

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Malaysia is a federal monarchy. The country has a three-tiered system of government. Subnational government in Malaysia comprises 13 states, 3 federal territories and 154 local governments. Local governments include 12 city councils and 38 municipal councils in the urban territories, and 98 district councils in the rural territories.¹



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

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

SDGs are aligned with national plans: they have been integrated into the **11th Malaysia Plan 2016–2020 (11th MP)**, in the **12th MP** and in **Vision 2020**. The **National SDG Roadmap** aims at providing a clear direction on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and will be developed in three phases until 2030. After Phase I of Malaysia's SDG Roadmap (2016-2020), the **SDG Roadmap Phase 2 (2021-2025)** will be formulated to advance the SDG agenda by identifying priority areas, key enablers and critical 'accelerator points' for lagging SDGs, ensuring policy coherence across all levels of governments, and recommending strategies and plan of actions. Finally, the **Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV 2030)** is a commitment to make Malaysia a nation that achieves sustainable growth along with fair and equitable distribution across all levels by 2030.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **National SDG Council** chaired by the Prime Minister is the main body in charge of the coordination for SDG implementation. It is supported by a **National Steering Committee (NSC)**, which is chaired by the Director General of the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), Prime Minister's Department (EPU). This Steering Committee includes six Cluster Working Committees (CWC) with representatives from the ministries, CSOs, the private sector, academia, UN agencies and youth. Similar mechanisms were created at the state level (see below a diagram of the national coordination organization). Also, the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on SDGs (APPGM-SDG)** is an innovative model where CSOs, academics and experts collaborate with parliamentarians to localize the SDGs (see the box in the VNR, 2021, p. 121).³

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Both 2017 and 2021 VNRs were prepared by the **National Steering Committee**. The 2017 VNR takes into account Malaysia's efforts to align key elements of the SDGs with the latest five-year development plan, the 11th MP and the National SDG Roadmap 2016–2020. While the first VNR focused heavily on the government's effort in achieving SDGs, the 2021 VNR took a different approach by adopting a whole-of-nation approach. A **steering committee (SC)** was formed, as well as **technical working groups (TWGs)**. The SC discussed the content and endorsed the VNR before presenting it to the Cabinet, while the technical working groups verified the accuracy of information and data in the report. Participation in this process was well received with active representation from ministries and agencies, civil society, CSOs, academia, private sector and relevant stakeholders. This effort was supported by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Malaysia, as well as other UN agencies. Several rounds of engagement sessions, workshops and consultation meetings were held. The findings and data collected for the upcoming 12th MP and the SDG Indicators Malaysia 2019 report are also utilized in the report.

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOF12019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

2. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/15881Malaysia.pdf> (2017);

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/285982021_VNR_Report_Malaysia.pdf (2021)

3. The Parliament of Malaysia established this All-Party Parliamentary Group on SDGs to assist the government in reaching out to the most vulnerable groups in society, particularly those who reside in remote areas. This initiative is part of Malaysia's effort in ensuring that everyone in the country will enjoy the benefits of economic development

1.3 MONITORING

The **National SDG Council** plans and monitors SDG implementation. Additionally, the **Economic Planning Unit (EPU)** has an overall view and is able to monitor implementation. The 2021 VNR presents the **Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)** as the national focal point for SDG indicators that coordinates data collection and compilation from various line ministries and agencies. In 2020, a further global review of the indicators at the 51st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2020, resulted in the adoption of 247 indicators globally. Based on the review and building on a similar exercise done in 2018, DOSM listed that 128 indicators are available, while 73 are partially available but require further development, 31 are not available and 15 are deemed to be not relevant. In terms of percentages, this highlighted that the overall available indicators have increased from 48% to 52% from 2017 to 2019.

The Ministry of Housing and Local Government is developing a more comprehensive **SDG indicator for local governments**. This indicator is one of the initiatives to improve and upgrade the existing 39 MurniNet indicators. Currently, a total of 52 additional indicators covering each target across the SDGs have been listed.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Participation in the elaboration of the **National SDG Roadmap 2016-2020** was received from states and was driven by the Economic Planning Unit (EPU), and supported by the UN Country Team in Malaysia. The **SDG Roadmap** aims to mainstream the 2030 Agenda at subnational level. The 2021 VNR states that recent years have seen the government pursue various efforts to translate the SDGs at both state and local levels. This includes efforts by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in undertaking VLRs with six cities. In a final section on issues and opportunities, the 2021 report highlights that “in localizing SDGs, in addition to working with local authorities, efforts are being made to engage with the district offices. This is to ensure an inter-agency SDG delivery taskforce is organized at the district level to enhance the role of all agencies including a multi-stakeholder group (civil society, private sector and academic networks) in addressing economic, social and environmental concerns at the grassroots level”.

Under the coordination of the Malaysia United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office (UNRCO) and with the key support of UN-Habitat, the Malaysian VLR cities have been invited to contribute to the 2021 VNR process by preparing a policy paper on their activities and priorities. They also had an opportunity to present the paper at the Technical Working Groups that are coordinating the stakeholders’ inputs to the VNR.

