

REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The Republic of North Macedonia is a unitary country. In 2016, there were 81 local government units in North Macedonia, including 80 municipalities (*opština*) and Skopje. The capital city, Skopje, is recognised as having special status and consists of 10 independent municipalities (which are part of the overall number of 80 municipalities). Eight regions are established for statistical and planning purposes only. They don't have any administrative role.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

North Macedonia has a **National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2009-2030**. The three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development are streamlined within the **Government Programme 2017-2020**, which rests on four pillars: economic development; politics and rule of law; human capital; and foreign policy. In 2018, the National Council for Sustainable Development identified SDGs 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 as the five priority goals for the period 2018-2020. In addition, in 2016, the national government and the United Nations agreed on the Partnership for Sustainable Development, which promotes equitable and sustainable development and supports the country's integration into the EU.³

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **National Council for Sustainable Development** was established in 2010, and is chaired by the Deputy President in charge of Economic Affairs. It consists of 12 ministers, members of Parliament, representatives from the National Academy of Science and Arts, from the chambers of commerce and from universities. An independent **Council for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector** has been established as an advisory body of the government to promote dialogue with the civil society sector.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

In 2020, a two-day "Stakeholder engagement" workshop was organized by Partners for Review and the GIZ as part of the VNR process. About 40 representatives from academia, chambers of commerce, civil society and government attended it. Following this, a two-day consultation process for the first draft of the VNR was organized, accompanied by a youth forum/consultation.

1.3 MONITORING

An **Agenda 2030 Indicator Framework** workshop was organized by the UN Resident Coordinator Office with the participation of 80 representatives from government and UN agencies. Participants and the State Statistical Office endorsed the proposed indicator framework of 100 indicators. In 2019, a preparatory workshop Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) was held for experts from the central and local government. Conducted with the support of the UN, the RIA mapped development policy planning documents and legislation against the SDGs, reviewed the role of state institutions in strategic policy planning for the SDGs, assessed EU requirements and its alignment with SDGs and estimated donor financial contributions for the SDGs.

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

2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26387VNR_2020_Macedonia_Report.pdf (2020)

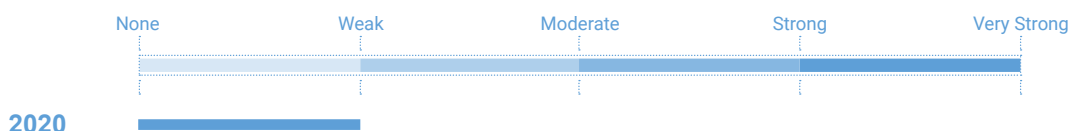
3. UNDP's vision is outlined in its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which assists the country to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development and build resilience to crises and shocks.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

A policy for balanced regional development in accordance with the principles of the Law on Balanced Regional Development was adopted in 2009 as well as the Strategy for Regional Development as a ten-year planning document within the eight planning regions. In each of the planning regions, there is a Center for Development in charge of implementing the development programme.⁴ LRGs are not included in the national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation. They are not mentioned in the presentation of the VNR process either.

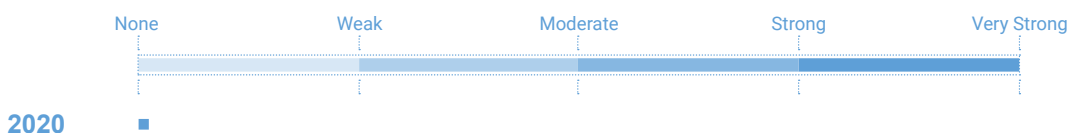
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: The RIA may have involved LRGs regarding their planning processes. No specific mention is made regarding LRG involvement in the VNR process itself.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: LRGs are not included in the coordination mechanisms. This is also stated by the Association of the Municipalities (GTF Survey 2020).

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 the 2020 VNR, LRGs are specifically mentioned in the evaluation of the SDG 11. This section highlights the role of LRGs pointing out the fact that they are responsible for urban or rural planning, local construction, environmental protection and ensuring their residents' wellbeing. Actually, each municipality, as well as the city of **Skopje**, is obliged by law to develop a master plan, also referred to as Detailed Urban Plan, to address settlements and the development of public spaces. The report also highlights that the **decentralization** process that started in 2001 has devolved a wide range of responsibilities from central to local governments but some municipalities still struggle to provide adequate services to their constituents.⁵

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The city of **Skopje** has recently adopted and is implementing its Strategic Plan 2020-2022. It has also established an Innovation Lab in support of sustainable development. The lab is designing solutions for a wide range of problems, including air pollution, public services like waste management, and transforming Skopje into a smart city. "Resilient Skopje: Scaling-up for Sustainability, Innovation and Climate Change" (with UNDP) aims to further develop the city's resilience to climate change and other environmental threats. Results include green cadastre, groundwater assessment, construction of green roofs at City Mall (GTC), inventory for water habitats, and flood risks assessment.

► The following are some national initiatives involving the LRGs:

► With UNDP's support, the Ministry of Local Self-Government is preparing a new Programme on Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization for 2021-2025 and Action Plan for 2021- 2023.

► A municipal sustainable development index aligned with the SDGs will be developed through the project Building Municipal Capacity for Project Implementation, which aims at strengthening the capacities of the municipalities to prioritize, formulate and implement development projects.

► A technical documentation fund will provide financial resources to less-developed municipalities to undertake preparatory work (infrastructure designs, urban plans, and feasibility studies) for development projects.

4. Planning regions are not administrative units, but are intended for development planning purposes only.

5. Data from the survey on local governance and local service delivery conducted by the Ministry of Local Self-Government in 2013 indicated that some municipalities do not provide all public services required by law.

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

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

There is a Law on Financing Local Self-Government Municipalities, which regulates the financing of municipal and city governments. Nevertheless, some additional measures to improve public financial management in certain municipalities are being considered in order to better implement the SDGs. In 2020, according to the budget programmes for balanced regional development, 7 million denars (113,608 euros) were allocated for balanced local development.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: North Macedonia's adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 took place in the context of a protracted political crisis, which was resolved with snap elections at the end of 2016. This context is the consequence of its historical background. Actually, the accession of North Macedonia to the EU has been on the current agenda for future enlargement of the EU since 2005, when it became a candidate for accession. The Prespa Agreement, along with the Treaty of Friendship with Bulgaria, facilitated accession to NATO and helped to start accession talks with the EU in 2020. In this sense, the policies for accelerated, inclusive and sustainable growth of North Macedonia are compatible with the EU accession process and the 2030 Agenda.

The 2020 VNR constantly points out the role of young people as key stakeholders related to policies targeting youth. This is highlighted in the Law on Youth (2020) and the National Youth Strategy (2016-2025). Y-PEER, a youth network, has been actively dedicated to promoting the Agenda 2030 and through its work has involved many young people in different activities related to the SDGs and the building of a sustainable future.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

In 2020, five women ministers were covering the key portfolios of Labour, Finance, Justice, Defence and Foreign Investment. However, at the local level the situation is less advanced. Only 15 women ran in the 2017 local elections out of 260 mayoral candidates, and only six were elected as mayors. Out of 1,388 local councillors, 415 were women.

3.2 COVID 19

There is no specific mention for measures at the local level or specific policies involving LRGs.

4. SDG INDICATORS⁶

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	85 (2020)
	Rural	66 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	8 (2020)
	Rural	18 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		8.3 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		73 (2012, All areas or breakdown by cities not available)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		29.6 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

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/mkd>