SOUTH AFRICA

AFRICA

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

South Africa is a quasi-federal state and a constitutional democracy divided into three spheres rather than tiers of government: national, provincial and local governments. The country comprises 9 provinces and, at the local level, 8 metropolitan municipalities, 208 local municipalities and 41 district municipalities.[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 **National Development Plan (NDP) – Vision 2030 "Our future, make it work"** – was adopted in 2012 as South Africa's development roadmap. The NDP has a 74% convergence with the SDGs. In addition, in 2016, the national government adopted the **integrated urban development framework (IUDF)**, an initiative coordinated by the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) in collaboration with other national departments, LGAs and international partners. The IUDF has been promoted not as a policy or plan, but as an approach to activating an 'all of society' approach to implementing the New Urban Agenda and its four strategic goals of spatial integration, inclusion and access, inclusive growth and effective governance.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)** coordinates the national coordinating mechanism for SDG implementation, which includes the **Cabinet** and its committees, the **Interministerial Committee on Sustainable Development Agendas** (the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Programme (SADC RISDP)), the Director-Generals' **National Steering Committee** and an **interdepartmental implementation committee** with working groups. There is also a Presidential Coordinating Council and a National Sustainable Development Stakeholders Forum.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Preparation of the 2019 VNR was led by **Statistics South Africa (Stats SA)** and the **Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)**. An institutional mechanism was established and extensive consultations were undertaken to integrate views across the national government, provincial and local governments, the private sector, civil society, academia and UNDP. **Sector Working Groups** were formed and led by Stats SA.

1.3 MONITORING

The **South African Local Government Association (SALGA)** was part of an SDG initiative led by **Stats SA**, which is the central national government department coordinating the compilation of the SDG reports (i.e. SDG Goal reports, Thematic reports, and Country reports) based on inputs from different departments, organizations and private institutions.[3]
SALGA also uses the "**municipal barometer**" web-based portal and its smart mobile application, working in close collaboration with Statistics South Africa, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research to develop disaggregated local data.[4]

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1. South Africa has one of the world's most highly devolved systems of government. However, devolution remains asymmetric. The so-called category 'A' or metropolitan municipalities, have far more autonomy than smaller category 'B' or local municipalities, or the category 'C' district municipalities. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23402RSA_Voluntary_National_Review_Report___The_Final_24_July_2019.pdf (2019)
3. Answer of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to the GTF Survey in 2020.
4. Answer of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to the GTF Survey in 2020. The Municipal Barometer is a web-based portal established to collect, re-package and disseminate local level data for municipalities. It was developed to provide easy access to municipal level data for both specialist and non-specialist audiences. See: http://www.municipalbarometer.co.za/

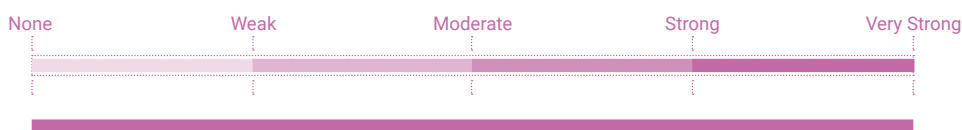# 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Provincial and local governments are part of the national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation, since, as the 2019 VNR emphasizes, "the achievement of development targets is anchored in the programmes of subnational governments" (see VNR, 2019, p. 23). The national government has been working to improve the coordination and coherence of the provincial and local development plans with respect to the 2030 Agenda. SDG implementation and coordination is facilitated through **provincial growth and development strategies (PGDSs)**, as well as **integrated development plans (IDPs)** at the local level. Provincial and municipal governments are responsible for the roll-out of the **IUDF** through their provincial and municipal spatial development frameworks and strategies.[5]

The 2019 VNR process included a range of representatives from subnational governments, but some challenges persist. For instance, the city of Johannesburg has volunteered to report data for the VNR, but there is no clear institutional mechanism for coordinating and reporting linking the national and local governments; instead this seems to take place on an ad hoc basis. There are also difficulties to integrate local-based data into the national official statistics system.[6]

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

▶ **In the VNR process**

None	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong

2019

▶ **In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation**

None	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong

2019

Comments: Johannesburg reports a puntual participation (GTF Surveys 2020 & 2021).

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

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

There is a box on the alignment of the SDGs with local development plans, showcasing the municipality of **eThekwini** as an example illustrating the efforts to integrate the SDGs into development planning at the local level (see VNR, 2019, p. 28). Another box mentions initiatives of different cities to increase reliance on renewable energy in transport (see VNR, 2019, p. 67).

