The ITI instrument is mentioned in article 36 (1) OF CPR, in article 7 of ERDF Regulation 1303/2013, article 12 of ESF Regulation 1304/2013 and article 11 of ETC Regulation 1299/2013.
[48] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/guidelines/2015/guidance-for-member-states-on-integrated-sustainable-urban-development-article-7-erdf-regulation.
[49] https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en
[50] https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda

Even if almost all the EU initiatives can be related to sustainable development issues, for 2014-20 **only a few are directly targeted at local sustainable development** (e.g. urban sustainable development). Over the next programming period, EU initiatives will expand to make regional and local sustainable policies more effective, efficient and accountable.

The report 'Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals through the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework of the European Union' published in March 2018 has nine recommendations to improve SDG implementation beyond 2020. These are: embedding 'think sustainability first', adjusting 'ex-ante conditionalities' to sustainability, clear definition for 'EU added value' that also refers to sustainability, a link between spending and the 'rule of law', transforming the 'European Semester' to a delivery model for sustainability, benchmarking or earmarking within funds to achieve specific sustainability objectives, excluding 'contradictory subsidies', adding 'social, environmental and climate indicators' to European structural and investment funds, as well as moving to an evidence-based, participatory and simpler approach for the Multiannual Financial Framework. However, these recommendations are not specifically targeted to LRAs.

Progress can be made in the EU policy design to help LRAs integrate SDGs more effectively into their local policy agenda, including:

- Better political commitment at EU institutional level, providing policy objectives and targets with clear connections to SDGs. SDG achievements should be integrated in budgetary and political agendas (e.g. the Multiannual Financial Framework or the European Semester), with monitoring and reporting requirements. This could help LRAs take more responsibility for implementing SDGs for example by providing them with targets, milestones and benchmarks.

- Strengthen the profile of sustainable development within the EU policy framework, to clarify how and to what extent policy instruments can address SDGs. This would allow regions to better identify instruments that support their SDG strategy. This entails, for example, including SDGs in ESI regulations, connecting objectives and investment priorities and related outcome indicators with each of the 17 SDGs[51].

- Enhance instruments supporting integrated territorial approaches within ESIF. e.g. ITI or Community-led local Development[52], and require them to be strongly connected with the 17 SDGs specifically for the LEADER initiative in

[51] Notably, SDGs are not mentioned in the draft proposal of ESI regulation beyond 2020.
[52] Article 32 of the CPR, an instrument used to strengthen public participation and the involvement of citizens in designing and implementing local-territorial development strategies.

rural areas. Local development strategies should clearly structure their priorities based on SDGs.

- Provide direct support to LRAs supporting SDGs, targeting local authorities with low capacity or severe financial constraints. These would include small cities, rural areas and areas with geographical and demographic handicaps. Support should include capacity building for coordination in implementing SDGs, training activities and communication campaigns to increase awareness at territorial level. The EC would be directly involved in managing this instrument, allocating money based on socio-economic and geographic factors and commitments to SDGs[53].

- Promote an EU level open-access web platform[54] offering information to LRAs about SDGs. This should include the Agenda 2030 state of play at EU/ international level, guidelines on local and regional strategy setting and implementing tools, a dashboard with EU and national/regional indicators for each Member State, a repertoire of local and regional best-practices and a list of funding opportunities (e.g. through ESIF).

[53] Multi-region Assistance, introduced by DG Regio to broaden the use of financial instruments co-financed by ESI Funds (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/funding-opportunities/calls-for-proposal), could be replicated and offer co-funding to consortia including at least two managing authorities/intermediate bodies of ERDF, CF, ESF or EAFRD programmes covering at least two Member States.

[54] A similar platform is underway in the field of financial instruments; see https://www.fi-compass.eu.

4 Potential role of the cor in relation to SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important global initiative to address poverty, environmental crisis, development needs, peace and partnership. This is especially important in a period when emphasis tends to be at a national scale and on bilateral relationships between national governments. In such a context, in promoting SDGs, the EU is contributing at a supranational level.

National governments are committed, especially through VNRs. However, subnational governments are not regularly engaged in the reporting process. This appears to be a serious gap, since the **national level alone cannot achieve the goals**. As noted in this study, 65% of the 169 targets within the 17 SDGs can only be reached with the coordination and inclusion of local and regional governments. For development, and especially sustainable development, **change has to be promoted at a territorial scale, where integration between economic, social and environmental factors can be more easily designed and implemented**.

From a global perspective, and knowing that there is significant room for improvement, Europe notably gives a prominent role to municipalities, counties and regions. Even if institutional frameworks differ from country to country (i.e. centralised or decentralised), local and regional political competences tend to be significant. It is worth noting that the shared management of European Structural Funds has contributed to enhancing the profile of *regional* authorities, and to a more limited extent, of *local* authorities. This has improved their capacities to analyse needs, involve regional and local stakeholders, formulate programmes including setting indicators and to implement the programmes.

The territorial experiences illustrated in this study confirm that these European local and regional authorities are fully engaged in designing and implementing strategies to achieve SDGs. However, much higher awareness of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would be necessary to make best use of local and regional commitment in Europe. Furthermore, good experiences in different local and regional contexts could be made available to inspire and guide municipalities, counties and regions, which have not yet identified their own strategic approach to SDGs. **This significant opportunity of capacity building can be capitalised on only if experiences at European level are diffused, among LRAs, as well as discussed and adapted to specific new local and regional contexts.**

The CoR could assume a proactive role in reducing the gap between expectations of LRAs building sustainable development strategies and their implementation capacities. This study identifies ways LRAs contribute to SDGs. Further steps are recommended.

The CoR could promote a structured exchange between LRAs looking to identify SDG strategies with LRAs, or other local or regional operators that have already started the process ('first movers'). **Local or regional seminars** should be encouraged by the CoR and facilitated by providing the format and indicating possible speakers and facilitators.

The seminars, organised by interested LRAs, should highlight options by showing existing LRA experiences, help identify an action plan for the LRA and prepare the ground for possible further learning. A suggested list of speakers could include experts from the session 'Delivering Sustainable Development Goals at regional level' on 9 October 2018 at the European Week of Regions and Cities[55], including experts and LRA representatives interviewed in this study. This list should expand to ensure that each issue is associated to both a speaker and to a concrete local/regional experience. CoR should use social networks to increase the reputation of LRAs proactively participating in this capacity building process. A possible format for seminars is described in the box below.

Box 4.1: Format of a seminar to promote the start of a local/regional SDGs strategy

1. **Promoting institutions**
   LRA willing to design the SDG strategy

2. **Institutional participants**
   CoR and other EU institutions/ organisations
   LRAs offering a valuable experience concerning SDG strategy design and implementation
   Other national and non-national LRAs
   National/ regional statistical offices

3. **Non institutional participants**
   Key stakeholders for the possible local/ regional SDG strategy
   National and European associations of LRAs

4. **Tentative programme**
   Introductory plenary session
   - Brief introduction to Agenda 2030 implementation at world and EU level – *Speaker: Moderator of the seminar could use a promotional video*
   - Concept of 'Localising SDGs': main challenges for LRAs willing to play a proactive role in SDG achievement – *Speaker: CoR representative (possibly via videoconference)*
   - Inspirational experience of a region or a city having designed and implemented an SDG strategy – *Speaker: LRA representative*
   - Inspirational experience of a region or a city (different nationality from the seminar promoter) having designed and implemented an SDG strategy – *Speaker: LRA representative*

[55] https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/programme/sessions/49_en

Parallel workshops (to be identified according to local/ regional priorities)

- New vs old or re-labelled strategy – *Invited LRA representative could facilitate*
- Sector vs cross-cutting approach - *Invited LRA representative could facilitate*
- Top-down vs bottom-up approach – *Local facilitator, from key stakeholders of the possible strategy, to be identified and instructed*
- Types of possible multi-level governance arrangements - *Local facilitator, from key stakeholders of the possible strategy, to be identified and instructed*
- The role of indicators in setting-up and follow-up the strategies – *Invited LRA representative, or invited representative of Eurostat/ national statistical office could facilitate*
- Specific challenges and risks – *The moderator of the seminar could facilitate*

Final plenary session

- Summary by workshop facilitators
- Conclusion by the promoting LRA and the CoR

Follow-up

- Public information on the process established by the promoting LRA to identify the best SDG strategy
- Possible training

5. **Suggested venue, timing and setting**
   It is recommended to organise the workshop at the venue of a key local stakeholder, even if not institutional. The format is designed for about 50 participants.
   Suggested timing: 10am – 5pm (to facilitate transfers in the regional space).
   The conference room should ideally have 4-5 round tables, for the parallel workshops.

6. **Language**
   National language (interpretation of English and national language if needed).

Capacity building needs coordination at institutional level. As noted in this study, the CEMR and the nrg4SD, recently investigated challenges for towns and cities in implementing SDGs and can provide precious content for capacity building. National LRA networks already implement annual learning programmes, with high participation by LRAs. This shows that **both knowledge generation and distribution could be strongly facilitated by the appropriate partnerships**. However, there is a risk of duplication and confusion between the different sources of information or among the organisations providing support for LRAs. The CoR could play a role in dispatching the information through networks and provide regular updates on the SDG state-of-play.

Finally, at the UN level, the CoR should increase visibility of EU LRAs and coordinate with the European Commission in this field. International cooperation initiatives have been started under EC external actions, including with Brazil[56], China[57] and Russian Federation[58]. Best practices in the **localisation of SDGs, with the contributions of EU towns, counties and regions to achieving them, should be identified and diffused taking stock of the role and experience gained by the CoR.**

[56] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/international/brazil
[57] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/international/china
[58] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/international/russian-federation

References

- Basque Country (2018), *Agenda Euskadi 2030 - Contribución Vasca a la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.*

- Board of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship (2012), *Wielkopolska 2020: Updated Development Strategy of the Wielkopolskie Voivodeship by 2020, Attachment to resolution No. XXIX/559/12 of the Wielkopolskie Voivodship Parliament of 17 December 2012*.

- City of Poznan (2013), *Development Strategy for the City of Poznan to 2030*.

- Comité 21 (2018), *Appropriation des ODD par les acteurs non étatiques français*.

- Council of Ministers (2018), *Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Poland*, the 2018 National Report.

- *Éupolis* Lombardia (2017), *Rapporto Lombardia 2017*.

- European Commission (2016*a*), *Next steps for a sustainable European future - European action for sustainability*, COM(2016) 739 final.

- European Commission (2016*b*), *Key European action supporting the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals*, Commission Staff working document.

- European Commission (2017*a*), *EU SDG Indicator Set: Indicators for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in an EU context.*

- European Commission (2017*b*), *Commission Decision of 22.5.2017 on setting up the multi-stakeholder platform on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU.*

- European Commission (2017*c*), *White Paper on the Future of Europe.*

- European Commission (2018), *'Toward a Sustainable Europe by 2030' on the follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, Target Consultation.

- European Commission (2018), *Delivering the Sustainable Development Goals at local and regional level - Recommendations to the European Commission by the subgroup on 'SDGs at local and regional level' of the Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the EU*.

- European Economic and Social Committee (2016), *Sustainable development: a mapping of the EU's internal and external policies*, Explanatory Opinion NAT/693.

- European Union (1997), *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts.*

- European Parliament (2018), *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF), New York, 16 - 18 July 2018*, Briefing.

- Eurostat (2018), *Sustainable Development in the European Union, 2018 - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context.*

- ISTAT (2018), *Rapporto SDGs 2018 - Informazioni statistiche per l'Agenda 2030 in Italia - Prime analisi*.

- Louis Meuleman (2018*a*), *Metagovernance for Sustainability – A framework for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals*, Routledge.

- Louis Meuleman (2018*b*), *Multi-level governance and the role of local and regional actors*, Multi-Stakeholder Platform on the Implementation of the SDGs in the EE Sub-Group Meeting on SDGs at Local and Regional Level, DG Environment, European Commission.

- Messias R., Grigorovski Vollmer J. and Sindico F. (2018), *Localizing the SDGs: regional governments paving the way*, nrg4SD, Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development.

