

# PHILIPPINES

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The Philippines is a unitary republic with three tiers of subnational government. The country is divided into 82 provinces, each led by an elected governor and an elected provincial council. Local legislative power is exercised by Provincial Boards (*Sangguniang Panlalawigan*). The country is also divided into 17 statistical/planning regions, composed of 13 ordinary regions plus four special regions: the Cordillera Administrative Region, the Negros Island Region, the National Capital Region, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), which replaced the former Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao in 2022 and is the only region with an elected government. At the intermediate level, the country is further divided into 146 cities and 1488 municipalities. Mayors and municipal councilors are elected. At the local level, there are 42046 villages (*Barangays*), which are managed by an elected official (*Barangay* Chairperson or “captain”) and an elected village council (*Sangguniang Barangay*).<sup>1</sup>



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

## 1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The SDGs are integrated into the **Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2017-2022**. The country also has a long-term document “**Ambisyon Natin 2040**”<sup>3</sup> and a **10-Point Socio-economic Agenda**<sup>4</sup>.

### 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)** is responsible for the coordination of the SDG implementation strategy. The **Sub-committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (SC-SDGs)** has been established with the approval of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC). The sub-committee is co-chaired by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). The sub-committee on the SDGs and the four technical working groups led discussions on SDG indicators and provided direction for the 2022 VNR process.

### 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

In conducting the 2019 VNR, the Philippines undertook several consultation workshops to collect feedback from stakeholders while engaging and renewing commitments for cooperation towards the achievement of the SDGs. For the 2019 VNR, focus was given to synergies between government and non-government actions that empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality, particularly on deliberate efforts to reach out to the marginalized sector. Regional consultations were held with governmental and non-governmental organizations. Outside NEDA, a Committee on Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking was created to improve coordination.

The 2022 VNR process brought together various government agencies, stakeholders, and members of society from different sectors and geographic regions of the country through multi-stakeholder consultation. The Sub-committee on the Sustainable Development Goals and the four technical working groups led the VNR process, while the Stakeholders’ Chamber was formalized as part of the government’s official mechanism for collaborating with various sectors of society.

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

2. See: [https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/10765PH%20VoluntaryNationalReview\\_FINAL.pdf](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/10765PH%20VoluntaryNationalReview_FINAL.pdf) (2016); [https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/23366Voluntary\\_National\\_Review\\_2019\\_Philippines.pdf](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/23366Voluntary_National_Review_2019_Philippines.pdf) (2019); <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/06222022%20VNR%20of%20the%20Philippines.pdf> (2022)

3. This long-term vision is meant to guide development planning across at least four government administrations. The attainment of the SDGs, set at 2030, should pave the way for the achievement of “*Ambisyon Natin 2040*”.

4. This agenda gives emphasis to regional or subnational equality and the improvement of the access to services in rural areas. It is aligned with the SDG’s core tenet of leaving no one behind.

## 1.3 MONITORING

The **SDG Watch**, regularly compiled by the **Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA)**, local government units, and the **Community-based Monitoring System (CBMS)**, are the mechanisms for SDG monitoring at the national and subnational levels. SDG data monitoring and evaluation is managed by the PSA, which created the initial list of the SDGs for monitoring in the Philippines. The SDGs are monitored through the Socioeconomic Report SDG Annex.<sup>5</sup> There are two government-initiated online sources of SDG information in the Philippines: the SDG Website of NEDA and the SDG Watch of PSA.<sup>6</sup>

The **PSA regional offices** monitor the SDG indicators at the regional and local levels with the approval and adoption of the 2019 **Core Regional SDG indicators (CoRe-SDGIs)**. By 2022, 13 out of 17 regions have been monitoring the CoRe-SDGIs through their SDG Watch. The **Community-based Monitoring System (CBMS) Act** is crucial in generating local indicators and disaggregated data that can fill local data gaps on the SDGs. The compilation of the **Provincial Product Accounts** serves as localized tools to help local governments better understand realities on the ground and design programs accordingly. However, findings from the first VSR published in the Philippines in 2022 (see below) suggest that monitoring is particularly challenging for the majority of LRGs due to the unavailability of SDG-related data and information, as well as cities' lack of capacity to process already available local data.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The 2019 VNR showed that the Philippines sees the **localization** of the SDGs as a means to reduce regional disparities. As part of the 2019 VNR process, regional consultations were held in each of the three major Philippine island groups, and were attended by CSOs, academic institutions, media, business consortia, and government representatives. Other consultations involving children and trade and labor unions were organized in Quezon City, Manila and Tacloban City.

