

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The Kingdom of Netherlands is a unitary monarchy that consists of four countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao and Saint Maarten, and the three special municipalities Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba. The Kingdom is governed by the Kingdom Statutes; however, every country within the Kingdom is autonomous and has its own constitution.¹ The country is divided into 12 provinces and 344 municipalities.²



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).³

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the SDGs in the Kingdom of the Netherlands is organized differently in each autonomous country within the Kingdom. With their own national strategies, all four countries are committed to achieving the SDGs despite the absence of an overall strategy at the Kingdom level. In the Netherlands, the SDGs are mainstreamed in the **Netherlands Action Plan on Inclusive Development**. However, the government of the Netherlands has not drawn up a national SDG strategy or programme, while most of the 17 global goals and targets have also not been translated into tangible targets for 2030.⁴ Curaçao and St Maarten integrate the SDGs in their **National Development Plans**, and Aruba in its **Roadmap of the SDGs**.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

In the Netherlands, responsibilities have been assigned to all the ministries concerned, with the **Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation** in charge of overall coordination for SDG implementation in the country. An inter-ministerial **SDG Focal Points working group**, chaired by a special SDG coordinator, with representatives from each ministry and the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)** meets regularly to discuss progress on SDG implementation. Arbitration, if necessary, takes place at a higher policy level (Director General level) and ultimately within the Council of Ministers.⁵ Aruba established a **National SDG Commission** consisting of representatives of the Ministry of General Affairs and the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry (DEACI). In St Maarten, a **'Think and Act' commission** has been established, representing the three ministries that are most involved in SDG implementation.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

There are no details on the VNR process in the 2017 report. The VNR elaboration process remains unmentioned in the 2022 report. Sint Maarten and Aruba engaged NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector through dialogues in the drafting process of the 2022 report. In Curaçao, the **National SDG Commission** contributed to stakeholder engagement in the VNR process, while the **Social Economic Council (SER)** has independently reviewed the report.

1.3 MONITORING

The national statistical institutes of the Netherlands play a key role in monitoring SDG implementation, while each of the countries within the Kingdom has its own statistical institute. As of 2017, data are currently available for 37% of the SDG indicators. In 2018, the Parliament of Aruba established an SDG Parliamentary Committee on the progress of the SDG implementation. In 2019, SDG measurement was merged with the annual Monitor of Well-being, producing an additional 13% coverage through proxy indicators.⁶ In 2021, a resilience dashboard for shocks and stress was added to the Monitor to

1. See: <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/>

2. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/the_netherlands_2022_vsr_eng.pdf

3. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/16109Netherlands.pdf> (2017);

<https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Netherlands%20Report.pdf> (2022)

4. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/the_netherlands_2022_vsr_eng.pdf

5. See: https://www.oecd.org/governance/pcsd/Country%20profile%20-%20The%20Netherlands_rev.pdf

6. See: <https://longreads.cbs.nl/monitor-of-well-being-and-sdgs-2022/>

examine the resilience of households and systems to crises. In the same year, the effectiveness of SDG implementation in the Netherlands was evaluated through a report, which recommended that well-being and the SDGs should be embedded in policy and the budget cycle.⁷

With regards to the subnational level, the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)** and **Statistics Netherlands (CBS)** are working to create a set of indicators at the local level.⁸ CBS has set up regional monitors including the contributions from local and provincial government authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. A monitor for the Caribbean Netherlands, namely Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba (the BES islands), is also under development.

Aruba, Curaçao and St Maarten are working in close collaboration with the UN system as well as the BES islands in mapping the current situation regarding the SDGs on the islands, and to make plans for SDG implementation. The three countries also work with the BES islands in the Dutch Caribbean Statistical System. Curaçao's CBS is actively involved in monitoring SDG implementation. Its research will enable it to properly define indicators for the four prioritized SDGs. Together with UNDP, the Central Bureau of Statistics is launching a National Socioeconomic Database, which will make it possible to monitor SDG indicators that are relevant to Curaçao.⁹ Currently, 28% of the indicators are available for six of the priority SDGs, while coverage is expected to rise to 48% after the 2022 census in Curaçao.

In 2017, an inter-ministerial SDG-Indicator Working Group (IWG) was established to support CBS Aruba, by developing data to measure SDG indicators. The IWG has now been able to measure 67 SDG indicators. St Maarten has introduced the StMaartenInfo database to compile development data, as well as a user portal for policy development initiatives. However, Sint Maarten's data are collected separately by the ministries, making integrated data management difficult.