- OECD (2018), *Policy coherence for sustainable development - Towards sustainable and resilient societies.*

- Platforma and CEMR (2018), *Sustainable Development Goals - How Europe's towns and regions are taking the lead*.

- Sánchez Gassen N., Penje O., and Slätmo E. (2018), *Global goals for local priorities: the 2030 Agenda at local level*, Nordregio Report 2018:2.

- SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform (2018), *Europe moving towards a sustainable future: Contribution of the SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform to the Reflection Paper 'Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030'*.

- United Nation (1987), *Our common future - Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.*

- United Nations (1992), *AGENDA 21 - United Nations Conference on Environment.*

- United Nations (2000), *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: United Nations Millennium Declaration.*

- United Nations (2013), *Mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system.*

- United Nation (2015*a*), *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

- United Nations (2015*b*), *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015.*

- United Nations (2015*c*), *2030 Sustainable Development Agenda - Joint Positioning by the Regional UN System in Europe & Central Asia.*

- United Nations (2016), *Looking back, leaping forward - Moving from MDGs to SDGs in Europe and Central Asia.*

- United Nations (2017), *Building More Inclusive, Sustainable and Prosperous Societies in Europe and Central Asia - From Vision to Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals - Call for Action from the Regional UN System*, Regional Advocacy Paper 2017.

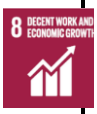
- United Nation (2018*a*), *Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, Report of the Secretary-General.

- United Nations (2018*b*), *Handbook for the preparation of Voluntary National Reviews - The 2019 Edition*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).
- United Nations (2018*c*), *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018.*

- United Cities and Local Governments (2018), *The Sustainable Development Goals - What local governments need to know*.

ANNEX I - EU initiatives and SDGs

SDG	*External actions*	*Internal actions*
	• EU development cooperation policy (European consensus on Development Agenda for change) • Official Development Aid commitments • European neighbourhood, trade and investment & climate policy • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • New development approach to forced displacement • EU funding instruments	• Europe 2020 Strategy • European Pillar of Social Rights • European Solidarity Corps • European Disability Strategy • CAP, Fisheries, Cohesion & Civil Protection policy • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • Trade and investments, Food & Research and innovation policy • EU funding instruments	• CAP, Fisheries, Environmental and climate, Innovation & Food policy • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • Health research in developing countries • Promotion of global health agenda, UN Decade of Action for Road Safety • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • Cooperation with WHP, OECD, G7/G20 • Support for World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and Illicit Trade protocol • EU funding instruments	• Health policy • Support for civil society organisations and joint actions • European Reference Frameworks • Vaccination and tobacco control • Support of EU health systems, antimicrobial resistance • EU youth strategy • Climate, Environmental & Cohesion policy • European Solidarity Corps • European Disability Strategy • European Pillar of Social Rights • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • Cooperation in education and training with third countries • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • EU funding instruments	• Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training • New skills Agenda for Europe • Erasmus+ programme • European Pillar of Social Rights • EU Cohesion policy, CAP • Europe 2020 strategy • EU funding instruments
	• EU strategy and action plan to promote gender equality and women's empowerment • EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood policy	• Equal treatment legislation • Strategic management for gender equality • European Pillar of Social Rights • Annual report on equality between men and women

	• EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security, humanitarian aid and trade policy • EU funding instruments	• Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility • EU Cohesion policy • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • Horizon 2020 • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • EU funding instruments	• EU environmental and water policy • European Innovation Partnership on Water • CAP, Cohesion, health and food safety policy • EU funding instruments
	• 2030 Climate and Energy policy • Role in COP21 Paris Climate Agreement, Energy Community • EU development cooperation policy • Global Initiative Sustainable Energy for All • (New) Covenant of Mayors • Global Climate Change Alliance Plus • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • EU funding instruments	• Implementation of Energy Union • Europe 2020 Strategy • European Pillar of Social Rights • Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility • CAP, Digital, Cohesion policy • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • External Investment Plan • Trade for All Strategy • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • Activity in G7/G20 • Cooperation with International Labour Organization • EU funding instruments	• Investment Plan for Europe • Europe 2020 Strategy • Circular Economy package • Employment and social, CAP, Fisheries & Cohesion policy, • European Pillar of Social Rights • Youth Guarantee • Environment Action Programme • Digital single market strategy • Blue Growth strategy • Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • External Investment Plan • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • EU funding instruments	• Trans-European Networks policy • European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection • Promotion of smart, innovative and clean industry, and the digitalisation of European industry • 2030 Climate and Energy policy framework • EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change • Europe 2020 Strategy • EU Cohesion policy • EU funding instruments

	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • Trade and investment policy • Needs-based humanitarian assistance and action plans • Partnership frameworks for migration • Cooperation with OECD • EU funding instruments	• Europe 2020 Strategy • New agenda for migration • European Solidarity Corps • Framework for equal opportunities and discrimination • European Pillar of Social Rights • New skills agenda • Initiatives in banking union • Cohesion Policy • Union Civil Protection Mechanism • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement policy • Internal for a Habitat III • Covenant of Mayors • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • Cooperation in cultural heritage • EU funding instruments	• EU Cohesion policy • 7th Environment Action Programme • European Green Capital and Green Leaf Award • EU research and innovation actions • European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities • Covenant of Mayors • European Year of Cultural Heritage • Ecosystem of social economy enterprises • EU funding instruments
	• EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Trade policy • EU rules to combat illegal unreported and unregulated fishing • Contribution to international agreements • EU funding instruments	• Ecodesign legislation • Framework for EU environment policy • EU Forest Strategy • Circular Economy Package • EU public procurement framework • Eco-Management and Audit Scheme, Ecolabel • Promotion of the digitalisation of European industry and Corporate Social Responsibility • CAP, Fisheries and Cohesion policy • EU funding instruments
	• Forerunner in international efforts (Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction) • Contribution to International Civil Aviation Organisation • Trade policy • Launch of GCCA+ • Needs-based humanitarian assistance • 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework • EU funding instruments	• 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework • Mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in multiple policy areas • Europe 2020 Strategy • EU Emissions Trading System • Binding energy efficiency and renewable energy measures • Circular Economy Package • Strategy on Adaption to Climate Change • Promotion of Green Infrastructure and Corporate Social Responsibility • EU Floods legislation • Commitment to Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

		• EU Civil Protection Mechanism • EU funding instruments (Life +, …)
	• Participation in UN Convention on the Law of the Sea • Policy on International Ocean Governance • Bilateral Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements • EU rules on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing • EU development, Trade and investment, Research and innovation policy • EU funding instruments	• Common Fisheries policy • 7th Environment Action Programme • Marine Strategy Framework • Birds and Habitat legislation • Regulations to tackle marine litter and pollution • Framework for Maritime spatial planning • Integrated Coastal Zone management • Civil protection management • Research and innovation policy • EU funding instruments
	• Part of international conventions and protocols (Biological Diversity, Combat Desertification, etc.) • EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan • Trade and investment policy • Action Plan for Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction • Mainstreaming environmental objective with partner countries • EU funding instruments	• 7th Environment Action Programme • EU Biodiversity Strategy • Birds and habitats, Environmental assessments & Timber legislation • EU Forest Strategy • CAP, Water, Research and innovation & Cohesion policy • EU Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection • Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change • Action plan against wildlife trafficking • EU funding instruments (Life +, …)
	• EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security policy • EU development cooperation policy • Action plan on Human Rights and Democracy • Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace • EU Conflict Early Warning System • Common Security and Defence, Trade policy • Humanitarian assistance • Support for UN conflict prevention and peacebuilding architecture • EU funding instruments	• Charter of Fundamental Rights • Better Regulation Agenda • Environmental Assessments • Party in Aarhus Convention • Environmental Implementation Review • Common European area of freedom, security and justice • Framework for civil, criminal and contract law • Promotion of e-government • European Agenda on security • Structural Reform Support Service • EU Cohesion policy • EU funding instruments
	• Collective commitment to Official Development Assistance and Addis Ababa Action Agenda • EU development cooperation policy • European Neighbourhood and Enlargement & Trade policy • Needs-based humanitarian assistance	• Better regulation agenda • Partnerships between EU, governments, social partners and civil society • Europe 2020 Strategy • Green Diplomacy Network • Promotion of Corporate Social Responsibility/Responsible Business Conduct

	• Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation • European Climate Diplomacy • External Investment Plan • Domestic resource mobilisation reforms • Support and capacity building for partner countries • Research and innovation programme • Policy coherence for development • Promotion of data monitoring and accountability & Earth observation • EU funding instruments	• Horizon 2020 • Cohesion Policy • Environmental Implementation Review

Source: European Commission (2016*b*).

ANNEX II – List of interviews

Organization	Type of organization	Country	Name and role
LAG 21	NGO	Germany	Dr. Klaus Reuter, - Managing director
Styria Bundesland	Regional Authority	Austria	Ms Gudrun Walter - Sustainability Coordinator of Styria, Austria
Utrecht	Municipality	Netherlands	Hans Sakkers, -Head of department of European and International Affairs
Comité 21	NGO	France	Sarah Schönfeld, - Responsible international area
Ministry of Environment	Public Body – national	Italy	Mara Cossu - expert SDGs
Polis Lombardy	Public Agency – regional	Italy	Antonio Dal Bianco – senior expert SDGs
Lombardy region	Regional Government	Italy	Maria Grazia Pedrana and Daniele Magni – senior experts SDGs
Basque country	Regional government	Spain	Rafael Hueso and Leyre Madariaga - External Relations office of the Basque Government
City of Poznan	Municipality	Poland	Ms. IwonaMatuszczak-Szulc - Director of the Department Development and International Cooperation
CSR Foundation	Foundation in Poznan – local	Poland	Ms. Joanna Skaluba – senior expert
UNICEF	International organisation	Spain	Elsa Fuente Do-Rosario, coordinator of UNICEF – Comité País Vasco
UNDP ART	International Organisation	Belgium	Johannes Krassnitzer – responsible UNDP offices in Brussels
Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)	International Association	Belgium	Pedro Bizarro – Project officer
NRG4SD	International NGO	Spain	Rodrigo Messias, - Policy Officer

ANNEX III – Case studies

Basque Country

1. Overview

Location	*Basque Country, Spain*
Key economic and social indicators	*The Basque Country is comparatively well-off compared to the rest of Spain. There are however shortcomings in comparison to the EU, for instance with youth unemployment and renewable energy use.*
Type and amount financing	*Basque Country Government budgetary commitment to be defined*
Source of financing	*Regional (Basque Country budget)*
SDGs (achieved or under achievement)	*All SDGs are targeted by the strategy and are assigned targets, activities, and indicators. Few goals have numerical targets, but one (school dropout rate below 8%) has already been met.*
Timeline	*July 2018 – 2020 (Long term objectives to 2030)*
LRAs involved	*The initiative is led by the Basque Country Autonomous Community government. All local authorities in the region (provinces and municipalities) are involved at different levels.*
Stakeholders	*The broad range of stakeholders is described in section 6.*
Web link	*https://www.irekia.euskadi.eus/es/debates/1106?stage=conclusions*

2. Summary

This case study presents findings from analysis of the Agenda Euskadi/País Vasco 2030, launched by the Basque Country Government in May 2018 as the region's strategy to address the UN Agenda 2030.

This case study includes an overview of the region, a description of the strategy's key features and objectives, its governance arrangements, an overview on achievement monitoring, as well as lessons and challenges from early stages of implementation. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

In addition to document analysis there were interviews with stakeholders from the Basque Government and a local NGO in November 2018. Detailed interview reports are at the end of this document.

The Basque Country has a clear and well-developed strategy for SDG implementation that is closely linked to the local government's political commitments and involves a wide range of strongly engaged regional stakeholders.

The strategy was published recently, so it is not possible to assess achievements yet. Part of its success will depend on financial commitments from the Basque Government, which are yet to be defined, as well as on the monitoring and related follow-up procedures.

Nonetheless, its level of detail, links to existing political commitments, involvement of a wide range of partners, and established initiatives, specifically citizen reach out, make this strategy a valuable example from which to draw useful lessons.

