ROADMAP TO LOCALIZE THE SDGs (DRAFT – April 2016)

Outline of the roadmap

What for?

The roadmap proposes guiding principles and solutions to create an enabling environment for the effective implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at local and regional level.

For whom?

This roadmap is aimed at local and regional governments and their associations that seek to influence national policy-making in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs in their country.

In addition, the roadmap will also be a useful tool for national policymakers, international organizations, civil society organizations, academia and other stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring process of the SDGs.

Why does localizing matter?

As it has been stressed by the UN Secretary General in his Synthesis Report, “many of the investments to achieve the sustainable development goals will take place at the subnational level and be led by local authorities”.

There are several reasons to put LRGs at the heart of the agenda. Indeed, all of the SDGs include targets related to the competencies and responsibilities of LRGs, particularly to their role in delivering basic services and promoting endogenous and inclusive territorial development. The achievement of the SDGs depends on the active engagement of local and regional governments.

What does localizing of SDGs mean?

Localizing refers to the implementation and monitoring of SDGs at the local and regional level.

Different actors, both public and private, should be involved in localizing the SDGs, according to their competences, capacities and available resources. National, regional and local governments should play a leading role in this process.

National strategies to implement SDGs should include a territorial dimension as the main challenges they should face are localized in territories.

To the same extent, public policies implemented by LRGs are key for inclusive and sustainable territorial development and strongly linked to the 2030 Agenda. LRGs are also the best placed to bridge the gap between higher levels of governments and civil society groups and
communities, fostering a strong involvement of civil society organizations, private companies (micro, small and medium enterprises), academia and other community based organizations, and promoting ownership.

Strengthening national mechanisms to guarantee the effective coordination between the different levels of government (national, regional, local) will be crucial for the SDGs achievement.

**Actions to be performed by LRGs to localize the SDGs**

1. **Awareness raising and communication campaigns. Getting to know the SDGs at the local level and the need for localizing**

   **Raise awareness of the SDGs:** LRGs, in partnership with local stakeholders, are well-placed to raise awareness about the importance of the new sustainable development agenda and its relevance to local communities and territorial development.

   **National LRG associations:** with the support of national governments and international organizations, LRG networks should promote campaigns for the “localization of the SDGs” to make SDGs better known and recognizable among their member local and regional governments.

   **Promote “local or regional champions”**: as part of the campaign, LRG networks can promote the nomination of “champions” actively involved to promote the formal adhesion of regions, cities and municipalities to the SDGs.

   It is important to highlight that SDGs are universal and should be implemented all over the world, even in the most developed countries.

This section of the roadmap should briefly present the SDGs and the notion of localizing in an appealing and didactic manner (cf The SDGs – What Local Governments need to know, [https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/the_sustainable_development_goals_](https://issuu.com/uclgcglu/docs/the_sustainable_development_goals_)). It should also present the key mechanisms to be deployed such as the communication and awareness raising campaigns, champions, etc. Examples of best practices will be provided (e.g. Dutch Municipalities Supporting the Millennium Development Goals A VNG campaign explained and the support that could be mobilized, e.g. EU CSO&LA Programme and the budget line on Raising public awareness of development issues and promoting development education in the European Union).

2. **Enabling LRG participation in the definition of national priorities, strategies and institutional framework**

National governments all over the world are launching SDG-based national development strategies or aligning their existing plans and strategies with the proposed goals of the 2030 Agenda which came into force in January 2016. National associations of local and regional governments have an important task in seeking to participate in and influence these national strategies:
Build national consensus: these efforts should serve to mobilize national and local stakeholders toward a national consensus on SDGs and localizing, as well as to promote local ownership. LRG associations should seek to participate in the definition of national priorities, strategies and the institutional framework for the implementation and monitoring of the new goals. In such processes, they should advocate for localization and provide information on local contexts, circumstances, needs and aspirations.

Create an enabling environment for the localization process: national legislation and regulations provide the frameworks within which local and regional governments act, which can create either incentives or obstacles for sustainable development action\(^1\), especially in regard to progressive environmental protection, land and local resource management, fiscal and financial devolution and thus inclusive economic development\(^2\). Therefore, it is essential that national associations advocate for the creation of enabling environments for SDG implementation and monitoring at local level.

Develop coordination mechanisms for the SDGs implementation and follow-up: in this context, LRG capacities to advocate toward national governments and international organizations should be reinforced through the establishment of adequate mechanisms of multilevel governance.

Section 2 should highlight the important role that national governments play in localizing SDGs and what national associations of LRGs can do to participate in this process and inform national priorities and strategies with local circumstances, needs and aspirations. Experiences in multilevel governance platforms linked to the SDGs will be provided (Colombia: Comisión Interinstitucional de Alto Nivel Para la Implementación de los ODS; Philipines: Council for Sustainable Development).

3. Getting ready to start the implementation of the SDGs at subnational level

The implementation process of SDGs at the subnational and local level requires:

- Identifying local needs and shared priorities coherent with SDG-based national development strategies
- Defining how local priorities can be integrated in participatory local and regional development plans
- Ensuring efficient implementation of local/regional key projects included in the plans
- Establishing monitoring systems to follow up impacts at local, regional and national levels

How to assess needs and identify priorities to localize SDGs?