The **Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)** supports the localization of the SDGs. The SDGs have been cascaded to the subnational level through their inclusion in **Regional Development Plans (RDPs)**. To facilitate the localization of the SDGs in the country, the DILG, together with NEDA, issued a Joint Memorandum Circular that provided guidelines on the localization of PDP results matrices, and on the SDGs which bound local governments to create programs that implement PDP and SDG targets. In 2017, the national government issued an executive order requiring all levels of government to implement the PDP and public investment programme 2017-2022.<sup>8</sup> NEDA's regional development offices are responsible for crafting and coordinating the Regional Development Plans (RDPs). Provincial governors usually chair the Regional Development Council, acting as the formal mechanism for coordination and multilevel governance. However, the view from local government organizations is that local governments are not completely aware of the ongoing process, despite several workshops held by DILG in all the regions. The new matrices were launched ahead of the national and local elections in 2019 without real consultation, and not all local governments have the capacity to respond to their requirements.<sup>9</sup>

Still, in 2022, more than 50% of the cities responding to the survey of League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) expressed high familiarity with the 17 SDGs and are actively participating in national advocacy campaigns on the SDGs. Nearly all of them (92%) have already aligned their local plans with different SDGs (i.e. Baguio, Makati, Tabaco, Iriga, Luzon, Naga, Visayas and Mindanao).<sup>10</sup>

To enable the effective implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, the special **Regional Sub-committee on the Sustainable Development Goals (RSC-SDGs)** was created to be a responsive, participative, and accountable institutional mechanism at the local level which aligns with the national government. Similar to the national process, the regional sub-committees also have a secretariat and technical working groups that support its work. However, each regional sub-committee has its own structure. Some regions develop unique technical working groups dedicated to sectors such as indigenous peoples, watershed, or infrastructure. Allowing regions to pattern their structures after their own respective individual needs enabled an organic and deepening of ownership of the SDGs at the local level.

Finally, the 2022 VNR process included activities at the subnational level, such as the collection of best practices on the SDGs; an alignment meeting with the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) on the VSR it jointly prepared with the Leagues of Municipalities and Provinces (LMP and LPP, respectively); focus group discussions with Naga City, which prepared a VLR; and 18 events, meetings, and workshops to support the special regional committee on the SDGs.

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

6. See: <https://sdg.neda.gov.ph> and <https://psa.gov.ph/sdg>

7. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/vsr\\_philippines\\_final.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/vsr_philippines_final.pdf)

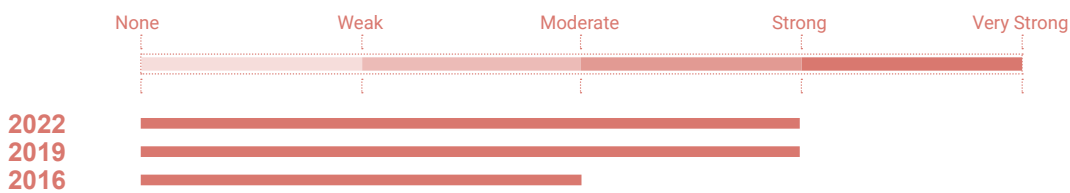
8. See: <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2017/06jun/20170601-EO-27-RRD.pdf>

9. There is an over-reliance on regulatory approaches instead of promoting outreach, collaboration and capacity-building efforts between national and local governments. Vertical and horizontal coordination between organizations remains patchy, producing weak linkages in planning and fragmented policy. The current electoral conjuncture and other national debates (in particular with respect to federalism) do not help the buy-in process either. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

10. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf\\_2022.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf)

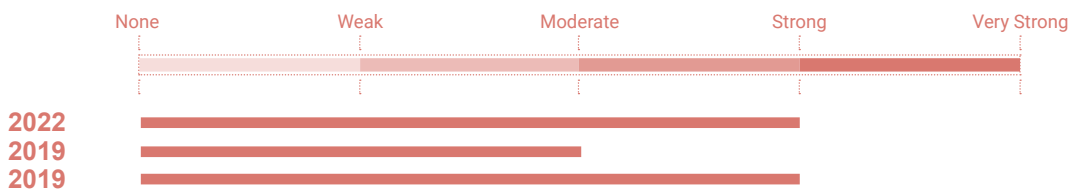
## 2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

### ► In the VNR process



Comments: Local governments and their associations participated in regional consultations.

### ► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Punctual participation of the League of Cities, Vigan City, and Makati. The city of Bagio reported a regular participation and a stronger involvement compared to previous years (GTF Survey 2021). However, local government organizations perceive that local governments are not completely aware of ongoing SDG-related processes.

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

There was a brief section, at the end of the 2019 VNR, dedicated to “localization” (see VNR, 2019, p. 47). It acknowledged that “attainment of the SDGs requires concerted, multi-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder efforts both at the national and local levels” and presented the national framework for SDG implementation at the local level through regional and comprehensive development plans (see above). In the 2022 VNR, there is a section on “Subnational mechanisms and localization of the SDGs” (see VNR, 2022, p. 15), as well as a section on “SDG adoption and implementation at the local level through a Whole-of-Nation approach using the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS)” (see VNR, 2022, p. 82). The 2022 VNR dedicates two pages to the country’s VSR and Naga City’s VLR.