3. Context

The Basque Country is an Autonomous Community in the North of Spain. It was established under a self-governing statute which grants it special powers in fields such as finance and tax. These give it greater autonomy than other Spanish Autonomous Communities. The Community has some 2.2 million inhabitants and is one of the most important industrial areas in Spain. The GDP is over EUR 68.8 billion, or EUR 35 300 per person[59]. This is above the Spanish (EUR 26 700) and EU28 (EUR 29 200) averages.

The economy is made up mostly of the services sector (63%) and industry (30%). Construction is 6% and agriculture and fishing 1%. Manufacturing accounts for significant part of the economy, however this figure has fallen considerably from pre-2008 as the sector was severely hit by the financial crisis[60].

Research and development (R&D) expenditure in the region was EUR 1.3 billion in 2015, 1.3% less than the previous year. R&D in the Basque Country was 1.9% of GDP in 2015, above the Spanish average (1.2%), and below the EU-28 average of 2.0%. 74% of R&D expenditure was by companies, 18.5% by higher education, and the remaining 7.5% was by public administration.

The unemployment rate of 11.3% is lower than the national rate of 17.2%, but still higher than the EU28 figure (7.6%). Unemployment has not changed significantly in recent years. However, youth unemployment (16 to 24 years old) increased from 19.5% in 2008 to 41.4% in 2015.

The indicator for population at risk of poverty and social exclusion 'Riesgo de Pobreza y/o Exclusión social – AROPE' rose from 13.9% in 2008 to 18.9% in 2011. Since then it has fallen to 14.5% in 2017, almost its pre-crisis level (European Anti Poverty Network España, 2018).

The indicator for Spain rose from 23.8% in 2008 to 29.2% in 2014, and only then started improving, falling to 26.6% in 2017. The Spanish rate in 2017 is still above

[59] In Purchasing Power Standards (PPS), data 2018 Eurostat relative to year 2016.
[60] Eurostat 2018.

the 2008 level and considerably higher than in the Basque Country, which is considerably lower than the EU28 average of 23.5% for 2016[61] and close to the best values in the whole EEA (13.3% for the Czech Republic and 12.2% for Iceland).

Total primary energy demand, or gross domestic consumption, decreased by 13% in the Basque Country from 2010 to 2014. Final energy consumption also fell by 8%. The reduction was in both final energy consumption (except transport) and generation. The decrease was steeper immediately after 2008 and continued to slow thereafter. So, a large share of the reduction was probably from lower industrial production and the general economic slowdown. The share of renewable energy production grew slightly in recent years, however at 7% it is still way below the EU target of 20% by 2020.

The distribution of income and wealth is relatively balanced in the region. The Gini coefficient of income concentration was 0.258 in 2015-2016 (0 = perfect equality), well below the national average of 0.346, and the EU value of 0.31. The lowest in the EU is 0.237 for Slovakia[62]. The coefficient's trend over the last 10 years has been relatively stable.

From analysis of available documents and interviews with the Basque Government and a local NGO, key challenges in the region can be identified as:

- Generating quality employment. Given the economic structure of the region, this is key to facing industrial transition, as well as to tackling youth unemployment.

- Fostering continued and further development of the region's strong track record in industry, specifically by investing in R&D for productive companies. This is relevant also to helping curb worsening youth employment.

- Maintaining and expanding current levels of public service is a key priority, to foster and maintain equality and social well-being.

- Supporting youth, focusing on measures to reverse the trend in unemployment, by concentrating on education and employability. One goal of the Basque Government in its 2017-2020 Programme is to reduce the school dropout rate to below 8%. This target was reached in 2017.

[61] Ibid.
[62] Eurostat 2016.

- Issues relating to the SDG theme of peace are also on the agenda, with the complete and definitive dismantling of ETA being a political goal of the Basque Government. This is also linked to a need for increased citizen participation and involvement, mentioned by interview respondents.

These pressing issues and their coherence with the UN Agenda 2030 show how the achievement of SDGs can be a powerful tool to foster territorial development. In this regard, the history of the Basque Country's commitment to transversal policies has shown that these can significantly impact such forward-looking and proactive regions. The commitment to environmental sustainability, gender equality and social cohesion has a long heritage, chiefly driven by the region's commitment to EU cohesion policy objectives. The impact of this has been visible, with the region's per capita GDP rising to 123% of the EU average. The same can be said for many key indicators presented above, the improvement in these have been largely driven by such policies. Further engagement with objectives such as the SDGs is therefore likely to foster even more territorial development in the region.

4. Strategy

The strategy closely follows UN Agenda 2030 objectives, develops them coherently with the local context, and links them to topics and objectives of the 2017-2020 Basque Government Programme (Basque Government, 2016).

The strategy is based on the 15 goals in the Basque Government programme (summarised in Figure 1), and the 17 SDGs in UN Agenda 2030.

Each of the SDGs has specific targets and each target is individually linked to one or more of the 175 commitments in the Government programme. The strategy has 100 targets, linked to 93 government commitments. Selection focuses on links to SDGs and issues of common interest rather than merely domestic issues.

Each SDG is also linked to existing or future planning instruments. The large number of instruments in the strategy (80) shows the close link that the objectives have with Basque Government planning and strategy development.

Most goals also highlight the 19 legislative initiatives, which help implement the objectives.

Finally, each Goal indicates a selection of two or three indicators for monitoring.

Figure 1: Overview of the links between SDGs and the Basque Country Government programme

Figure 2: Overview of Agenda Euskadi 2030

To ensure that the targets are implemented effectively and simultaneously, a coordination mechanism was established. This included the Interdepartmental External Action Committee and the Advisory Committee within the Basque Government External Action Department. The arrangement, ensuring that all government offices and external stakeholders assume their role in implementing the Strategy, is described in more detail in section 6 about governance.

The strategy is designed to be:

- Integrating: covering the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development indivisibly;

- Transversal: covering all public policy areas, while its leadership is not rooted in a single sector;

- Time-based: with a time horizon of 2030, in line with the UN Agenda; however, the strategy pairs SDG targets with the Basque Government Programme running until 2020;

- Specific: focusing on clear issues and realistic commitments;

- Participatory: open to participation from all kinds of contributors at all levels;

- Adaptable: open to change following feedback from monitoring, assessment, and participation;

- International: built on the UN Agenda 2030.

The target group is as broad as its thematic scope, with beneficiaries related to all SDGs. However, the focus is on improved living conditions for all citizens. In defining priorities for future resources, the strategy anticipates a focus on particularly vulnerable groups, such as women, children and migrants. Other priority groups will be people suffering from inequality, environmental management entities, and the conservation and restoration of ecosystems. Social protection, health, education, nature conservation, climate change and cooperation policy complete the intervention fields.

The range of actions under the Agenda is very broad, from legislative acts and specific interventions, to political orientation. Each action is defined in the programme, ensuring the highest level of political commitment. For instance, an action promoted under Goal 1 (ending poverty) is to establish an interinstitutional technical commission for joint management and optimisation of the ‘income guarantee’ system, consolidating it as an instrument for social cohesion. Under

Goal 4 (education), one action linked to the Government programme sets a specific target to strengthen the supply of professional courses. By 2020 50% of professional training students are to be catered for by courses in the Basque Country, rather than in other parts of Spain or abroad. Many actions involve defining new strategic documents, plans, and roadmaps. Target 62 under Goal 11 (inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities) is linked to commitment 48 of the programme, including defining a long-term intervention strategy for the built environment.

Agenda Euskadi 2030 has numerous points of contact and complementarities with other regional policies, chiefly with the 15 government strategic plans, as shown in Figure 2.

Other initiatives in the Basque Country include the Alianza Alavesa de Desarrollo Sostenible by Diputación Foral de Alava, and the Etorkizuna Eraikiz Programme by Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa, with similar goals to Agenda Euskadi 2030, including social, economic, and linguistic equality. Basque Country University is elaborating a strategic plan linked to Agenda Euskadi 2030.

Agenda Euskadi 2030 resources will come from the Basque Country General Budget with direct links to SDGs. No other financing sources are foreseen.

5. Objectives

The strategy's objectives are very broad and encompass all SDG objectives. The key overarching objective is to foster human development that ensures essential services and high-quality job opportunities on an equal basis to everyone. This will involve different partners. Institutional cohesion is key to enabling simultaneous implementation of the SDGs and improving implementation of public policies in the region.

An example of an early outcome is the AliaODS initiative, led by the local UNICEF office. This initiative takes international and local promotion of SDGs, with the UN Agenda 2030 and Agenda Euskadi 2030, and increases visibility and ownership by local organisations and the general public. This moves it from seeming to be a high-level set of commitments just for government organisations or large corporations, to being locally relevant. This was through a partnership with local media organisations, given their capacity to convey information and shape opinions among the general public.

The partnership brings together 16 media organisations in the region, responsible for 28 media outlets including newspapers, television channels, radio and web news outlets, but remains open to newcomers.

Offline and online communication is produced under a single brand, to be shared among the participating media, giving visibility to these common goals and raising awareness of the 17 SDGs, as well as the action plan for their implementation.

To carry out this work of dissemination and awareness in a clear and efficient manner, UNICEF Basque Country Committee offers the Alliance all appropriate information, especially concerning childhood and adolescence.

The partnership also directly contributes to SDG 17 itself (boosting the means for implementation and revitalising the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development), as it enables synergy and cooperation with commitments to joint efforts.

The ultimate goal is to strengthen the impact among citizens, promoting proactive behaviour and mobilising citizens to support UN Agenda 2030.

The alliance is proposed as a first phase until 2020, coinciding with the first Agenda Euskadi 2030 and the term of the current government, and will be automatically extended annually.

Communication campaigns have also been launched by the Government itself, integrating SDGs in public events and areas or spaces managed by the government. These include disseminating best practices and good experiences among the general public. Communication campaigns also relied on IREKIA, in charge of open government in the Basque Country. IREKIA focuses on transparency, participation and collaboration and represents a fundamental tool to foster citizen participation.

Training and capacity building exercises within Basque public administration raise awareness in all Government departments.

6. Governance

The first version of Agenda Euskadi 2030 is led and coordinated by the Office of the President. The General Secretariat of the President's Office and the General Secretariat for External Action are the leadership-coordination for implementation.

The General Secretariat of the President's Office coordinates Government action, while the General Secretariat for External Action fosters and promotes coordination of external action in connection with the Basque Country 2020 Internationalisation Framework Strategy. Various areas of the Government are involved in the governance through the Interdepartmental External Action Committee under the External Action Department.

The Basque Government is encouraging provincial and municipal governments to sign up for Agenda Euskadi 2030 within their areas of authority and forums or governance bodies. Consequently, a working group has been set-up that includes all levels of Basque Public Administration. This is through the Interinstitutional Commission (with members from all levels of Basque Public Administration - 3 provinces, the 3 main municipalities and the Association of Basque Municipalities-EUDEL).

Civil society and other external stakeholders contribute through the External Action Department's Advisory Committee, chaired by the Basque President.

The Basque Internationalisation Council fosters debates on the localisation and implementation of the SDGs. In addition to contacts with the private sector, academia, the third sector, NGOs, and organised civil society, there is also coordination and involvement of political parties and legislative power, as they hold essential responsibilities for several actions under the strategy.

In this regard, the Basque Parliament recently created a Working Group on the Agenda to strengthen alliances and work with other organisations, institutions, agents, regions, and networks.

Basque municipalities are also committed implementation via Udalsarea 21[63], a network linking 183 Basque municipalities, as well as the three provincial councils (diputación foral) of Araba, Bizkaia, and Gipuzkoa, Basque Government departments and the agencies for water and energy. Udalsarea 21 promotes coordination and co-responsibility for integrating sustainability logic in municipal policies.

The Public Society for Environmental Management (Ingurumen Hobekuntza – IHOBE) is also involved in Udalsarea. This organisation is part of the Basque Government's Environmental Department. In pursuit of its goal to support the Basque Government in developing environmental policies and promoting sustainability in the Basque Autonomous Community, it is involved with the Agenda, mostly with environmental issues.