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

▶ The **South African Local Government Association (SALGA)** has been raising awareness about the SDGs among its political leadership and members, for example during the National Members Assembly. It made active use of the media to disseminate information about the SDGs, in particular through its 'Voice' magazine. The LGA developed a book, 'Leading change — Delivering the New Urban Agenda through Urban and Territorial Planning' in support of SDG 11. In December 2018, the SALGA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN in South Africa to support South African municipalities in localizing the SDGs. With regards to its monitoring activities, the SALGA also developed a 'municipal barometer' web based portal and works closely with Stats-SA to promote disaggregated local data. The SALGA is also collaborating with ICLEI Africa which in 2019 organized South Africa's first SDG symposium, bringing together local government representatives to discuss SDG localization.[7]

Also, SALGA has undertaken to institutionalize the advancement of women in political and decision-making positions through the formation of **SALGA Women's Commission (SWC)**. The mandate of the Women's Commission is "to coordinate, promote and advocate for gender appropriate strategies and practices within member municipalities and feed into national, regional and the global agenda and processes". The SWC is one of the governance structures chaired by a female politician who is also a member of the National Executive Committee on an ex-officio basis. The Association has advocated for 50/50 representation in local government elections.[8]

5. However, clear guidelines and support for the implementation of the IUDF at the local level are so far absent. This is because the responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of these agendas lies with other government departments such as the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
6. Answer of the city of Johannesburg to the GTF Survey in 2021.
7. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
8. See: http://www.cib-uclg.org/sites/default/files/uclg_cib_gender_equality_publication_june2021.pdf

► The city of **Johannesburg** has established seven waste buy-back centres, operated by the informal community of waste pickers, with the aim of empowering impoverished communities and providing job security benefits, while increasing recycling rates. Also, public spaces in Johannesburg serve as bridges to reconnect the urban areas to recreational spaces and allow for freedom of movement. Because of the spatial legacy of apartheid, parks and public facilities were all concentrated in higher-income neighbourhoods, while townships remained dense areas with almost no open green spaces. The 'Corridors of Freedom' initiative illustrates this new vision of making public space inclusive, particularly in poorer areas, and improving living conditions in former townships.[9]

► The municipality of **eThekwini-Durban** has aligned its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) with the SDGs. For the last two fiscal years, eThekwini has incorporated the SDG targets and indicators into its local government responsibilities and municipal budget using a bottom-up approach as part of the city's strategic approach to sustainability. The alignment has focused on four main pillars: human rights, people, the planet and prosperity. This exercise has allowed the city's metropolitan area to introduce a system of benchmarking that permits more robust monitoring and a better reporting framework. In 2017, 66 out of 98 SDG indicators had been aligned with investment projects; in 2018, this number increased to 75. With support from local government affiliated organizations such as the eThekwini Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), eThekwini Municipal Academy (EMA), and UCLG, the city has been able to improve its knowledge and understanding of the SDGs. By providing input into SDG Toolkit developments and assisting in the training of trainers on SDGs, the city is enabling advocacy, learning and institutionalization of the SDGs amongst its own officials as well as those from other cities.

Also, eThekwini has a comprehensive package of measures for poor and vulnerable people, including indigenous communities (SDGs 1, 6, 10, 11). With regard to basic services, rates are not levied on properties valued under a certain amount, with preferential treatment for pensioners and social grant recipients; and the use of water, sanitation, electricity and waste is free up to specific limits. With respect to housing, a new programme will deliver over 150,000 housing units to poor people free of charge over a ten year period. To improve the quality of life in informal settlements and transit camps, short-term emergency/interim services have been provided in the form of washing blocks, refuse removal, storm water ditching, fire breaks, etc. In addition, innovative new housing forms and urban design solutions are being implemented with the aim of promoting densification, social cohesion, and a more sustainable urban form.[10]

Ethekwini, through the MILE programme, facilitates inter-municipal learning and cooperation on SDGs, both domestically and within the SADC region – offering learning opportunities to sister cities.[11]

Finally, eThekwini supports women employment within the municipality. Women represent 48% of the teams responsible for environmental issues and actions related to climate change in the city. The municipality has partnered with a local university to develop tools to respond to climate change and increase local capacities and resilience. This program has 60% female students. Education is indeed considered to be a major empowerment lever for women.[12]

The 2019 VNR highlights the active participation of eThekwini in **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**. The latter has assisted the municipality in developing toolkits for SDG awareness and localization. Senior staff within the municipality have been involved in the packaging and development of training modules that can be used to build capacity on SDGs at the local government level. The municipality of eThekwini, through the Strategy Office, has provided content and assisted UCLG and UN-Habitat in the development of training modules on SDG awareness, SDG strategic planning and implementation, and SDG monitoring and reporting. Currently, 12 staff members have been trained on the methodology of SDG localization using the above modules.