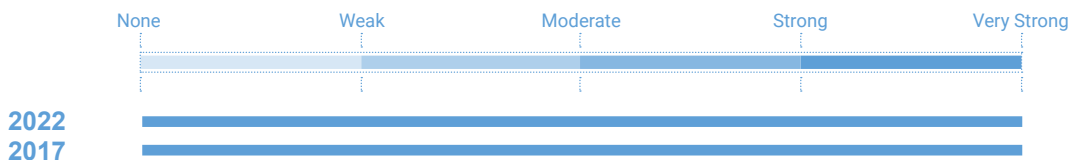
2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Local governments, as well as the private sector, civil society organizations, knowledge institutions and young people, are acknowledged by the 2022 VNR as essential partners of the national government in implementing the SDGs. There is regular dialogue between the national government, the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)** and LRGs. The Netherlands supports cooperation with local governments through **City Deals**.¹⁰ Also, the government, together with municipalities and civil society, is fostering growth, innovation and liveability in cities through the **City Agenda**.¹¹

Input from LRGs is deemed important in the national reporting process and is taken seriously. Some inputs are included in the VNR, in a joint chapter written by all ministries and partners, even if the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)** regrets the little space granted to information on subnational progress.¹²

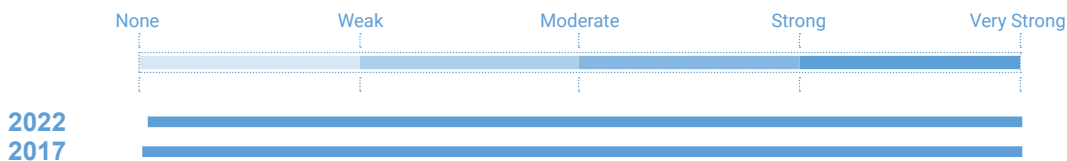
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: LRGs' inputs are included in a joint chapter written by all ministries and partners, despite that little space is granted to information on subnational progress.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Strong multilevel cooperation.

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.

7. See: <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2021/02/15/evaluatie-van-de-aansturing-van-de-nationale-sdg-uitvoering-in-nederland>

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

9. Curaçao has published its first national review using inputs from civil society, its Central Bureau of Statistics, the private sector and the National Platform for Youth Development, including the National Youth Council.

10. With the City Deals, the Netherlands' government, municipalities, the private sector, civil society and knowledge institutions share insights and resources to solve problems linked to urbanization and promote innovation in the urban environment.

11. This agenda focuses on twelve priorities: inclusion of migrants and refugees, local employment, air quality, urban poverty, housing, circular economy, climate adaptation, energy transition, sustainable land use and nature-based solutions, urban mobility, digital transition, and innovative and responsible public procurement.

12. Answer of Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

The 2017 VNR refers to multilevel partnerships between national and local governments, and comprises a specific subsection dedicated to subnational governments. It details their responsibilities, documents the work of the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities \(VNG\)](#) in SDG localization, and presents the initiatives led by the municipalities of Utrecht and Oss (see VNR, 2017, p. 38-39). Municipalities are more referred to than provinces. The 2022 VNR includes a subsection on Voluntary Subnational and Local Reviews (see VNR, 2022, p. 24), where VNG initiatives and its VSR (see below) are mentioned.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► [Curaçao](#) established a democratically elected [National Youth Council](#) in 2017 to engage young people in policymaking and in shaping their future. More than 300 young people participated in national youth dialogues aimed at ensuring broad support for the National Action Programme for Youth Development, which is also linked to the SDGs. A local Children's Rights Platform was set up in 2018. In 2020, the 'Curaçao education agenda' was conceptualized and implemented in the following years. In 2021, an assessment report on the feasibility to establish a sheltering framework for victims of domestic violence proposed recommendations that would be implemented in 2022.

► The government of [Aruba](#) has adopted the concept of smart growth for community development and has developed programmes for the renovation of the urban centers [Oranjestad](#) and [San Nicolas](#) and 20 other neighborhoods on the island. The Bo Aruba (Your Aruba) and Bo Barrio (Your Neighborhood) community enhancement programmes have created more parks and public spaces to promote physical activity and walking and bring people together, thus linking the promotion of health, happiness and wellbeing.

► The Netherlands has seen the emergence of a myriad of local projects thanks to the [Municipalities4Global Goals Campaign](#), fostered by the [Association of Netherlands Municipalities \(VNG\)](#). Examples of the projects of this initiative are the SDG 'Time Capsule', the annual most inspiring LRG competition, and the creation of communication materials. Each year, VNG International (VNGi), the international agency of VNG, organizes a competition for the 'most inspiring Global Goals municipality', as part of their New Year's reception.¹³

► All provinces and 86 municipalities in the Netherlands have joined the [Schone Luchtakkoord](#) (Clean Air Agreement) to achieve a level of air quality that meets the 2005 WHO standard.