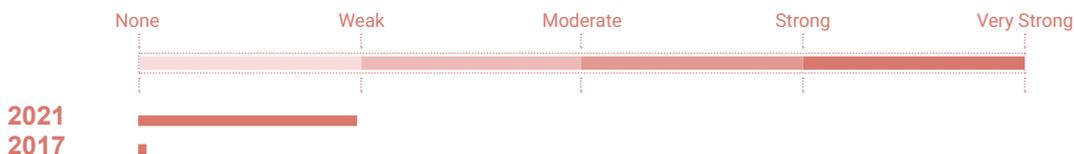
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: The cities elaborating a VLR participated in the 2021 VNR elaboration.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Coordination mechanisms based on the national model were created at the state level (yet there is no evidence of the relation between national and state mechanisms).

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

In its preface, the 2021 VNR states that “localizing SDGs is a crucial prerequisite for nationwide SDG adoption. There is a need for greater coordination across government, from the federal level all the way down to the local level, in order to facilitate SDG adoption”. There is a box on the VLRs elaborated by six cities (see VNR, 2021, p. 36 and below). Also, as part of the section on SDG 17, there is a brief subsection on “Mainstreaming SDGs at the National and Local Levels” (see VNR, 2021, p. 118).

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

- ▶ The **Malaysian Association of Local Authorities (MALA)** has worked on connecting local governments with international activities linked to the SDG framework in, for example, **Seberang Perai** and **Penang**.
- ▶ The **Low-Carbon Cities Framework (LCCF)** was introduced in 2011 as a national framework to guide local governments in their efforts to transition to a low-carbon development. It includes guidelines for design, measurement and reporting. In 2019, 22 local governments have implemented low-carbon solutions and demonstrated reduction in GHG emissions. The Low-Carbon Cities Challenge 2030 was launched to establish designated low carbon zones within state capitals and major cities. The aim is to establish 200 low-carbon zones and 1,000 low-carbon partners by 2030.
- ▶ **Shah Alam City** is presented as a pioneering example of the LCCF (see VNR, 2021, p. 102). The city started its sustainable development journey as early as 1998 through the Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 (LA21) programmes. Shah Alam also performed well in the Malaysian Urban Rural National Indicators Networks (MURNInets) Sustainability Index from 2012 to 2020 with an average score of 97%. MBSA has also received the Gold Award from Malaysia Institute of Planner (MIP) for three consecutive years: 2017, 2018 and 2019. Now, the city is dedicated to driving the low-carbon agenda.
- ▶ The Ministry of Housing and Local Government also introduced the **Safe City Programme** in 2004. It aims to reduce crimes in cities by putting in place prevention measures such as ensuring dark and lonely lanes are illuminated, installing CCTVs, separating pedestrian walks from motor roads, and installing road safety mirrors. In addition, iSelamat.my was developed to enhance public awareness by providing information on crimes in the neighborhood areas in the form of crime mapping.

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

Currently, six cities in Malaysia have engaged in VLR processes: **Shah Alam, Subang Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Alor Gajah** and **Malacca City**. For 2021, two cities have concretely advanced in formulating their VLR, namely **Shah Alam** and **Subang Jaya**.⁴ **Penang Island** also published its first VLR in 2021.⁵ Within this year, the **State of Selangor** will also embark on SDG reporting and prepare a VLR.

The support to VLRs has been framed within the program called **Malaysia SDGs Cities**, which has provided cities with an overall strategy and guiding frameworks to implement the SDGs in their territory.⁶ Malaysia SDGs Cities is developed by **Urbanice Malaysia**, a Centre of Excellence under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. The VLRs have also been initiated to ensure local authorities' programmes and initiatives are in line with the SDGs.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The **New Economic Model (NEM)** is premised on three main goals of achieving high-income nation status, as well as inclusiveness and sustainability in development. This entails, among others, reducing the divides between urban and rural dwellers. The National Transformation Programme has benefited 4.1 million people in rural areas.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: In Malaysia, state governors are elected, but both local assemblies and executive bodies of local governments are appointed. Tasks that were traditionally devolved to local governments have been partially recentralized or privatized. Malaysia has elections at state level, but local elections have been suspended since 1965.⁷

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

No reference.

3.2 COVID 19

In mitigating the impact of COVID-19, Malaysia has implemented several economic recovery packages equivalent to 20% of the GDP, to boost growth and ensure no one is left behind. More concerted efforts will be undertaken in the 12th MP to ensure that everyone will benefit from inclusive socioeconomic development, while addressing current and future challenges, including the impact of the pandemic. There is a box on the impact of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable groups (see VNR, 2021, p. 47-48).

4. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/shah_alam_2021.pdf ; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/subang_jaya_2021.pdf

5. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/penang_island_2021_0.pdf

6. The formulation of Malaysia SDG Cities is the key outcome of Kuala Lumpur Declaration of World Urban Forum 9 (WUF9), which Malaysia hosted in 2018, as an action plan roadmap towards SDGs implementation for cities in the country.

7. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

4. SDG INDICATORS⁸

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		-
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
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)		16.3 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		100 (2020)

⁸ 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/mys>