Other actors from different backgrounds have been involved in SDG implementation related to Agenda Euskadi 2030. The 17x17 initiative promoted by the regional UNESCO office (UNESCO Etxea) in June 2017, brought together 17 partners with the specific objective of contributing to implementation of the UN Agenda 2030. This initiative drew on expertise from different backgrounds and sectors. The 17 partners included charitable organisations, public service providers, third sector foundations, think tanks, a business support organisation, as well as industrial and commercial enterprises, including the leading utility multinational Iberdrola.

[63] Presentation of the Udalsarea intermunicipal network and its commitment toward SDGs (in Spanish) http://xarxaenxarxa.diba.cat/sites/xarxaenxarxa.diba.cat/files/red_vasca_m-s_udalsarea_21_rdr.pdf

The central government of Spain set up a cross-ministry High Level Group (HLG) for Agenda 2030 in 2017, to coordinate implementation of SDGs in Spain. The HLG is also in charge of preparing the voluntary review of Spain's progress toward sustainable development. The Group involves several ministries and the national statistical institute for monitoring progress. In June 2018 the HLG published the first Action Plan for Sustainable Development (Gobierno de España, 2018).

The commitment to UN Agenda 2030 is State policy. The Plan is chiefly in the hands of the national government, however all government levels are part of the process. The national government provides for responsibility to be shared with local and autonomous governments. This is especially relevant concerning SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), as well as measures fighting climate change, promoting employment, equality and education. The role of local governments is foreseen at all stages of public policy development (formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation).

Localisation of the UN Agenda 2030 goals is stated as the need to build local government capacity to develop tools that are participative, innovative and sustainable. The Action Plan describes and builds on existing measures for sustainable regional development.

In spite of these national commitments, the Agenda Euskadi 2030 strategy was set up on the initiative of the Basque Government. National activities and strategies are not cited in the strategy and there are no explicit arrangements for coordination between the national and regional governments. This may be due to the national Action Plan being published after Agenda Euskadi 2030, so there could be more coordination in the future.

The governance model, bringing together the broad range of stakeholders, is well established, however it largely relies on the Basque Government. Although the links, networking, and communion of intents are strongly developed in the regional context and with lower government levels, little focus on coordination at the national level may be a weakness of the current governance arrangement. This arrangement is however newly established, and since flexibility is enshrined in the founding principles, the picture could evolve following feedback from contributors, as well as the first monitoring exercises in 2019.

7. Achievements

Since the strategy only very recently entered into force, it is not yet possible to assess final achievements. The main achievement has so far been integrating efforts from multiple actors at multiple levels, as well as seamless integration with existing government strategies and commitments. The effectiveness of this will become apparent from the monitoring.

Agenda Euskadi 2030 includes 50 indicators from those identified for each goal by the UN and the EU (Eurostat, 2017). These depend on the availability of data.

There are three indicators for each goal, except for goal 15, which has two indicators. An overview dashboard in the strategy links each indicator to the respective UN and EU indicators. In many cases, the Basque indicators closely reflect the EU or UN indicators, however sometimes they are adapted to the local context and available information.

The sources of data and current levels are not yet defined. Details will be provided with the first annual monitoring report produced with the help of an Interdepartmental Commission. This report will be submitted to the Basque Parliament.

8. Challenges

A challenge encountered during the set-up process was the different speeds at which organisations and institutions could work for the Agenda. In addition, there were different degrees of knowledge and awareness about UN Agenda 2030 and what it entails.

These difficulties mainly stem from a lack of specific training, as well as the tendency of these organisations to work in silos. For this reason, awareness-raising, training, and dissemination are given special emphasis by the Basque Government to enable SDG ownership and the commitment of all stakeholders.

There is also a key challenge with institutional and political continuity. As described above, the strategy follows political cycles, linking SDGs to the Government political programme, which should be repeated with following governments. This makes the strategy more concrete, facilitating accountability and avoiding duplicated targets. However, the time frame is limited, with 2030 only a strategic horizon, while implementation stops in 2020.

Although commitment to SDG strategy definition was high from the start of the government's term at the end of 2016, the strategy was only adopted in mid-2018. In 2019, municipal and provincial elections are due, with elections for the Basque

Government in 2020. This could jeopardise efforts regarding interinstitutional cooperation and the fostering of partnerships. The local third and private sectors have been proactive in promoting SDG-related initiatives, as have municipalities and other bodies in the Udalsarea network. This shows that support for SDGs in the region is wide-ranging and resilient, making it harder for future elected politicians to sideline it. Nonetheless, diminished political support from regional or provincial governments could pose serious issues to continued efforts in the field.

Remedies to help prevent and overcome these challenges from the Government focus on:

- communication campaigns, including reaching out to citizens via the IREKIA initiative;
- training and capacity building within the institutions;
- external dissemination of best practices and good experiences;
- translating documents into Basque.

9. Lessons learned

The deep integration of regional strategic planning with other kinds of planning appears to be a clear strength. The strategy draws on extensive planning by the Basque Government in a range of connected fields.

Moreover, the strategy enjoys broad institutional and stakeholder support at many levels. This reflects a sense of community backed by the autonomous spirit of the region, which surely played a part in enabling broad consensus.

The involvement of NGOs such as UNICEF has played a fundamental role in bringing together actors not previously involved in SDG-related topics, such as news outlets. The AliaODS initiative for broadening public knowledge on SDGs could be a useful tool in spreading the positive effects of SDG implementation, and could be scaled up or implemented in other territories.

As discussed in previous sections of this case study, transversal policies could significantly impact forward-looking and proactive territories like the Basque Country. A continued concerted effort by a broad range of actors, integrating transversal policies in many fields, is key to enabling territorial impact.

10. Conclusions and recommendations

The Agenda Euskadi 2030 is a clear, well defined and powerful tool with strong support from the local community which outlines several potentially effective arrangements. Linking targets under SDG Goals to existing Government

commitments and the many planning documents show how deeply rooted the culture of transversal development objectives is in the territory.

The decision to closely link the strategy to the current Government's political objectives is also positive for the clarity and concreteness of the strategy, as well as for the likelihood of implementation. However, it forces the strategy to follow the short terms of political office. The SDG strategy was approved more than one and a half years after the start of the Basque Government term, with its first monitoring report to be published two years, or halfway, into the term. The next government will have to adjust the strategy in view of the 2030 target. This approach could yield positive results, however the strategy should be updated earlier in the term, or even integrated in the political programme at the start of each term. This would allow even closer relations with political programming, as well as more time for monitoring.

The strong interinstitutional and multi-stakeholder support that the strategy enjoys is without doubt a key strength. However, more coordination with the national level and other Autonomous Communities could make the initiative more resilient and effective in the long term.

The strategy was published recently, so it is not possible to assess achievements yet. Its success will depend in part on the financial commitment from the Basque Government which is yet to be defined, as well as the monitoring and follow-up procedures. However, its level of detail, links to existing political commitments, wide range of partners, and established initiatives, specifically in reaching out to citizens, make this strategy a valuable example.

City of Poznan

1. Overview

Location	*Poznan/ Wielkopolskie Voivodeship/Poland*
Key economic and social indicators	*-see Annex to the national Strategy for Responsible Development (SRD) and Annex to Development Strategy of the City of Poznan*
Type and amount financing	*- SRD: PLN 1.5 trillion from public sources, PLN 0.6 trillion from private sources*
Source of financing	*Local/Regional/National/Private*
SDGs (achieved or under achievement)	*3,4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17*
Timeline	*Starting date: 2013*
LRAs involved	*Local (City of Poznan), Regional (Wielkopolskie Voivodeship), National (Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology, Ministry of Investment and Economic Development)*
Stakeholders	*Citizens, public city servants and socio-economic players.*
Web relevant links	http://www.poznan.pl/mim/main/strategia-rozwoju-miasta-poznania-2020,p,14886,26640.html https://www.miir.gov.pl/strony/strategia-na-rzecz-odpowiedzialnego-rozwoju/ https://www.umww.pl/strategia-rozwoju#

2. Summary

The City of Poznan set up a development strategy for inclusive and holistic economic development which addresses several SDGs. The city authorities emphasise their pursuit of SDGs through the strategy. While strengthening economic competitiveness is the first priority, the other strategic areas (improved quality of life, education, culture and sport, as well as sustainable development of the Poznan city area) are meant to be mutually supporting. The priorities have been carefully updated based on the results of the previous strategy. The national SRD to 2020 (with a perspective to 2030) explicitly includes implementation of SDGs to achieve sustainable development (Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, 2018). Other national strategies incorporate elements of sustainable development.

Local and regional strategies should be coherent with national strategies. Local initiatives by authorities, NGOs and research centres also show commitment to sustainable development in Poznan. Local authorities believe in the need to consider sustainable development as a way to improve the quality of life in Poznan and stress the importance of engaging with residents, including them and other stakeholders in policy-making and city development projects.

3. Context

Poznan is in the west of Poland, in Wielkopolskie Voivodeship. It is one of the oldest and largest cities in Poland, with some 540 000 inhabitants while the population of the whole urban agglomeration is almost one million. In 2016, both the city and Voivodeship population grew, although the population had fluctuated in previous years partially as a result of emigration. Apart from the relatively high emigration, Poznan is demographically similar to other major cities in Poland.

The unemployment rate in Poznan was the lowest in the country in the last five years and in 2017 was only 1.7%. In the first half of 2018, business employment increased by 3.8% compared to the first half of the previous year. The economy is relatively well-performing, among other reasons due to the large and increasing number of enterprises, high workforce productivity as well as investment in innovation and R&D. In 2015, the GDP per capita of Wielkopolska region was the third highest in Poland at roughly PLN 50 800 (approximately EUR 11 800). For 2008-2010, the GDP per capita of the city of Poznan was the second highest after Warsaw for Polish cities. Similarly, over the same period, Poznan ranked second in Gross Value Added per employee, which was almost 126% of the national average (PLN 113 500) in 2010.

4. Strategy

National strategy

Sustainable local development is guided not only by local strategies but also by regional and national ones. Especially relevant is the SRD, a national strategy that ensures implementation of SDGs in Poland. It is a key document for medium- and long-term economic policy and development in Poland. The document is ‘a basis for revision of the applicable integrated development strategies, other strategic documents, and for verification of previous instruments for their realisation (Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, 2018). The SRD indicates that Agenda 2030 is one of most relevant international documents for sustainable development.

Formulation of the strategy is based on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs as well as analysis of the development challenges in Poland. The challenges and principles in the strategy are coherent with SDGs, especially:

1. No poverty, 2. Good health and well-being, 4. Quality education, 6. Clean water and sanitation, 7. Affordable and clean energy, 8.Decent work and economic growth, 9.Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 12.Responsible consumption and production, 13.Climate action, 14.Life below water, 15.Life on land, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.

The SRD is formulated to move towards responsible, as well as socially and territorially sustainable development, in line with the SDG commitments. The SRD main objective is to create conditions for increasing incomes of Polish citizens along with increasing cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and territorial dimensions.

Figure 1: SRD Objectives

Source: Development Strategy for the City of Poznan to 2030.

The table below highlights the specific objectives and corresponding SDGs.