► The local authorities are involved in the national [Economy Circular Implementation Programme](#). In 2020, the provinces presented a '[Krachtenkaart](#)' (Circular Economy Power Map) that examines the opportunities per region for the circular transition. In [Groningen](#), the strength lies in the greenification of chemistry, while [Drenthe](#) performs well in circular housing concepts.

► In 2021, the province of [Zeeland](#) won the European innovation prize for procurement, the Procura+ Award. Zeeland has entered into dialogues with stakeholders based on the SDGs and how an impact can be made with sustainable procurement. This was subsequently made concrete and tangible in the [Socially Responsible Procurement plan 2021-2024](#). This led to internal awareness among the Province of Zeeland, adjustment of the purchasing process and better cooperation between the departments. In the plan, seven SDGs have been selected on the basis of urgency, policy ambitions and dialogues, on which every procurement must make an impact in the coming years.

► [Utrecht](#) has a long tradition of sustainability. It was declared the first Dutch human rights city in 2012, features high on the national monitor of sustainable municipalities and has a sustainable procurement policy. In 2015, the Utrecht Council decided to become a [Global Goals City](#). One of the main priorities is the creation of a 'healthy urban living' environment, focusing on areas such as innovation, health economy and infrastructure, sustainable mobility, air quality, and reducing CO2 emissions. Working towards an integrated, interdisciplinary and multistakeholder approach, the city mobilized a large coalition of citizen initiatives and local stakeholders (business, NGOs, knowledge institutions): for example: the [HeelUtrechtU Campaign](#) to stimulate citizens, grassroots initiatives and businesses that contribute to the SDGs; Fairtrade Utrecht and Utrecht4GlobalGifts to promote fair trade and sustainable products from Utrecht-based businesses. In 2018, Utrecht4GlobalGoals organized the Climate Planet which attracted an estimated 70,000 visitors. Furthermore, the municipality developed the Global Goals Dashboard. Other cities, such as [Oss](#), have included the SDGs in their programme budgets for 2019-2022 and developed their own local indicators and dashboards. Meanwhile, Rheden has decided to base its municipal reorganization on the SDGs.¹⁴

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

The [Association of Netherlands Municipalities \(VNG\)](#), the [Dutch Water Authorities](#) and the [Association of Provincial Authorities \(IPO\)](#) have developed a VSR in 2022. The VSR mentioned how municipalities use the SDGs as a policy framework in a variety of ways, while the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNG) has taken on the role of actively driving the localization process forward since 2016. The VSR also presented LRGs' call to the national government to set up an SDG strategy with relevant sub-targets for different scales of government in setting clear, ambitious, achievable and measurable goals. [Amsterdam](#)¹⁵ has prepared a VLR in 2022.¹⁶

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

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

15. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/amsterdam_2022.pdf

16. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/the_netherlands_2022_vsr_eng.pdf

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The government of Curaçao is using the SDGs, and particularly the SDG indicators, to enhance cooperation between ministries in drawing up multi-year budgets for policy programmes on youth, safety and economic growth. The Aruba Roadmap for SDG implementation relies on domestic resource mobilization through re-aligning expenditure and delivering existing financial resources more effectively. In 2020, the Minister of Finance outlined the alignment of the policy objectives to the SDGs until 2022.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: The Netherlands imposed some budget and transfers restrictions on the subnational level, with new devolution of responsibilities (e.g. youth health, long-term care, etc.) accompanied by a historical merger process, and compelled local governments to rationalize and develop new modalities for services delivery (e.g. implementation of Service Charters).¹⁷

The platform organization **SDG Nederland**, which was set up in 2013, has over 1,200 member organizations, including many umbrella organizations representing subnational authorities, the business community, youth, knowledge institutions and educational institutions.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

No reference.

3.2 COVID 19

The **Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)** has been in continuous discussion with the national government on the topic of COVID-19 and economic recovery. It has been and still is being consulted about recovery packages. The VNG actively sought to influence recovery packages to make sure that the needs and priorities of municipalities are adequately represented and that the extra costs and missed revenue during the pandemic are compensated for. The COVID-19 crisis has further revealed the existing financial problems of municipalities and the skewed financial relations between national and local governments. This is VNG's most important point towards the new national elections: without adjusted intergovernmental relations and finances that fit this, municipalities cannot invest much in (sustainable) recovery.¹⁸

4. SDG INDICATORS¹⁹

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		31.8 (2020)
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	97 (2020)
	Rural	97 (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 (%)		100 (2015, Amsterdam-Utrecht)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		11.1 (2019)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		100 (2017)

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

18. Answer of Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

19. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database>