

THE STATE OF LOCALIZATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA

7 YEARS
REVIEWING
ACTIONS
FROM CITIES AND
REGIONS FOR THE SDGs

THE STORY
OF VLRs
AND VSRs



7 YEARS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS REPORTING ON THE LOCALIZATION OF THE SDGs

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, local and regional governments (LRGs) have manifested an unwavering commitment to achieving its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The organized constituency of LRGs, articulated in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTLRG), has presented seven editions of the “Towards the Localization of the SDGs” annual report since 2017, which monitors the state of SDG implementation at the local level around the world. The periodicity and methodological consistency allows for extracting important insights about the overall evolution of SDG localization in this period.

The seven reports offer annually updated, bottom-up evidence around two main questions:

In the face of these challenges and opportunities, how have LRGs advanced SDG localization?

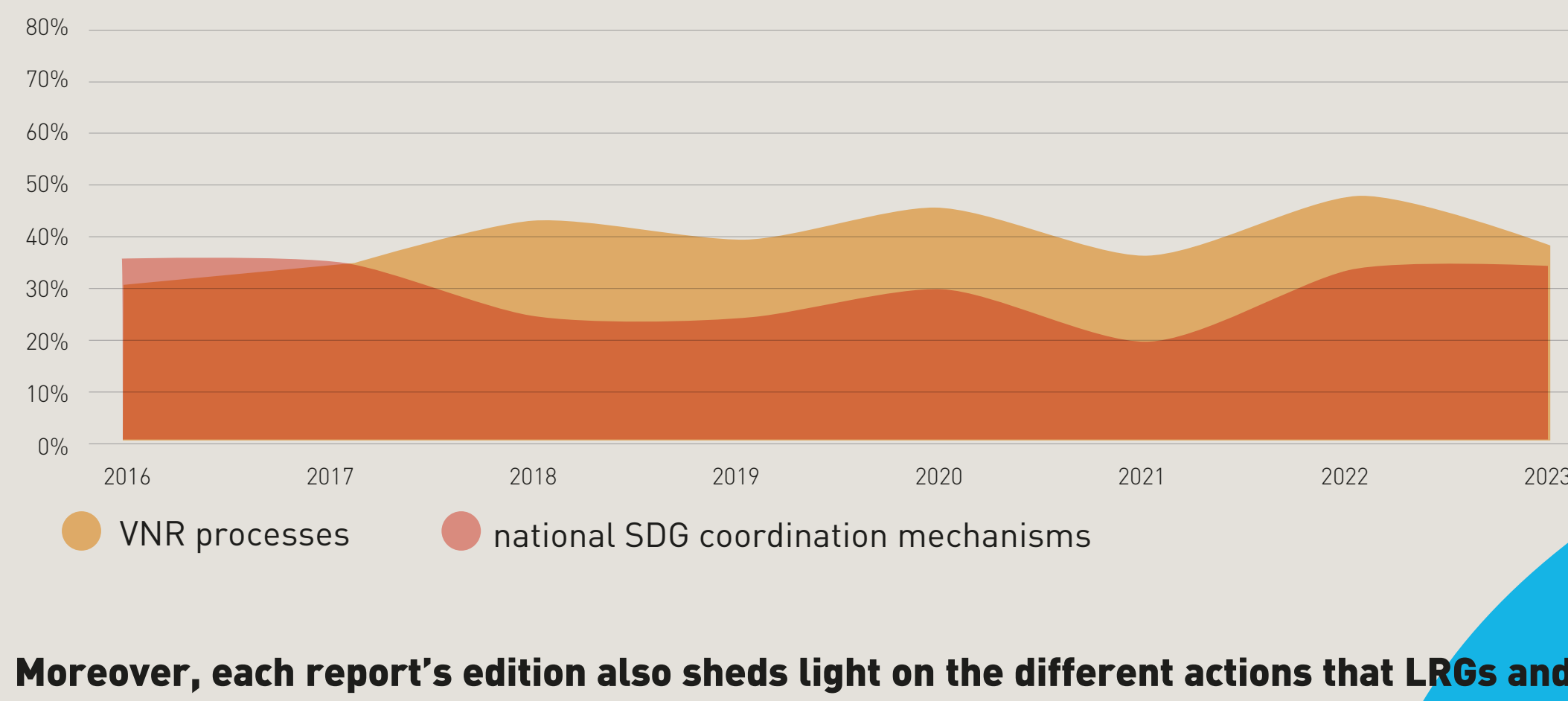
How enabling are the institutional environments for SDG localization around the world?