Table 1: Specific objectives (SOs) of the SRD

SO I: Sustainable economic growth driven by knowledge, data and organisational excellence	**SO II: Socially sensitive and territorially sustainable development**	**SO III: Effective state and economic institutions contributing to growth as well as social and economic inclusion**
Re-industrialisation based on innovation and R&D. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the basis of the Polish economy and will be further supported to create optimal growth conditions. Additional endeavours are to increase investment and capital as well as internationalisation.	Equal social and territorial benefits from economic growth. Lagging regions, such as rural areas and medium-sized cities, will be supported through territorial policies and a focus on economic specialisations and new market niches.	Modification and simplification of laws as well as increased effectiveness, inclusiveness and openness to citizens and entrepreneurs. Reduced bureaucracy, improved functioning of justice, spatial planning processes and public procurement as well as strengthening social and civil dialogue. In addition the issue of digitalisation and improvement in the use of public finances.
SDGs under each SO (as identified in the SRD)		
2. Zero hunger, 3. Good health and well-being, 4. Quality education, 7. Affordable and clean energy, 8. Decent work and economic growth, 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 10. Reduced inequalities, 11. Sustainable cities and communities, 12. Responsible consumption and production, 13. Climate action, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions, 17. Partnership for the goals.	1. No poverty, 2. Zero hunger, 3. Good health and well-being, 4. Quality education, 5. Gender equality, 6. Clean water and sanitation, 8. Decent work and economic growth, 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 10. Reduced inequalities, 11. Sustainable cities and communities, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.	3. Good health and well-being, 8. Decent work and economic growth, 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 11. Sustainable cities and communities, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions, 17. Partnership for the goals

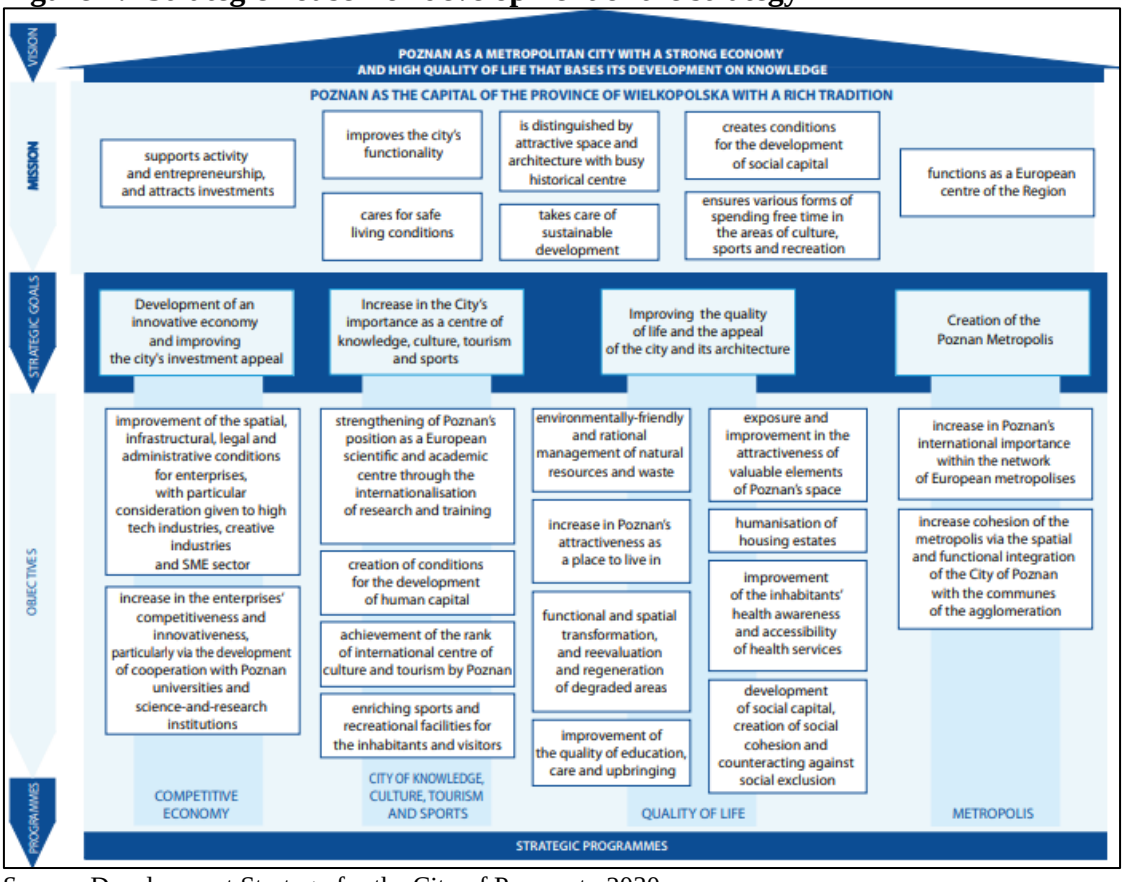
Local strategy

The City of Poznan local strategy updates the previous development strategy with fact-based policy, including monitoring results. This strategy was updated before the SRD was published, but authorities made sure that its priorities are coherent with the SRD. Similarly, city authorities fully endorse the SDGs and believe their development strategy commits to the fulfilment of SDGs.

The strategy contains precise expectations, listing strategic objectives and programmes, actions to address goals, measures, projects, potential sources of financing, implementation dates, expected effects and methods of measuring. The strategy´s development was based on a participatory approach and its implementation involves co-management with various stakeholders and leadership from the Poznan City Council.

The strategy has four strategic areas (further detailed in section 5 on the local strategy). For each area, there was an assessment based on monitoring results, which also form the basis for the updated strategic goals. The vision for 2030 is Poznan as a metropolitan city with a strong economy and high quality of life that bases its development on knowledge.

Figure 2: 'Strategic house' for development of the strategy



Source: Development Strategy for the City of Poznan to 2030.

The table below shows the coherence between the strategic goals and SDGs.

Table 2: City of Poznan Development Strategy objectives with corresponding SDGs

Strategic objective	Relevant SDGs
1. Develop an innovative economy and improve the city's investment appeal	8. Decent work and economic growth, 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
2. Increase the city's importance as a centre of knowledge, culture, tourism and sports	3. Good health and well-being, 4. Quality education,
3. Improve the quality of life and appeal of the city and its architecture	3. Good health and well-being, 7. Affordable and clean energy, 10. Reduced inequalities 11. Sustainable cities and communities, 13. Climate action.
4. Create the Poznan Metropolis	7. Affordable and clean energy, 11. Sustainable cities and communities, 15. Life on land, 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions, 17. Partnerships for the goals

The strategy further lists strategic actions and pairs them with measurement indicators. There are also baseline and target values for 2020 and 2030. Within the first strategic goal, actions focus on organisational and intellectual support for increasing SME innovativeness as well as improved communication of these measures to innovators. The city also looks to foster cooperation between manufacturing and R&D as well as between production companies and the business environment. Furthermore, the authorities continue to promote entrepreneurship, the economy, local companies and the image of the city itself. Maintaining and strengthening competitiveness will need further interventions to attract and keep entrepreneurs, including highly specialised graduates. This is also part of other strategic goals focusing on improved living quality, education, culture and sports as well as the attractiveness of living in the city.

Under the second strategic goal, the city´s focus on knowledge, culture, tourism and sports includes a fellowship programme for the best pupils, awards for teachers, strengthened cooperation between universities and the city, along with linking their development strategies and a cooperation network in academia. Better urban management as well as improved transport will also help the city´s knowledge, cultural, tourism and sporting quality.

The measures also contribute to the third strategic goal for the quality of life. Urban management focuses on revitalising and redefining functions of the city centre, rationalising the school network considering the distribution of inhabitants, as well as improving transport infrastructure. These should enhance the attractiveness of living in the agglomeration.

Finally, the fourth strategic goal (Poznan as a strong metropolis) is cross-cutting and builds on performance in other strategic areas. Measures for this strategic goal include an integrated approach to city development and strategic planning, financial instruments, partnerships between communes and public-private partnerships as well as integrated spatial planning. Other actions will to develop metropolitan functions (listed as economic, scientific, cultural and symbolic), public transport, revitalisation programmes, environmental protection and more effective resource use including energy efficiency, a focus on the knowledge-based economy and strengthening the partnership culture.

The local strategy incorporates sustainable development and is coherent with many SDGs. Not all SDGs are addressed as some are not relevant or not a priority for the city. The strategies emphasise the creation of a business-friendly environment and support for innovativeness to support a sustainable economy. The strategy is also committed to providing appropriate living conditions for citizens. Less prioritised is the issue of environmental sustainability, though some elements of this are incorporated into the strategies. The coherence between SDGs and strategies also highlights the relevance of many SDGs to sustainable development in Poznan.

Specific examples of projects

Various local actors, including local authorities, NGOs and businesses have projects to further SDGs and sustainable development in the city of Poznan.

The city is especially concerned with pursuing SDGs through a sustainable economy and through businesses. Under Poznan Business Partner, the city helps and assists entrepreneurs. The city has hosted eight Poznan Entrepreneurship Days[64]. These events include a contest for Poznan entrepreneur leader, Start-up Poznan, Poznan Business Partner, Social Media Ninja and Blog Conference Poznan. Each of these address different issues within business (start-ups, partnerships, social media and blogging) and offer targeted support to local businesses.

[64] http://www.poznan.pl/mim/pdp/o-dpp,p,20323.html

The city authorities also offer free courses for entrepreneurs on e-marketing[65], legal business counselling[66] as well as the loan programme Jeremie2[67]. Finally, it has also provided 500m^2 of free co-working space in the city centre to offer working and networking opportunities[68].

NGOs are also active in sustainability in the business environment. For the past three years the city has hosted an SDG-themed film festival called '17 Goals: Festival of Responsible Films'[69]organised by a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) foundation Res Severa[70]. The festival includes a contest showcasing short documentary films made by enterprises, NGOs, or public authorities about CSR and sustainable development as well as their efforts to contribute to the SDGs. It also has documentary films related to sustainability, as well as speeches. The initiative aims to spread awareness about CSR, sustainable development and SDGs. Entry is free and the event is a green event, so it aims for no negative impact on the environment.

Res Severa organises other activities. The local foundation organised a workshop on CSR and sustainability[71] in the Poznan Science and Technology Park. Participants had an opportunity to better understand CSR, why is it important for entrepreneurs, as well as learn about good and bad practices.

There are many other good practices concerning CSR as well as numerous actors supporting the implementation of SDGs in businesses. An organisation called Responsible Business Forum[72] supports businesses and entrepreneurs in Poland in undertaking CSR actions. The organisation also collects good examples of CSR in Poland and links them to SDGs. Volkswagen Poznan has 22 good practices relating to SDGs implemented between 2011 and 2016 with initiatives that cover employment and well-being, human rights, social involvement and the environment.

Good practices of Poznan businesses address other SDGs. The newspaper, GazetaWyborcza organised 'Week of seniors'[73] with articles for the elderly. In cooperation with other partners, the newspaper team held workshops and events to inform the elderly about ways of improving their well-being, including through nutrition.

[65] http://www.poznan.pl/mim/msp/news/e-marketing-dla-firm,125162.html
[66] http://www.poznan.pl/mim/msp/news/bezplatne-doradztwo-prawne-dla-przedsiebiorcow,125375.html
[67] http://www.poznan.pl/mim/msp/news/fundusz-pozyczkowy-jeremie2-szansa-na-zalozenie-i-rozwoj-przedsiebiorstwa,125497.html
[68] https://www.plusjeden.com/en/
[69] http://www.17celow.pl
[70] http://www.ressevera.pl
71 http://ppnt.poznan.pl/zrownowazony-rozwoj-fakty-mity-spotkanie-ppnt/
[72] http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl
[73] http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/dobre-praktyki/tydzien-seniora-w-poznaniu/

Another example is 'Highway to School'[74] by Wielkopolska highway. The project aims to increase safety on the way to school. Thanks to virtual reality and technology, schoolchildren learn appropriate behaviour near roads as well as how to avoid dangerous situations on the way to school.
City authorities also undertake projects that contribute to social sustainability. For community participation, Poznan founded the Centre of Local Initiatives[75] which encourages civic engagement in local community life and exchanges on significant issues. Thanks to the initiative, residents can share their ideas on social development within their area. In addition, through its website the city tries to popularise cultural life as well as provide information and guidance for residents. There is also information on measures to provide social care, such as a project co-funded by the European Social Fund[76] on improving day-care for children under three years old. Under this project, the city is opening 84 day-care places to support parents.

Finally, there are national projects, programmes and initiatives within the SRD which are noted in the VNR.

5. Governance

Governance in Poland is based on subsidiarity and policy-making takes place at three levels of government. Local and regional authorities in Poland are often referred to as self-government (*samorząd*). The national level is generally in charge of setting the country´s strategic orientation and development. It offers comprehensive guidance for multiple strategies, such as the SRD, which implements SDGs in Poland along with other projects and programmes. While the self-government has some independence, strategies of lower levels should be coherent with higher administrative level strategies. Multi-level governance is also seen in the different competences for each administrative level, as laid down by regulation[77]. This division makes some competences more relevant for each administrative unit.

