

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Israel is a unitary parliamentary democracy with a single tier of subnational government, made up of 257 local authorities.¹



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Review (VNR).²

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The integration of the SDGs into the government's strategic planning was being prepared as of 2019.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The 2019 VNR announced that a national mechanism for SDG implementation would be established, for coordination within the government and with other stakeholders.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Under the guidance of the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a **governmental team** headed by Israel's Special Envoy for Sustainability and Climate Change and the Deputy General for Strategy at the **Ministry of Environment Protection** was commissioned to lead the 2019 VNR process. In addition to the involvement of ministries and national agencies, the inputs of additional stakeholders are included in the annex of the report.

1.3 MONITORING

The **Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS)** serves as the national focal point for all processes connected to collecting and reporting data on SDG indicators. Prior to the elaboration of the 2019 VNR, the ICBS had started a process of mapping available SDG indicators data. One of the main contributions of the 2019 VNR process in this respect is that creating an intergovernmental team facilitated cooperation between ministries and agencies to bridge data gaps. As for 2019, there were 123 available SDG indicators.

The **Ministry of Construction and Housing (MOCH)**, as the leading ministry promoting SDG 11, is considering the proposal of a **new local indicator for urban renewal** which could provide the basis for a global indicator within SDG 11.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The contributions of **Forum 15 - The Israeli Forum of Self-Government Cities** and the **Israel Urban Forum** are included in the annex of the 2019 VNR (see VNR, 2019, p. 419-422). The first represents the country's largest cities and submitted a contribution on SDG 11. The second is a civil society and multi-disciplinary team, also focused on SDG 11, highlighting the role of civil society in shaping cities.

There is no evidence of any LRG involvement in the national coordination mechanism mentioned as being developed in 2019 by the VNR. Nonetheless, the **Union of Local Authorities** participates in the Committee for the War on Poverty (the Alaluf Committee) that was created in 2013, along with government representatives, academia and civil society.

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

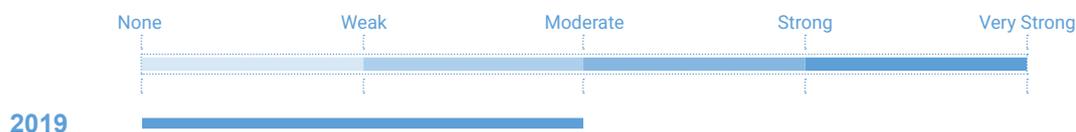
2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23576ISRAEL_13191_SDGISRAEL.pdf (2019)

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

Local authorities are extensively referred to throughout the 2019 VNR. The report mentions many national programmes implemented at the local level, but very few locally-led initiatives for SDG implementation. Some of the "Case Studies" presented in specific boxes relate to cities.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The country's largest cities are organized through the **Forum 15** network and launched a new strategy, in 2018, for mainstreaming sustainability. This strategy involves joint goals in six major fields of urban sustainability. It also delineates specific actions to be taken in every city and defines basic standards for promoting and measuring urban sustainability. Israel's Forum 15 cities advocate adopting a cross-departmental municipal strategy to pursue sustainability. This involves developing joint policies and best practices, providing information and opportunities, and encouraging peer learning, training, data collection and reporting.³

► The **Israel Urban Forum** was launched in 2015 and serves as a collaborative and inclusive platform for the civil society to foster better urbanization through bottom-up and interdisciplinary processes.⁴

► In **Jerusalem**, in the southern part of the city and confined between residential neighbourhoods, the Gazelle Valley Park is a unique site with a rich and significant biodiversity, including a herd of mountain gazelles. The site's development caters to the needs of the general public, and especially the surrounding neighbourhoods whose residents are active partners in the maintenance of the site. This park is a very popular and successful example of an urban nature park.

► As the "White City" of **Tel Aviv** was declared a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003, the municipality committed to prepare a statutory protection plan for the historical buildings and fabric of the site. The Tel Aviv conservation plan was approved in 2008, identifying approximately 1,000 historical buildings designated for statutory protection.

► As most of Israel's local authorities are small and lacking financial resources, a sliding index for resilience support has been developed to ensure that the budgetary standing of the municipality does not reflect on its disaster preparedness. While most local authorities have effective emergency systems in place, they do not have contingency plans for climate changes, in particular for the impacts of increased heat and infrastructure degradation due to extreme weather.

► Hundreds of community gardens have been created throughout the country with the support of local authorities, NGOs and government ministries. While most of them were originally established in central cities, recent years have seen the proliferation of such gardens in peripheral areas as well. In addition to helping to preserve urban nature and open space, these gardens have helped develop a sense of environmental responsibility and empowerment among residents. A National Committee for Community Gardening was established in 2009, with representatives from government ministries, municipalities and NGOs.

3. UCLG, 2019, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Localization2019_EN.pdf.

See more information on Forum 15 in the VNR, 2019, p. 419.

4. More information on the Israel Urban Forum in the VNR, 2019, p. 421.

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

No reference.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: No major decentralization reform or devolution of powers has officially taken place and the central government retains most of the powers and strict oversight of local government activities and finances. However, some de-facto **decentralization of political power** has taken place since the 1970s, starting with the direct election of mayors and chairpersons by universal suffrage since the 1975 Law on Local Authorities, which went into effect in 1978. Previously, they were elected by local councils from among their members. Council members are elected on the basis of proportional representation for a five-year term. Also, some additional responsibilities have been transferred to local governments.⁵

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Women's representation in local authorities rose in the 2018 elections. In 2013, 386 women served as council members (13%). In the 2018 elections, 635 women were elected as council members (18%). The number of women heading local authorities rose from 6 to 14 during this period.

3.2 COVID 19

Not applicable.

4. SDG INDICATORS⁶

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		17.1 (2020)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	99 (2020)
	Rural	99 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	95 (2020)
	Rural	93 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		-
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		-
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		18.5 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

5. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

6. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/isr>