► In **Tshwane**, the city administration has improved its collaboration with informal transport providers, leading to improvements in local economic development (LED) (SDG 8), which has accelerated the rate of social change and had a direct impact on the lives of the poorest citizens.[13] Overall, the city has in 2020 initiated an SDG localization and alignment process to align all city planning activities and instruments, as well as policies to eth SDGs and their targets.[14]

► **Cape Town** has initiated action to recover and reduce waste and improve energy efficiency in municipal buildings since 2009. By 2015, the city had installed about 500 smart meters within municipal facilities and developed an automated energy management system, the 'SmartFacility' application. This interprets the facility's electricity consumption data in a friendly, accessible manner, illustrating the data on a dashboard for internal end users and the public. In addition, the Western Cape Industrial Symbiosis Program (WISP) was established in the city, and provides business members with time and technical expertise, connecting companies with unused or residual resources, such as materials, energy, water, assets, logistics and expertise. The cumulative impact of WISP over the last five years has included: 27,436 tons of waste diverted from landfill; 46,700 tons of GHG saved (equivalent to nine 2.2MW wind turbines installed in South Africa); EUR 2.8 million generated in financial benefits through additional revenue, cost savings and private investments; 143 jobs created in the economy (25 directly in member companies). The programme has received multiple award nominations, including being a three-time finalist for various circular economy awards.

► Steps are being taken to decarbonize the transport sector and lower its emissions by supporting the uptake of electric and hybrid cars, the use of cleaner fuels and more energy efficient technologies, the expansion of non-motorized transportation, and an efficient and integrated Bus Rapid Transport System, among others. Progress has been made in enhancing the city of **Tshwane**'s bus fleet using compressed natural gas (CNG). The city of **Johannesburg** is using a dual system for their bus

9. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
10. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
11. Answer of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to the GTF Survey in 2020.
12. Friends of the Earth, C40, 2015, Why Women Will Save the Planet, London, Zed Books Ltd, 299 p.
13. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
14. Answer of the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to the GTF Survey in 2020.

network with a combination of diesel and CNG. For phase 2, the City has identified CNG and electric buses as potential newer technologies. The city of **Cape Town** has selected to procure electric buses, which are currently undergoing testing.

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

The municipality of **Cape Town** published its VLR in 2019.[15]

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

A methodology has been developed to allocate spending as recorded in budget documents to the achievement of specific SDGs. Using the United Nations Tier Classification for Global SDG Indicators, each sub-programme within each vote of the 2018 South Africa National Budget was assigned an associated SDG (when appropriate) and an associated SDG target (when possible). The SDGs that captured the most funding in fiscal year 2017-2018 were promoting good governance, peace and justice (SDG 16), reducing inequality (SDG 10) and reducing poverty (SDG 1). The three accounted for 42% of spending on SDGs, followed by spending on education (SDG 4), infrastructure (SDG 9) and partnerships (SDG 17).

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: The 2019 VNR acknowledges that South Africa has failed to address inappropriate spatial patterns that limit growth and impair welfare. Cities suffer from fragmentation, with poorer neighbourhoods far from centres of employment, large settlements that, due to location and informal legal status, are difficult to connect to basic services, and poorly integrated transit systems that do not provide smooth connections between bus and rail services and result in over served and underserved communities. Addressing these issues requires greater and more efficiently planned infrastructure investment, the location of subsidized housing in leafy suburbs and urban centres, and policies that emphasize support and provision of legal rights to informal settlers.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Women leadership in local government has also improved substantially over the past 25 years. Women representation rose from 19% in 1995 to 41% in 2016. South Africa is one of the three countries (after Lesotho and Namibia) leading women leadership in local government in the Southern African Development Community between 2010 and 2016.

3.2 COVID 19

Local and provincial governments have been at the front lines of implementing interventions to respond to COVID-19 – including health care and support and awareness, food parcels, ensuring basic services, providing shelter, supporting economic recovery and promoting a safe environment, etc. Support and resources have been made available from the national government, but much of the response required for the COVID-19 crisis is an unfunded mandate.[16]

15. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Cape%20Town%20(2019)_0.pdf
16. Answer of the city of Johannesburg to the GTF Survey in 2021.

4. SDG INDICATORS[17]

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		40.7 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	**Urban**	81 (2020)
	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 (%)		25.6 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		82.6 (2015, Johannesburg)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		25.1 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		98.0 (2020)