The governance of implementing the SRD is complex since it is a comprehensive strategy that guides sustainable development coherently with SDGs. Many bodies, within each of the three levels of government are involved in its implementation. The Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology is responsible for overall implementation of the SRD as well as its cohesion with SDGs.

[74] http://odpowiedzialnybiznes.pl/dobre-praktyki/autostrada-do-szkoly/
[75] http://www.poznan.pl/mim/main/o-centrach-inicjatyw-lokalnych,p,35745,35746.html
[76] http://www.poznan.pl/wracapraca/
[77] The 1990 Act on Municipalities; 1998 Act on the three-tier division of the country; 1998 Act on the Regions; 1998 Act on governmental administration of the Regions; 1998 Act on the Counties; and 2003 Act on Local Government Revenue.

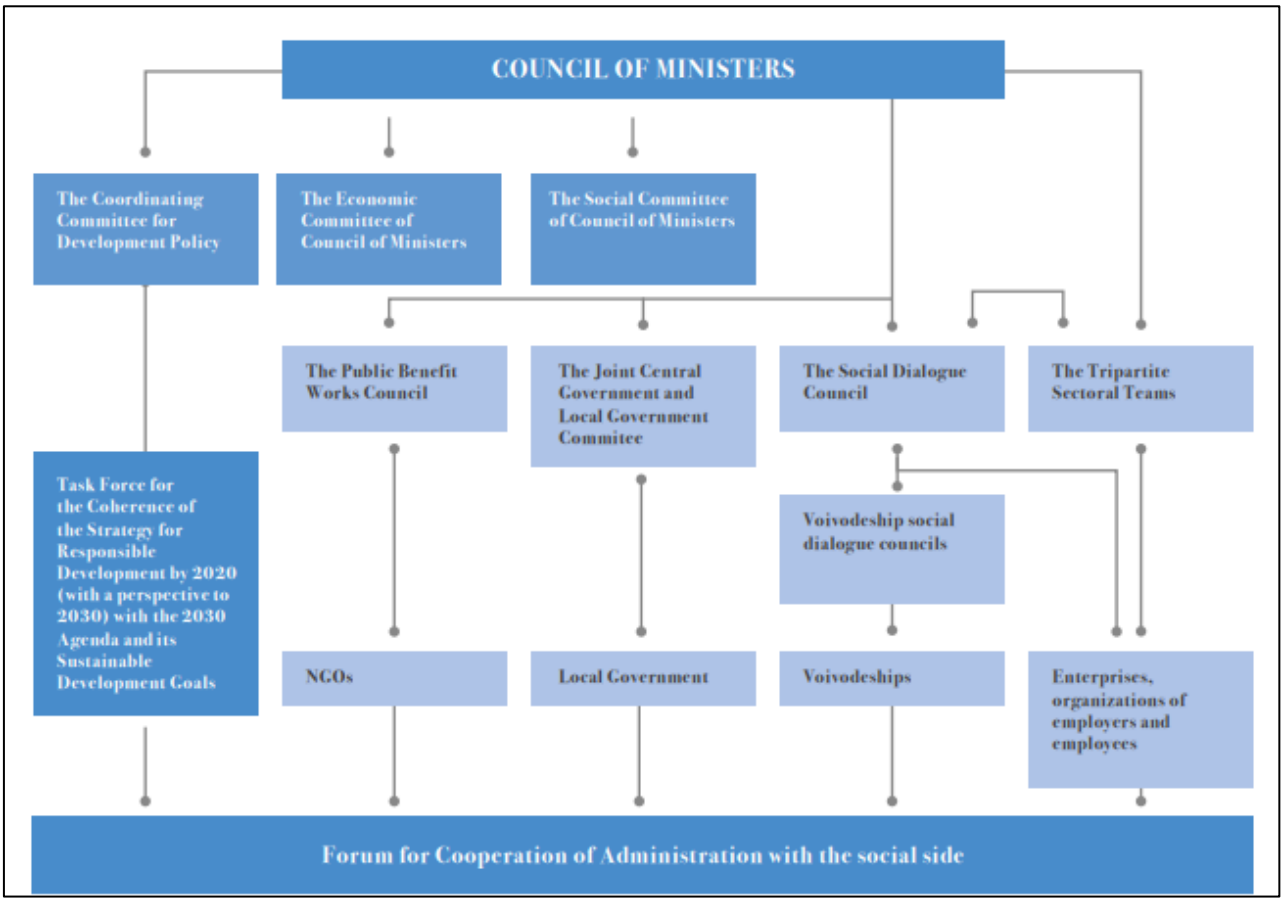
The Ministry of Investment and Economic Development is involved in preparing annual implementation reports (VNRs). These reports are submitted for comments to the Coordination Committee for Developmental Policy and for consideration to the Council of Ministers. Other bodies involved in implementing the SRD include the Council of Ministers, which takes important decisions, the Economic Committee of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Finance and the Coordinating Committee for Development Policy. The Team for Cohesion between the SRD and Agenda 2030 oversees implementation of the SRD.

Regional and local levels are crucial to implementation of the strategy. Cooperation between different levels of government is based on subsidiarity and partnership. This cooperation focuses on implementation, monitoring and evaluation and is ensured by territorial contracts and agreements. The VNR report notes that local and regional governments are key players, as they manage the development process in voivodeships and *gminas* (municipalities). Voivodeship governments are responsible for sustainable development at the regional level including programming regional development activities, creating cooperation networks, coordinating pro-development activities as well as monitoring progress and evaluation of the development policies Finally, voivodeships coordinate regional measures and investments.

Consequently, there are several bodies that provide a platform for multi-level integration and implementation of the SRD. Voivodeship Social Dialogue Councils are a regional forum for dialogue between representatives of employees, employers and local as well as central authorities. The Joint Central Government and Local Government Committee is responsible for defining economic and social priorities supporting the development of territorial units: gminas, poviats and voivodeships. It also assesses legal and financial conditions for the operation of local governments and provides opinions and solutions on relevant issues. Other bodies that involve local and regional authorities are the Labour Market Council as well as voivodeship and poviat labour market councils. They work towards sustainable development in labour and employment.

The figure below presents the implementation process with horizontal and vertical involvement.

Figure 3: Institutional mechanisms supporting implementation of sustainable development in Poland.



Source: Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Poland / The 2018 National Report.

6. Challenges and achievements

A review of national, regional and local strategies highlights that an important challenge for the country, regions and cities is to reconcile economic growth with sustainability. Even though SDGs already incorporate the concept of sustainable economic growth as an element of sustainable development, finding solutions that ensure prosperity without compromising environmental sustainability and social conditions is still a challenge in practice.

The national statistical office collects data for 76 indicators monitoring sustainable development. These relate to social, economic, environmental, institutional and political issues[78]. The office publishes a summary of national statistics for some of these indicators. The most recent report (Statisics Poland, 2018) indicates that lifestyle diseases, increasing pay gaps, regional inequalities, air pollution, decreasing biodiversity, democratic deficit within the government, as well as the enforcement and implementation of laws remain problematic for achieving SDGs. The state must also improve its capacities to enforce certain commitments, for example to better air

[78] http://wskaznikizrp.stat.gov.pl/index.jsf;jsessionid=qSw5UqmTGAABlUHN17wJ23VBh_0yvJmsfgFiZl2y.veadmz40?parametr_o1=&parametr_r1=&parametr_inf=&jezyk=en&rozmiar=pl

quality, to improve achievements in other areas, such as health and well-being. As long as the problems of environmental pollution are not tackled properly, significant challenges for health care remain.

Other national challenges for implementation of the SDGs are mentioned in the VNR. Among others, the limited attractiveness of vocational education remains problematic. This is significant as the labour market needs a workforce educated in trade and crafts, rather than a general university education. SMEs also continue to face challenges related to the low level of internationalisation and insufficient innovation as well as weak networking and cooperation. Innovation remains a significant challenge in the Polish economy. While expenditure on R&D increases, it is still below the EU average. Exports mostly consist of low-processed goods and the share of high technology and services sectors remains low. The government is well aware of the challenge to stimulate innovation investments.

Despite these issues, many national achievements can also be identified. Decreases in unemployment, at-risk-of-relative-poverty as well as overcrowded household rates between 2010 and 2016 can be noted. Increased high technology exports and imports, as well as gross domestic expenditure on R&D are also achievements. Households with broadband internet connection increased by 21% in the past 6 years. Similarly, there is a slight improvement in access to health care measured by physicians, nurses and midwifes per 10 000 population as well as employment for women with children up to 5 years old. In terms of environmental and resource sustainability, the population connected to water supply systems and wastewater treatment plants as well as the recycling rate have been increasing. Another positive trend is the increase in the share of energy from renewable sources even though electric energy consumption more than doubled between 2010 and 2016. Polish society also seems to be using energy more efficiently.

The above holds true for the whole country and, to a large extent, also for the city of Poznan. Nevertheless, the city's business-friendly orientation has already resulted in many achievements. Poznan has very good economic development compared to other Polish cities with high workforce productivity (Gross Value Added per employee), high GDP per capita, many companies, high expenditure on R&D and the lowest unemployment rate in Poland. The city of Poznan is also an important academic centre (see section 3).

However, to meet its ambitious vision and the relevant SDGs, the city still faces similar challenges as the rest of the country. These are, most notably, the need for enterprises to increase innovativeness and the ability to network and compete internationally. Despite the positive economic situation, the city also seems unable to attract highly qualified, creative and entrepreneurial people. Other problems are the limited opportunities for using advanced technologies and their development. Furthermore, the authorities especially see the need to provide appropriate education

for talented students and improve the city´s cultural life and participation to improve the quality of life. Authors of the strategy cite evidence that cultural participation and creativity contribute to innovativeness. Improving the city´s cultural and sports offer, in turn, raises its prestige and makes it more attractive for qualified and creative people.

The local authority also refers to other challenges related to implementing SDGs. These are connected to poor environmental and social awareness of citizens. As an example, residents find it difficult to be open and inclusive to visitors and newcomers. Another example is the habit of using cars as the main means of transport and a reluctance to use public transport. Part of the solution is to improve public transport. Nonetheless, the lack of environmental awareness and ingrained habits make it difficult to change behaviour.

The city of Poznan, like many other cities and regions in Europe, faces the challenge of population decline which is connected to fewer working age people and more older people. Another challenge is the need for appropriate urban planning. In this area, there are complicated ownership relations, new housing developments and in the broader urban planning context, urban development that is endangering green spaces. Other challenges include a 'ghetto problem', with concentrations of people exposed to social exclusion, as well as suburbanisation and gentrification.

The good governance steering relations between the city and the region has a positive impact on sustainable and inclusive development and the implementation of SDGs. However, many challenges continue such as intense construction projects, especially in suburban areas, changes in the environment connected to human pressure, limited bottom-up cooperation and integrated public transport. To overcome these challenges, strong cooperation between administrative units within the agglomeration and, at the same time, leadership from the city of Poznan is needed. Effective and balanced governance is not easy to achieve.

The authorities of the city and Poznan district launched a difficult process of integrating local governments in the Poznan agglomeration. Due to the diversity and specific nature of participants, lack of funding guarantees and limited national regulations, this process is very difficult but essential. The integration of metropolitan area communes will, however, require intensified cooperation and implementation of the development strategy based on their own resources and financial support from EU funds.

7. Lessons learned, challenges and recommendations

One conclusion that can be drawn from analysis of the strategies is the need for a solid monitoring system which enables accurate policy adjustments and measures. Having recognised the importance of fact-based policy, the local authorities in Poznan emphasise updating the strategy after each implementation phase according to results.

Another important lesson is the need for a holistic approach to sustainable development, as represented by the 17 SDGs. As discussed before, the Poznan strategy recognises that economic and social development mutually reinforce each other. It is also believed that improving the quality of life and cultural participation contribute to economic performance and entrepreneurial success.

Improved quality of life and social conditions also raise the city´s prestige and attract creative people. A high quality of life depends on multiple factors in different areas including economic performance, the environment and social conditions. The interview with the representative of the city authority confirmed that pursuing multiple SDGs can help achieve the main objective of improving the quality of life as well as Poznan´s international position.