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1 ICLEI, "Briefing Sheet No.3- Introducing a New Global Goal for Cities and Human Settlements," ICLEI.
The adequate implementation of SDGs at territorial level should respond both to local needs and priorities and be coherent with national strategies. National associations of LRGs may consider providing their members with support in the following areas:

**Needs assessment and identification of priorities at local and regional level:** a first exercise will require an analysis of existing local/regional plans or policy programmes to check their consistency with the SDGs and national priorities. The identification of main priorities and gaps will probably need the mobilization of a wide range of actors, both public and private. This process should shape the bases for a triple partnership: between different levels of government, between LRGs in inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms, and with territorial stakeholders.

**Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms:** these mechanisms aim to map and mobilize the main regional and local institutions and stakeholders to: 1) ensure complementarity between priorities emerged from the sectorial policies managed by the deconcentrated units of national governments and those proposed by LRG, 2) better coordinate regional and local governments to foster local economic development and investments in infrastructures, particularly in access to basic services delivery, 3) identify and promote the participation of key territorial stakeholders in the assessment of needs and the definition of priorities. Civil society organizations, private companies and academia, together with LRGs, should be recognized as the quadruple helix whose contribution to sustainable development at territorial level is key.

Given that the implementation of SDGs at subnational level should be the result of a joint effort of national, regional and local actors, priorities fixed in the framework of the triple partnership should be coherent with SDG-based national strategies and priorities.

This section should include the description of different modalities to efficiently manage needs assessment processes and develop institutional coordination and partnerships. Examples of relevant practices will be provided.

**How to align local and regional plans with the SDGs**

The priorities identified should be the core of local and regional plans to implement SDGs.

**Regional and local plans aligned with the SDGs:** implementation strategies can be addressed either in specific SDG-based plans or local/territorial development plans aligned with the goals, targets and indicators established in the new 2030 Agenda. Plans should link local/regional development to national strategies of sustainable development.

Local and regional plans should provide a holistic vision of the territory and an integrated and multi-dimensional approach to inclusive and sustainable development. They should be defined, implemented and monitored with the involvement of the major territorial stakeholders in the framework of participation mechanisms.

Efficient local and regional planning requires resources and capacities that are by now inexistent in most of the contexts. International development cooperation (including
decentralized cooperation) should focus on mobilizing resources with the aim of building these capacities.

This section should present the key contents that plans should include:

- Local / regional priorities
- Shared targets
- A set of local and regional indicators aligned with those established in the 2030 Agenda
- Key projects
- Budget and financial strategies
- Implementation timeline
- Monitoring and evaluation tools
- Coherence with regional and national plans

In the same line, concrete experiences will be described.

Next steps: How to ensure efficient and participatory implementation of key projects

Localizing the SDGs entails implementing the key projects included in the local and regional plans. However, LRGs have to face great challenges to efficiently implement such projects as their resources and capacities are, in most of the contexts, limited. National associations of LRGs may consider providing their members with support in the following areas:

Enabling environments, sufficient resources and adequate capacities: institutional reforms should be promoted to guarantee enabling environments that allow LRGs and local actors to carry out local development plans with sufficient financial and human resources. Without a strong commitment of national governments and the international community to reinforce LRG resources and capacities to operate, the advantages of localizing SDGs will be left untapped.

Promote co-responsibility for the implementation of key projects: the main institutional and local partners – NGOs, private sector, communities’ organizations, academic sector – should be associated in the implementation process to create ownership and enhance resource mobilization. Public institutions should particularly promote a strong involvement of poor groups through adequate mechanisms to facilitate their participation.

Development cooperation and peer-to-peer learning mechanisms: they can play a relevant role in this context through the provision of resources, knowledge and innovation. A special effort should be made to align local and regional plans with development cooperation effectiveness principles.

This section should include an overview of key considerations relating to the efficient implementation of key projects at the local and regional levels: adequate tools for implementation (budgeting, local regulation, public procurement, transparency, etc.), mechanisms for participatory implementation and monitoring, co-responsibility mechanisms.
with CSO and the private sector, resources provided by international cooperation (technical assistance, training, peer-to-peer learning, twinning, etc.).

4. **Follow-up, evaluation and capitalization of experiences**

The 2030 sustainable development agenda has been designed to be monitored and evaluated through an accurate system of indicators.

**Promote the participation of LRGs in national monitoring:** follow-up will be done at national level through the review of the concrete results of national plans. In this context, localizing the agenda entails both enabling the participation of LRGs and local stakeholders in the review of national plans and monitoring and evaluating local/regional plans using the indicators defined for the SDGs.

**Ensure subnational monitoring and local data collection:** as for the monitoring and evaluation of local/regional plans, strong local mechanisms should be created and supported by independent review mechanisms. The results of the follow-up process should serve to hold LRGs accountable (in this context transparency is a requirement) and to capitalize the best experiences and transfer knowledge to other regions or countries.

At this stage, the establishment of data collection systems at local and regional level is a fundamental challenge to address in most of the context to disaggregate information (urban/rural, etc.) and monitor indicators.

This section should include the description of available indicators and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impacts of SDGs at local/regional level. Experiences such as the regional statistical institutions in some regions and federal states will be analyzed, as well as the ways of involving local stakeholders in the monitoring process and innovative ways of data collection.