



Tools for the localization of the SDGs

Online training session at the High Level Political Forum 2020– 10 July 2020

Summary report

The training session organized by the Joint Research Centre was held virtually. About 240 participants joined the event online on Zoom and the recording has been watched more than 400 times.

The recording and the presentations are available here:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=6905&menu=14>

The training session was moderated and introduced by Mr. **Alessandro Rainoldi**, Head of Unit, JRC – European Commission. It included both presentations and discussion of case studies.

The first part of the session, presented by [Ms. Alice Siragusa](#), team leader, JRC – European Commission, was dedicated to the introduction of the localisation of the SDGs and the challenges that this implies, in particular on the local monitoring and reporting.

Ms. Siragusa introduced The *European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews*¹: it was launched in February 2020 at the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi. It has been downloaded more than 4.000 times since then. The Handbook is the main output of the URBAN2030 project, developed by the Joint Research Centre, with the support of DG REGIO, between 2018 and 2020. The *Handbook* offers to policy makers, researchers and practitioners an inspirational framework to set up Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). VLRs are a fundamental instrument to monitor progresses and sustain the transformative and inclusive action of local actors towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[Ms. Paola Proietti](#), project officer, JRC – European Commission, illustrated the second part of the Handbook, with particular focus on the SDG local indicators that can be used to monitor the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Ms. Proietti highlighted some of the main data challenges for local authorities in producing and collecting local data for the SDGs:

- Data in different departments of the local administration
- Lack of adequate financial resources
- Lack of capacity or trained staff
- Need to balance comparable data and data describing specific local situations
- Evaluation of the advantage of available data vs the creation of new data

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/european-handbook-sdg-voluntary-local-reviews>



Ms. Proietti illustrated some examples of local indicators in the Handbook.

In the second part of the training, invited speakers from a number of different institutions and different countries contributed through the presentation of case studies that complement the proposed methods and tools with insights on the challenges and opportunities in the implementation, and lessons learned.

[Ms. Serena Foracchia](#), Reggio Children srl and former Counsellor for International City, City of Reggio Emilia, presented the experience of the city of Reggio Emilia in shaping local strategies around the Sustainable Development Goals. Ms. Foracchia illustrated the ongoing process that the city has started in 2019, to align the strategic plan with the 2030 Agenda, engaging the local community, policy makers, stakeholders and actors in the definition of the missions of the plan. Ms. Foracchia highlighted some constraints that the process encountered during the pandemic:

- The role of the city leader (the mayor) has become much more prominent during the pandemic, jeopardizing the engagement of the local communities.
- There is concrete risk that the population perceives a distance between the 2030 Agenda and everyday needs.
- There is a risk in focus on local response and disregard global scenarios and processes.

On the other hand, Ms. Foracchia highlighted that the localization of the SDGs goes beyond the definition of city's strategies and relies on the participation and engagement of the local communities, and that in consequence of the pandemic citizens have become more aware of the interlinkages among different policies and actions. Moreover, the attention towards data is higher among the citizens.

[Ms. Norliza Hashim](#), CEO at [Urbanice Malaysia](#), illustrated the work carried out in Malaysian SDG Cities towards a Local Voluntary Reviews for Cities, developing and SDG Cities roadmaps. Challenges in Malaysia regard multilevel governance and the implementation of the SDGs at the local level. The localization process is developed 4 phases: the city profiling and diagnostic, the development of the city vision, the definition of the SDG local actions and roadmap, and the city voluntary local review. Urbanice is now also developing a set of local indicators to support the cities willing to produce a VLR.

[Mr. Enric Fuster](#), Expert, SIRIS Academic, illustrated the activities carried down to identify SDG-related science and innovation activities at the local and regional level for priority-setting and stakeholder mobilization. Mr. Fuster highlighted the main challenges in the implementation of Science, Technology and Innovation for SDGs in relation to: how to identify science and innovation actors/skills in SDG-related topics; how to set priorities at the local level, connected with global challenges; how to mobilise actors towards SDG-oriented innovation and collaboration.



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Mr. Fuster illustrated how to use a [controlled vocabulary \(CV\)](#) to identify science and innovation actors/skills in SDG-related topics. He illustrated the implementation carried out in two contexts: the region of Catalunya² and the application in a local territory developed by the Université Paris-Est Créteil (UPEC).

Mr. Alexander Heichlinger, international expert, drawn key conclusions from the presentations and the interventions, and highlighted some of the key recommendations from the upcoming comparative study on the first generation of VLRs, in particular: the strong need to strengthen the capacity of local governments and to provide guidance, while shifting towards evidence/base approach and result-oriented.

Mr. Rainoldi closed the session thanking speakers and participants.

² <http://ris3mcat.gencat.cat/#>



Background

Local governments are key actors for the achievement of the SDGs, and not only because they deliver essential services, but also for their capacity to mobilise local energies and actors. Therefore, including and enabling local actors to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs is key for their achievement. Furthermore, local actors need to learn from frontrunners that are implementing innovative methods and tools to foster their actions for a more sustainable urban and peri-urban development, linking actions in different fields.

Despite the increasing targeted action taken at the local level, how cities and regions should contribute to the SDGs and how their contribution can be measured and assessed, is still uncertain. The [European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews](#) fills this gap, building upon the knowledge developed in the framework of the [Knowledge Centre for Territorial Policies](#) and its Community of Practice – CITIES.

Objectives of the course

The training aims at building partnerships and improving capacities of representatives of different level of governments to implement transformative actions towards the achievement of the SDGs. In particular, the training presents tools that support the follow up and review of SDG implementation at local level. The training session focuses on one of the main tools developed by the JRC with a number of partners for the SDG localisation: the recently published "[European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews](#)", which describes the main steps for setting up a local SDG monitoring system (indicators and review).

The *European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews*³ was launched in February 2020 at the World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi. It has been downloaded more than 3.000 times since then. The Handbook is the main output of the URBAN2030 project, developed by the Joint Research Centre, with the support of DG REGIO, between 2018 and 2020.

The *Handbook* offers to policy makers, researchers and practitioners an inspirational framework to set up Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). VLRs are a fundamental instrument to monitor progresses and sustain the transformative and inclusive action of local actors towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). VLRs are reviews of the implementation and achievement of the 2030 Agenda at local scale, based on the blueprint of the Voluntary National Reviews that Member States submit periodically to the High Level Political Fora (HLPF).

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/european-handbook-sdg-voluntary-local-reviews>



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Agenda

Welcome remarks

Mr. Alessandro Rainoldi, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Presentations

Ms. Alice Siragusa, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Introduction on the local monitoring of the SDGs and the European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews

Ms. Paola Proietti, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Method and indicators for the local monitoring of the SDGs

Panel Discussion

Ms. Serena Foracchia, Reggio Children srl and former Counsellor for International City, City of Reggio Emilia

Shaping local strategies around the Sustainable Development Goals: the experience of Reggio Emilia

Ms. Norliza Hashim, CEO, Urbanice Malaysia

Malaysia SDG Cities Towards a Local Voluntary Reviews for Cities

Mr. Enric Fuster, Expert, SIRIS Academic

Identification of SDG-related science and innovation activities at the local and regional level for priority-setting and stakeholder mobilisation

Discussant

Mr. Alexander Heichlinger, international expert

Q&A and closing remarks

Moderator: Alessandro Rainoldi

This summary report was prepared by Alice Siragusa on 21 July 2020.