In addition to the need for a holistic approach and consideration of all or multiple SDGs, the city authorities have also learnt that successful policy-making and implementation of sustainable development also depends on the extent to which openness, diversity, understanding and dialogue are embraced. Creating conditions to empower city residents will contribute to their ability and willingness to act and be engaged in the city´s development. Sustainable development can be achieved through commitment from all stakeholders.

The last lesson leads to an interesting recommendation on the need to strengthen the community perspective in policy-making, especially in terms of SDGs. The representative of the local authority observed that, nowadays, the focus of city policies around the world is the individual human being, their rights, needs and expectations. This focus is being further established by the media who have a considerable influence on shaping attitudes of citizens. While individuals are more empowered, one should not forget goals of sustainability that serve a common interest.

As a result, it is very important that citizens share their empowerment and contribute to the common good of achieving SDGs through their involvement as well as cooperating with authorities in policy-making. An understanding of the community perspective is crucial. The stakeholder noted that currently the city of Poznan tries to achieve this type of policy-making through co-creating policy with citizens as opposed to consultations. The authorities believe that it is residents who understand

their city best and their involvement in creating policy will be reflected in their engagement in its implementation. This approach can also contribute to improve the common understanding of needs and goals in relation to sustainable development.

Vertical cooperation is also key to successful policy-making, especially in implementing SDGs. There is vertical cooperation within national strategies such as SRD, as discussed in section six. However, such cooperation may not be enough. In Poland, governance is based on subsidiarity, whereby each level has roles and responsibilities assigned by law. Effective governance and implementation of sustainable development depends on the recognition of roles by local, sub-regional, regional and national authorities. A dialogue for coordination and cooperation between different government entities, including at the European level, is key for ensuring effective governance. Such dialogue should focus on understanding not only roles and responsibilities but also on listening to the needs and challenges in order to better align strategies and actions. It would also support mutual learning and exchanges between stakeholders on opportunities and ideas for development. However, vertical consultations should not diminish the importance of a local perspective in understanding local issues.

The interview with Poznan local authorities also raised recommendations for EU Cohesion Policy. Some SDGs could be made more explicit in Cohesion Policy. The stakeholder suggested that cohesion policy could better cover some SDGs which are, in their view, currently underrepresented. This would encourage common action. Climate change was mentioned specifically.

Lombardy Region

1. Overview

Location	*Lombardy, Italy*
Key economic and social indicators	*Lombardy is one of twenty administrative regions in Italy, in the northwest of the country. The region has some 10 million people, or one-sixth of Italy's population, and about a fifth of Italy's GDP, making it the most populous and richest region in the country and one of the richest in Europe. Milan, Lombardy's capital, is the second-largest city and the largest metropolitan area in Italy.*
SDGs (achieved or under achievement)	*The regional strategy is still being completed and is based on the national strategy approved in 2016. The SDGs will consider the regional needs and priorities*

	in the Regional development plan. Context, policies and perspectives for each potential SDG are already analysed in the report 'Rapporto Lombardia 2017'.
Timeline	*The timeline is mainly determined at national level*
LRA(s) involved	*The initiative is led by the Lombardy Regional Government. The Regional council, cities and other local authorities in the region are involved at different levels in the decision-making process.*
Stakeholders involved	*At national level, the Region is a member of the SDG round table established by the Ministry of Environment. At regional level, NGOs, professional organisations and trade unions take part in the round table established by the region to define regional SD issues.*
Web relevant links	*http://www.polis.lombardia.it/wps/portal/site/polis/attivita/rapporto-lombardia*

2. Introduction

Lombardy, together with other regions in Italy (e.g. Emilia Romagna and Tuscany) is a forerunner for SDGs. The region is still defining its SDG strategy and is currently mainly concerned with involving and coordinating a wide range of national, regional and local stakeholders. Given the early stage, it is not possible to assess achievements yet. Part of its success, beyond technical considerations, will depend on future political and financial commitments from the Regional Government, as well as regular commitment by local authorities and other stakeholders.

3. Context

General economic profile

Lombardy is one of the richest regions in the EU. Although the Italian economy was severely hit by the world economic crisis, the GDP per capita in Lombardy of EUR 37 300 in 2016 was among the highest in Europe (EUR 28 200 in Italy and EUR 29 200 in the EU). Even though regional GDP decreased slightly from 2011 to 2013 (-2.45% vs. -2.04% in Italy and +1.7% in the EU), Lombardy remains the second richest region in Italy after South Tyrol, with a GDP per capita about 30% higher than the national and EU averages. In 2016, with EUR 366.54 million, it has the fifth largest GDP among European regions (Eurostat, 2018) and is one fifth of Italian GDP.

Despite sluggish economic growth, the strongly export oriented economy in Lombardy in 2016 had recovered to the level reached before the crisis in 2008. In 2017, 4.3 million people were employed in Lombardy. 67% were in services, 32% in industry and the remaining 1% in agriculture. In 2016, regional employment was 64.8% vs. national and EU averages of 63.8% and 72.9% respectively. In the same period, regional unemployment was 6.5% (Eurostat, 2018), far below the Italian and European average (11.4% and 7.8% respectively).

Lombardy has a wide variety of industries ranging from agriculture and livestock to heavy and light industry. The service industry has also developed strongly in recent decades. At the end of 2012 there were 71 enterprises per 1 000 inhabitants, one of the highest rates of entrepreneurship in Europe (44 enterprises per 1 000 inhabitants), of which more than 99% were SMEs.

Of central importance is the role of Lombardy in research, technological development and innovation, where Italy performs badly compared with other large European economies. In 2015, about 21% of Italian R&D investments were in the region (Eurostat, 2018). R&D expenditure in Lombardy was 1.27% of GDP (Eurostat, 2018), below the European average (2.04%, Eurostat 2018) and still far from the 3% established by the EU 2020 strategy. In the '*Smart Specialisation Strategy*' of 2013, updated in 2015 the region identified seven Specialisation Areas. These cover the economic and scientific actors situated in the territory: aerospace¸ agri-food, eco-industry, creative and cultural industries, health, advanced manufacturing and sustainable mobility.

4. Strategy setting

National approach

Italian law (article 34(4) of DLGS 152/2006 – the environmental code) states that regional sustainable development strategies must be consistent with the national one. Regional strategies address the regional context and priorities of themes and priorities identified in the NSDS. So, regions participate in activities coordinated at national level while also involving local stakeholders (NGOs, professional organisations, local authorities and citizens) in defining and implementing regional/territorial approaches.

The NSDS capitalises on experiences from the action plan for sustainable development ('Strategia d'azione ambientale per lo sviluppo sostenibile in Italia 2002-2010'), approved in 2002. The new approach is broader, involving national and regional stakeholders/ It is also integrated, covering all the socio-economic and environmental topics in Agenda 2030.

Box 1: SDGs as defined in the Italian National Sustainable Development Strategy

The NSDS has five core areas: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Each has national strategic choices articulated in national goals. The goals emerged from the consultation process and integrate the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development. The structure concisely reflects the complexity of the 2030 Agenda and balances the three pillars, focusing on the environment where integration is traditionally weak. Furthermore, this arrangement incorporates information from the consultation and the significant contribution provided by institutional players, who understand intervention best. SDGs indicators, as recently published by the National Institute of Statistics, will be associated with each national strategic choice and goal (see section 7 of this case study).

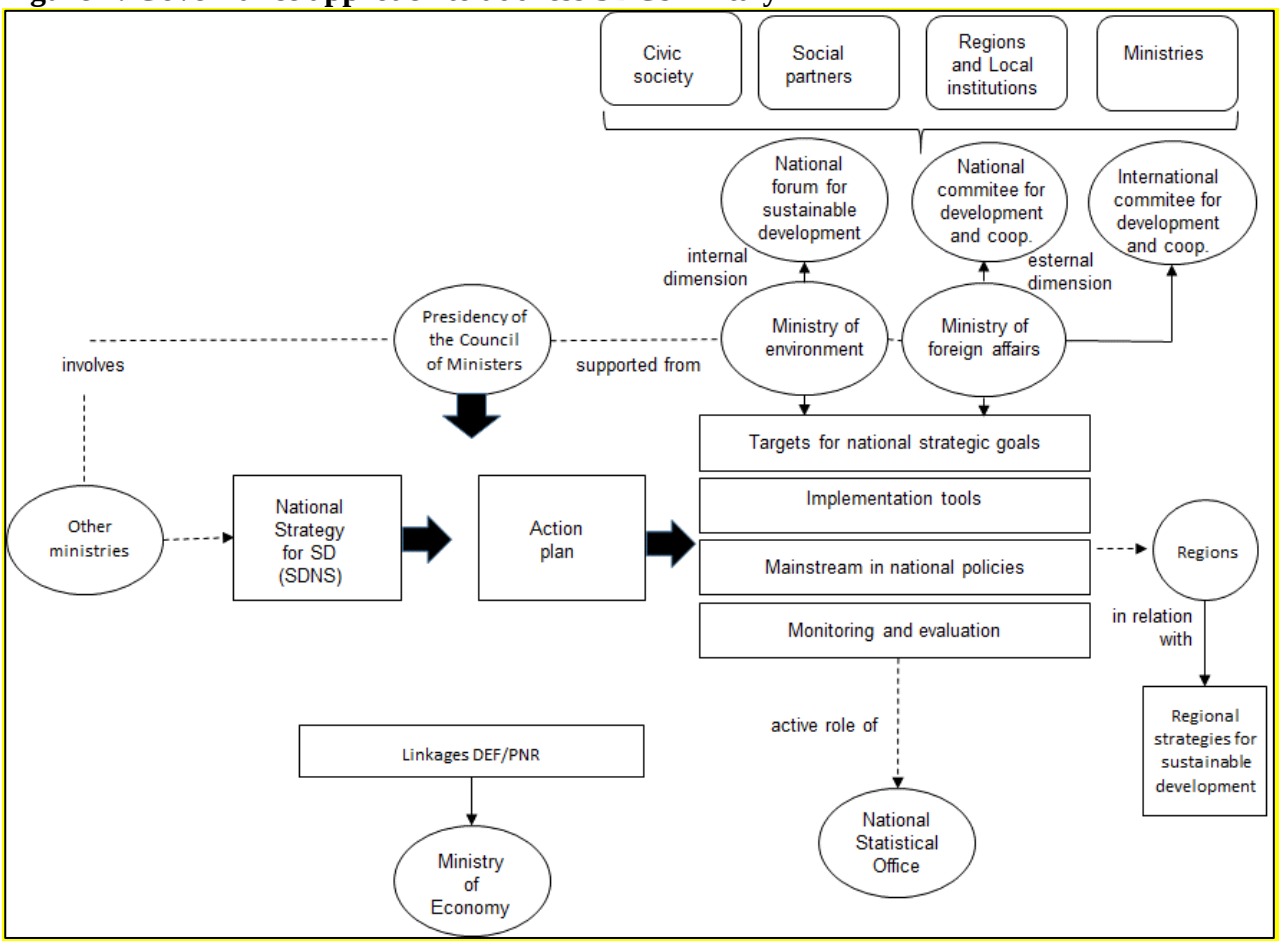
The chart below describes the strategic area 'PEOPLE', which has three national strategic choices or priorities and ten national goals. Each goal has a corresponding set of 2030 Agenda targets.

PEOPLE	
FIGHT POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION, ELIMINATING TERRITORIAL GAPS	Reduce the intensity of poverty
	Fight food and material deprivation
	Reduce housing deprivation
GUARANTEE THE CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN POTENTIAL	Reduce unemployment for the weakest segments of the population
	Ensure the effectiveness of social protection and security system
	Reduce the school drop-out rate and enhance the education system
	Combat deviance through prevention and social integration of vulnerable individuals
PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLBEING	Reduce population exposure to anthropogenic and environmental risk
	Promote healthy lifestyles and strengthen preventive healthcare systems
	Guarantee access to effective healthcare services and reduce territorial gaps

Source:
http://www.minambiente.it/sites/default/files/archivio/allegati/sviluppo_sostenibile/Italy_in_a_glance_VNR.pdf

National and regional governance is mainly top-down, from national government to regions then local stakeholders, with significant commitment required from LRAs to implement the SDGs at regional and local levels.