## 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

- Community-based Early Warning System (CBEWS) has been successfully replicated in several areas of the country such as the Agos River CBEWS in **Quezon Province**, which has been devastated by extreme typhoon events. The system consists of rain gauges, flood watchpoints, radio communication devices, and a defined set of emergency measures aimed at preventing loss of lives and damage to properties.
- After the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013, the municipalities of **Daanbantayan** and **Medellin** in the province of Cebu have successfully implemented community-led disaster recovery and rehabilitation efforts that resulted in timely rehabilitation of schools and restoration of tourism livelihood.
- The province of **Albay**, which is exposed to multiple natural hazards such as typhoons and volcanic eruption, has been a model of “zero-casualty” due to its effective response measures and proper coordination with relevant agencies. The successful implementation of these initiatives is a result of strengthened collaborations among local government units, NGOs, national government agencies, academic institutions, and the private sector.<sup>11</sup>
- Both the **League of Cities** and the **League of Municipalities** have been active in SDG localization through seminars, information sharing, conferences and workshops. The League of Cities has developed pilot projects with different partners to promote the integration of the SDGs into local activities, for example the Vertical Integration for Low-Emission Development (V-LED) in collaboration with UN-Habitat; the Building Climate Resiliency Through Urban Plans and Designs programme with the support of German cooperation agencies and UN-Habitat; the Ambitious City Promises project with ICLEI; the Global Initiative for Resource-Efficient Cities with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the “Green, Green, Green” project of the Philippine Department of Budget and Management, amongst others. The League of Cities, moreover, co-leads Citynet’s SDG Cluster.

11. The three practices above were extracted from the 2019 VNR.

- ▶ Since 2015 the **Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG)**, in partnership with the **League of Cities**, the **Local Government Academy** and several international agencies, has been promoting the SDGs in over 34 cities as a follow-up to a programme focused on children in poor urban communities. For example, the cities of **Naga**, **Iriga** and **Muntinlupa** have made efforts to incorporate SDGs into their development plans. They have introduced a system of (local target) scorecards to gather baseline data on governance. The scorecards evaluate whether development plans are aligned with the SDGs.
- ▶ In 2017, the *Galing Pook Awards* Programme shortlisted 30 municipalities and *Barangays* that have developed initiatives complying with the three pillars of sustainable development in different areas: participatory governance (**Angon**, **San Fernando**), poverty reduction (**Zamboanga del Norte and del Sur**) and economic development (**Tagum City**), support to informal workers (garment sector in **Taytay**) and poor communities (fisheries in **Ambao**, youth in **Ilocos Norte**), access to basic services (water in **San Luis**, waste management in **Makati**, transport in **Legazpi**, road maintenance in **Davao**), affordable housing (**Quezon**) and slum upgrading (**Dipolog City**), sustainable tourism (**Loboc**), urban renewal and green cities (**Pasig**), clean food (**Marikina**) and, finally, inter-municipal cooperation for better services (PALMA Alliance in the **Cotabato Province**).
- ▶ Other local governments are also active and follow a range of programmes supported by international institutions and local government organizations (such as the League of Cities) related to sustainable policies i.e. **Angeles City**, **Tagum**, **Legazpi**, **Ormoc**, **Cagayan De Oro**, **Pasig**, **Parañaque** and **Marikina** for climate mitigation and adaptation and resilient initiatives. Other examples include **Sorsogon**, a pilot city for the Global Initiative for Resource Efficient Cities; the city of **Cebu** for solid waste management; the cities of **Baguio** and **Quezon** for planned sanitation and tourism through public-private partnerships, and others.
- ▶ Since 2008, the **Iloilo Local Housing Board** has facilitated coordination between the local government and the urban poor federation to participate in the city's formal planning process, disaster rehabilitation and relocation strategies that operate at the city-wide scale.
- ▶ The **Grassroots Participatory Budget programme** (formerly Bottom-up Budgeting) succeeded in the mid-2010s in expanding to virtually all local government units (1,633 in total, in 2015).<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ The **League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP)** submitted in 2020 a report on the organization's on-going initiatives geared towards the attainment of the SDGs to the Office of Senator Pia Cayetano, head of the Senate Committee on SDGs, Innovations, and Future Thinking.<sup>13</sup> The LCP integrated the SDGs into its Strategic Plan for 2019-2022 and is leading various initiatives for SDG dissemination: partnering with the Liveable Cities Challenge in organising the Liveable Cities Labs; developing the LCP City Database Project to consolidate city data and show how cities are achieving the SDGs; developing the Cities' System Capacity Development Project to strengthen city planning; and promoting projects such as Gender and Development, and Building Climate Resiliency through Urban Plans and Designs.
- ▶ Cities such as **Baguio**, **Iriga** and **Makati** have adopted resolutions and strategic frameworks anchored in the SDGs (i.e. 2019-2025 Makati Comprehensive Development Plan). The Iriga Strategy for SDG localization includes, amongst other actions, setting up 5 sectoral committees for the formulation and integration of the SDGs within comprehensive land use and development plans.
- ▶ In **Iriga**, during lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, the "Vegetables on Wheels" project sought to help citizens with mobility issues by bringing them goods produced by local farmers. Also during the pandemic, **Makati** distributed around 82,000 food packs to students after school closures left children without school meals. **Baguio** and Makati have supported micro and small businesses through financial facilities and grants.<sup>14</sup>
- ▶ Recognizing the significance of cross-stakeholder initiatives in improving resilience, the Philippines urged local governments to join the **Making Resilient Cities 2030 (MCR2030)** initiative. MCR2030 is a global partnership of experts in urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate change, and the SDGs for sharing knowledge and experiences, establishing mutually reinforcing city-to-city learning networks and building partnerships among advocates of local resilience.