Each of the seven annual reports provides critical information to understand the extent to which the national institutional environments, particularly of the countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) in a given year, enable or hamper local action. In this regard, the reports analyze how the implementation of the SDGs is coordinated within a given country and how the VNR is produced, focusing on the extent to which LRGs partake or not in these implementation and reporting processes.

In 2023, LRGs participated in the national SDG coordination mechanisms in only 35%

of the countries that presented VNRs and in the preparation of only 39% of such VNRs. This represents a positive evolution with respect to the period 2016-2022, where figures were 29% and 38%, respectively. However, this evolution is not taking place at the pace that would be necessary to accelerate action and achieve the SDGs. Also, there are stark regional differences: while progress is more pronounced in some regions, others are facing stagnation and even setbacks. This requires urgent action at national and global level.

% of countries with LRGs' high and medium participation in VNR processes and in the national SDG coordination mechanisms



Moreover, each report's edition also sheds light on the different actions that LRGs and their national, regional and global associations are undertaking to localize the SDGs. These actions include inward-looking efforts to increase the ownership of, and advance, the SDGs within LRGs, their associations and their local communities and stakeholders, such as organizational and budgetary rearrangements, awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building activities. They also include policies and programs implemented to advance the different dimensions of sustainable development. Indeed, each edition devotes a whole section to mapping actions by LRGs from around the world that are directly related to the SDGs that are under review that year.

Taken together, the seven reports provide the most thorough and comprehensive analysis available of the state of SDG localization worldwide: they showcase 3,452 bold actions of 1,339 LRGs and their associations from over 145 countries.

All seven reports have been based on a global annual survey on SDG localization, which has received an increasing number of replies to reach over 200 annual replies over the past years from LRGs and their associations since 2020. The reports have also benefited from dedicated consultation processes, thanks to the networked

approach of the GTLRG and UCLG's facilitation, directly involving frontrunner LRGs to share their experiences first-hand, as well as key analysis and insights from different academic institutions. Importantly, the reports also witness and leverage the evolution of the global bottom-up reporting movement, through Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews (VLRs and VSRs, respectively), which currently involve over 240 VLRs and 37 VSRs published. Taken together, the 240 VLRs represent over 579 million inhabitants; while the 37 VSRs represent over 1,4 billion people and 170,000 LRGs.

THE 7 REPORTS
SHOWCASE OVER
3,450 BEST PRACTICES
IMPLEMENTED
BY AROUND **1,350** LRGs from all
regions to achieve the **2030 Agenda** from the
ground up

The seven reports include key conclusions and recommendations to steer the SDG localization process towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. The following is a summary of the conclusions and recommendations highlighted from 2017 to 2023:

2. It is necessary to strengthen the whole-of-government perspective to SDG achievement. Better results have been achieved in countries where multilevel coordination and engagement are present, including in the mechanisms designed to coordinate the implementation of the SDGs as well as in the national reporting processes. Fostering decentralization strategies that sustain, finance and leverage bottom-up SDG implementation is required to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

4. SDG 11 is an indispensable accelerator of the 2030 Agenda as it represents the opportunity to place urban and territorial equality, justice, care and local democracy at the heart of all actions to achieve the SDGs. Supporting LRGs, in collaboration with communities and partners, in their quest to achieve SDG 11 is fundamental for ensuring that the trade-offs between the different SDGs are navigated and enables the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

1. Revitalizing multilateralism, based on equitable representation and subsidiarity, is necessary to accelerate the localization of the SDGs and bolster transformation from the bottom up, through the SDG Summit, the Summit of the Future and beyond.

3. LRGs have proven to be at the forefront of guaranteeing rights and equitable access to local public service provision in the current times of intersecting complex emergencies. Including them in the decision-making and such actions are critical to tackle such emergencies through an inclusive, rights-based and territorial approach.

5. It is essential to redouble efforts to support local SDG monitoring and reporting processes. LRGs, together with their associations and networks, will continue to gather essential information on SDG localization through a true territorial perspective, necessary to track progress at national and global levels. Support includes contributing to the establishment of localized indicators, monitoring frameworks and data collection and analysis, as well as the systematic integration of VLRs and VSRs in national and global reporting efforts such as VNRs and decisive conversations such as the SDG Summit and the HLPF.