Figure 1: Governance approach to address SDGs in Italy



Source: Environmental Ministry.

The Ministry launched a tendering procedure, which Lombardy region took part in, to design a regional strategy.

Lombardy strategy

In Lombardy the definition of an Agenda 2030 related strategy is still in progress, as in other Italian regions. Objectives, an action plan and monitoring arrangements are still being defined. However, the methodological approach, with responsibilities of departments leading the process, the stakeholders involved at various levels of governance, as well as the thematic priorities have been defined. Reporting and monitoring have also been comprehensively addressed.

The first regional actions under Agenda 2030 are:

- Defining priorities: the Region is addressing energy and climate issues, and the regional Observatory is already used as a platform for discussing with stakeholders. A round table includes a large partnership with environmental NGOs, professional organisations (e.g. Confindustria), banking foundations, consumer organisations and trade unions. The circular economy (SDG 12) and energy consumption (SDG 13) were put on the table first, as these are very

relevant in the region, with strong industry and agriculture innovation as well as potential new business opportunities. The discussions involve the most relevant stakeholders for each SDG, for example environmental NGOs are involved in discussions on environmental awareness, education and training.

- Harmonising the ESIF approach in Lombardy with SDGs has started. The objective is to analyse implementation in the regional ERDF operational programme and understand how to reorient this to optimise the contribution towards SDGs, with a specific focus on energy. This work prepares for the next programming period.

- In parallel is a first attempt to link SDGs and targets with regional development plan objectives. Matching plan outcomes to regional SDG targets has been carried out. However, a major obstacle comes from a lack of indicators and targets defined at national level. There is still uncertainty in matching current regional development indicators with national social development indicators making it difficult to analyse performance in terms of SDGs.

5. Organisational arrangements in Lombardy

Regional governance of SDGs involves the regional government body (the 'Region'), council (legislative body) and development agency (Eupolis). The decision-making process is led by the two former institutions, while technical support is provided by Eupolis. The role of the Council is limited to awareness raising and giving information to elected councillors.

Within the Region, the body responsible for coordinating SDG strategy is the environmental department ('Direzione ambiente'). A specific working group within the division involves departments in the Regions, with the following objectives:

- Create a regional system of governance for Agenda 2030; involving stakeholders;

- Organise working tables on specific themes;

- Identify best-practices, to transfer experiences from various levels of governance to regional stakeholders.

The approach to sustainable development is well known in the environmental department (based on experiences from implementing environmentally sustainable policies). There is also awareness in some regional structures such as the department for health. In general, transversal collaboration is good and staff are already involved in delivering policies targeting the whole population. More recently, other regional

departments have also expressed their interest in the debate on SDGs, such as the industry, agriculture and innovation departments, as some SDGs are very relevant for competitiveness (e.g. circular economy and energy supply). The departments in charge of transport and infrastructure are traditionally less keen to work on sustainable development.

There is a need for more information and training on Agenda 2030, expressed by regional staff and civil servants. This could increase general awareness and facilitate dialogue between sectors involved in social development.

6. Multi-level governance

International

Lombardy is a member of nrg4sd[79] and participates in networking activities regularly organised to support regional efforts in designing and implementing SDGs worldwide.

National

In December 2017, the NSDS became law by formally updating articles in Law 152 / 2006 for the national environmental code. This means that development of Regional Strategies for Sustainable Development must refer to this document. The law also provides for a report to be submitted to Parliament by 15 February each year, which assesses the performance of health indicators (‘*Benessere Equo e Sostenibile’ - BES* see below) in light of the expected effects of the budget. Health indicators will monitor the effects of the Government's economic policies on citizen well-being. Experimentally, four indicators have been included in the 2017 Economic and Financial Document 1) average disposable income, 2) an inequality index, 3) the rate of non-participation in work, 4) emissions of CO2 and other climate altering gases.

This is an interesting novelty because it overcomes the economic and financial dimension of monitoring public policies and by predicting the indicator performance, the planning document enables the Government to confront social and environmental sustainability objectives envisaged in UN Agenda 2030. The forecasting models, drawn up by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance, enable estimates of the effects of Government economic policies on citizen well-being.

Following signature of the 2030 UN Agenda, Italy was committed to prepare the NSDS, which was drafted by the Ministry of the Environment and adopted in 2017.

[79] The Network of Regional Government for Sustainable Development, contributing as representative of the Local Authorities Major Group in the UN governance system, provides inputs and common statements to ensure effective implementation of SDGs on the ground. http://www.nrg4sd.org/who-we-are/fieldsofaction/

In technically and financially supporting the whole process of defining and implementing regional strategies, the Ministry of the Environment activated national funding. Support is through activities and workshops to raise the capacity of local governments and, since March 2018, through a semi-annual round table discussion between the state and all the regions. The round table discussion covers special needs from the regions and exchanges of views and information.

All the Agenda 21 organisations help implement the design and on 18 December 2018 they were all invited to the First National conference for sustainable development.

Regional and local

There are hundreds of initiatives for local sustainable development in Lombardy, which are almost always independent from the regional level. They involve local authorities (municipalities), private and public bodies, foundations (e.g. Enrico Mattei) and NGOs. They cover themes including migrants, poverty, urban development, environmental issues and consumer rights.

To better coordinate these initiatives, the region co-organises an annual 'European Sustainable Development Week' ('la settimana della sostenibilità'). This involves civil society, local organisations, schools and public bodies. In January 2019, an information campaign to local authorities started, followed by Eupolis presenting the new 'Lombardy 2018' report to the regional Council.

7. SDG indicators

At national level

The 17 SDGs are articulated in 169 targets and the United Nations Inter Agency Expert Group on SDGs proposed more than 230 monitoring indicators. In Italy, indicators have been agreed with the UN within the health database of the Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat). These indicators are multidimensional to complement production and economic indicators with measures of well-being, equality and sustainability.

Istat analyses the indicators and improves their coverage and significance in identifying trends in SDG achievement. A detailed analysis of SDG indicators is published annually by Istat on their web page[80]. The last available report is for 2018.
This work is continuously evolving, with improvements in statistical measures and synergies within the National Statistical System (Sistan), to a progressive extension of indicator mapping as proposed by the United Nations Inter Agency Expert Group.

[80] https://www.istat.it/en/well-being-and-sustainability/sustainable-development-goals/istat-indicators-for-sustainable-development

Law 163/2016 required an annex to the Economic and Financial Document for health indicators. This annex should show the indicators over the previous three years and forecasts for the reference period 'on the basis of measures envisaged for achieving economic policy objectives and the contents of the National Reform Program'.

The analysis says that Italy is not doing enough. Political shortcomings are particularly evident, despite significant mobilisation in the business world, cultural and educational institutions and civil society. The indicators confirm the country's unsustainable economic, social, environmental and institutional condition. Even where significant progress has been achieved, Italy is still very far from reaching the SDGs and in some cases the trends go in the wrong direction. Adding to all this, the country has large inequalities of gender, social groups and territories.

Italy shows signs of improvement in eight areas: nutrition and sustainable agriculture, health, education, gender equality, innovation, sustainable production and consumption models, fight against climate change, and international cooperation. The situation is significantly worse for poverty, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and life on land. There are no significant changes for the goals on clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, life below water, or peace, justice and strong institutions.

At regional level

In July 2017, Éupolis Lombardia presented 'Rapporto Lombardia 2017' which proposed sustainable development indicators. The original idea behind the report was to link SDGs to the Development Regional Plan to measure (and evaluate) political decisions and actions with respect to the SDGs. Given the data availability and regional needs, 21 indicators related to Agenda 2030 were proposed[81].

The report was an analysis tool to support Lombardy policy makers (regional government, companies, foundations, etc.) for regional implementation of Agenda 2030. It had the dual perspective of analysing and interpreting the regional system, as well as identifying sub-national policies that could contribute to SDGs in the region.

The report opens with a comparison between Lombardy and the 21 EU countries belonging to the OECD regarding the 17 SDGs. For each objective two synthetic indicators 'position' Lombardy with respect to other countries and are presented in infographics. Benchmarking aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of Lombardy compared to the limited number of international statistical indicators.

[81] See: 'Proposta di emendamento al Programma Regionale di Sviluppo della XI Legislatura avente ad oggetto l'inserimento di indicatori di sviluppo sostenibile Agenda ONU 2030', http://www.regione.lombardia.it/wps/portal/istituzionale/HP/DettaglioRedazionale/istituzione/programma-e-finanze/programma-regionale-di-sviluppo/approvato_prs_xi_legislatura

In the report objectives 7 (energy) and 13 (climate) are dealt with in a single chapter, because of their interrelation. Objective 14 on the conservation of oceans and seas is not relevant to Lombardy. Otherwise each chapter presents SDG contents and targets, the relevance to Lombardy and the related indicators, compared where possible over time and to other regions. The most relevant regional policies are presented and possible developments are outlined. The report proposes an integrated approach to policy analysis and reserves particular attention to identifying indicators for analysing and monitoring SDGs in Lombardy. This identification started with indicators proposed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, Eurostat and Istat.

The report has been updated for 2018.

8. Achievements

The work at regional level to define and implement SDGs has included:

- A comparative analysis of SDGs with the legislative framework and policy interventions in force (i.e. RDP); identifying regional priorities;

- pilot indicators to monitor social development in Lombardy Region, to enable a performance analysis of RDP actions, based on SDG indicators;

- a network of stakeholders involving local authorities as well as public and private institutions in Lombardy; to increase SDG awareness and the empowerment of stakeholders.

9. Challenges at regional and national levels

At national, regional and local levels, defining and implementing SDGs is still full of challenges. In the last year:

- the European policy framework is still not clear as at end-2018. A clear European strategy is still missing along with an operational framework. Clear EU objectives would allow the government and regions to design and implement consistent action plans. This also makes it hard to identify EU financial and technical support available in the next programming period (post-2020).

- A change of government in Italy brought about political contrasts between the NSDS adopted by the intersectoral committee for economic planning (CIPE) in December 2017 and the version the new government wants to adopt. In addition, there is a shortcoming in the current governance model which refers to the Environment Ministry only. This means the approach involves mainly

environmental stakeholders (usually energy departments) and is not integrated or transversal. To overcome this problem the system is being set up in the presidency, to guarantee integration between all departments and policy dimensions.

- Differences between Italian regions in addressing SDGs are manifold. There are even problems of communication, with no common understanding of central concepts. Central regions that suffered earthquakes in 2016 have challenges overcoming the perennial state of emergency they continuously face. A key question here is the resilience of these territories. A central round table for Marche, Umbria and Abruzzo about these themes has not yet been established (also because of the change of government).

- The regional governance structure is still not ready to adopt SDGs as a policy performance measure. This makes it difficult to select goals to be included in the policy framework and used to evaluate the performance of senior executives. Here a central problem is that the achievements required for SDGs are very dissimilar. For some, the new targets are very challenging. Executives do not want to be evaluated on achievements towards a target which was not agreed in previous years, so for which they could not prepare.

- The definition of analytical and time-specific national targets is a necessary step to permit regions to locally implement and regularly monitor SDG activities. However, no national SDG targets have been defined. Although some are quantitative, all of them are still in the form of a generic final goal, e.g. 'By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day' or 'By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions', etc. Furthermore, Italy has not yet adopted any specific review mechanism, nor policy impact assessment legislation.

- There is a risk of human resources and energies being spread thinly at the regional level, given the number of issues, sectors and stakeholders involved in the process. There is a clear need for organisational change and institutional learning in the regions. The regional government and administration would probably not be able to solve all the issues on its own, broader involvement of stakeholders in a comprehensive multi-governance approach is required.

EN

ISBN 978-92-895-1005-9
doi:10.2863/11396

QG-04-19-331-EN-N

European Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans.

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | BELGIQUE/BELGIË | Tel. +32 22822211
www.cor.europa.eu | @EU_CoR | /european.committee.of.the.regions
/european-committee-of-the-regions