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

In 2017, Cauayan City published its first VLR.<sup>15</sup> Naga City published its first VLR in 2022. The first VSR of the Philippines, published in 2022, was jointly developed by the League of Cities (LCP), the League of Municipalities (LMP) and the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP).<sup>16</sup>

12. All the practices presented until this one are mentioned in UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report.

13. According to the GTF Survey in 2021. See more in UCLG, 2021, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf\\_2021.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2021.pdf)

14. UCLG, 2021, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf\\_2021.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2021.pdf)

15. See: [https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Cauayan%20City%20\(2017\)\\_0.pdf](https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Cauayan%20City%20(2017)_0.pdf)

16. See: [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/vsr\\_philippines\\_final.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/vsr_philippines_final.pdf)

## 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The PDP 2017-2022 was complemented by national budget allocations through the Public Investment Programme.

The 2019 VNR presented the **Local Government Support Fund - Assistance to Municipalities (LGSF-AM)**, which “aims to address policy and governance gaps in the implementation of local programs and projects through the harmonization of LGSF-AM’s processes with the existing systems of the local government, strengthening the latter. Addressing governance gaps focuses on building partnerships between local government units and CSOs and people’s organizations in the selection and monitoring of infrastructure projects through the Local Development Councils. Addressing policy gaps focuses on correcting fiscal and infrastructure imbalances in local service delivery” (VNR, 2019, p. 28).<sup>17</sup>

As part of the localization efforts aimed at following up the implementation process, NEDA, DILG and the Philippines’ Statistical Office developed assessment criteria for SDG implementation linked to access to specific funds (i.e. the Seal of Good Local Governance). However, the alignment between the funds to support local governments’ plans and the SDGs is not clear for LRGs. Testimonies stress that local plans will continue to be aligned with the funds rather than with the national SDG strategy. On the other hand, LRGs also find it difficult to access specific funds to support adaptation to climate change and resilience projects.<sup>18</sup>

## 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments:** In the Philippines, the national government promotes a **top-down localization strategy**. Despite this, the three associations of subnational governments (LCP, LMP and LPP) are actively involved in the localization of the SDGs.

The Supreme Court ruling in 2020 on the Mandanas-Garcia case increased the share of the national tax allotment destined to subnational governments to fund devolved services; the response to and recovery from the pandemic; and SDG localization. Although it is yet to be implemented, this policy on full devolution is expected to give local governments an even more central role in SDG implementation.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

The proportion of women in local government was 31% in 2016, but this fell to 21.3% in 2018.

### 3.2 COVID 19

The National Policy Framework on Promotion and Recognition of Healthy Communities was implemented after the outbreak of COVID-19 aims to bring health awareness to local governments. The Social and Behavior Change Plan ensured the continuity of the first 1,000 days of services provided by local governments. Some local government units started to adopt digital monitoring systems, i.e. Visitor Information and Travel Assistance (VIS.I.T.A.) platform to protect tourists and communities by controlling the number of visitors and their activities.

The LCP was also mobilized to help with the COVID-19 response (i.e. quarantine and travel protocols, economic recovery, and vaccination rollouts).

17. For example, in 2017, the national government launched the Green, Green, Green program, funded under the Local Government Support Fund, to promote the development of public open spaces and create greener, and more sustainable cities all over the country.

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

19. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, [https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf\\_2022.pdf](https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf)

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>20</sup>

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		29.1 (2020)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	62 (2020)
	Rural	35 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	55 (2020)
	Rural	66 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		42.9 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		70 (2009, Manila)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		21.3 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		85 (2020)

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