

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Paraguay is a unitary republic. It is composed of 17 departments and 257 municipalities (including the capital Asunción, which is not part of any department). There are four types of municipalities according to their budgets compared to the corresponding department capital's budget.¹



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

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Paraguay 2030 National Development Plan (PND 2030) is the overarching strategic document for implementing the 2030 Agenda in the country.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The 2018 VNR presented the Inter-institutional Coordination Commission, Paraguay 2030 SDG Commission, that was created for the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the commitments assumed by the country regarding the 2030 Agenda. This mechanism is made up of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is in charge of the coordination, the Ministry of Finance, the Technical Planning Secretariat and the Social Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic. In 2020, Paraguay embarked on an institutional strengthening process to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, through the restructuring and hierarchization of the **Paraguay SDG Commission**, which now has representation from the three powers of the state (in total, 17 institutions). This implies a change in vision based on the logic of a budget for results aligned to the SDGs. The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE)** leads all the activities carried out by the Commission. In addition, a new **High Level Directive Council** was constituted, and is made up of the highest authorities of the 17 member institutions. At the technical level, the **Multisectoral Thematic Committee** is led by the MRE. The **Committee for the Localization of the SDGs** was created during the 2021 VNR process, and is led by the **Technical Secretariat for Social and Economic Development Planning (STP)**.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Both 2018 and 2021 VNR processes were led by the **Paraguay 2030 SDG Commission**. The 2021 VNR is the result of a participatory, transparent and comprehensive review process at both national and subnational levels. In addition to data collection, virtual workshops and dialogue tables were organized, and a survey was conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups. In addition, a survey was carried out with subnational governments. This survey, together with a discussion with subnational governments (more details below), was constituted at the beginning of the operation of the **Committee for the Localization of the SDGs**. Young researchers also participated, and an SDG Research Day was held in virtual format, with the participation of about 500 people. Representatives of children and adolescents were also involved in the process through a discussion organized in conjunction with UNDP and UNICEF.³ The objective of the **Paraguay SDG Voices** initiative was to give greater visibility to the points of view of young Paraguayans around issues related to sustainable development.

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/198771VN_ODS_PY_2018_book_Final.pdf (2018); https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/282692021_VNR_Report_Paraguay.pdf (2021)

3. The greatest concern of children and adolescents revolved around virtual education. Many of them mentioned that the educational system does not have the necessary equipment for virtual education to be effective. Added to this problem is the lack of preparation of teachers, the lack of technological tools from which children and adolescents can access their classes, and the lack of connectivity. Another issue that was highlighted during the discussion was the need for more inclusive educational policies that address the needs of children with disabilities and different abilities.

1.3 MONITORING

According to the 2018 VNR, the **General Directorate of Statistics, Surveys and Censuses (DGEEC)**, which coordinates the **Technical Committee for Statistical Monitoring** of the Paraguay 2030 SDG Commission, also coordinates different institutions for the construction of indicators to monitor compliance with the SDGs. The 2021 VNR mentions the **Recommendations Monitoring System (SIMORE Plus)**, which is a public online platform that reports on the implementation of international recommendations. It was elaborated with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. At the end of 2020, the law to create the new **National Statistics Institute (INE)** was enacted, a milestone that fosters the implementation of evidence-based policies. The INE has led a participatory process for the construction of the Multidimensional Poverty Index and is making many efforts for monitoring and reporting on the SDGs (more details in the VNR, 2021, p. 119-121). The **Monitoring Committee of the Paraguay SDG Commission** is led by the INE.

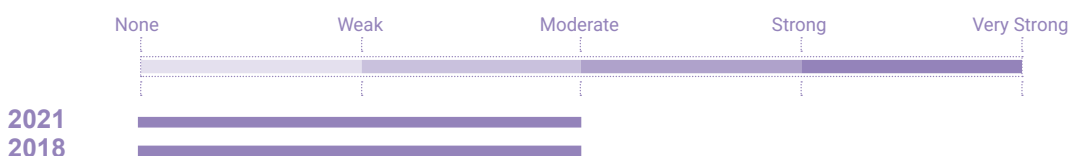
2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Although consultations with local governments have taken place with the national SDG Commission, the **Paraguayan Organization for Intermunicipal Cooperation (OPACI)** notes that the consultation did not directly include them. There is no evidence of any local government participation, albeit local participation is one of the goals of PND 2030.⁴

However, recently, as part of the 2021 VNR elaboration, **a process of sensitization on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda was initiated aimed at subnational governments** (see the description of the 2021 VNR process above). In alliance with the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning, UNDP, the FIIAPP and the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), a discussion entitled “SDGs in our communities: discussing a roadmap for sustainable development in the community” was organized with the **participation of mayors, presidents of the departmental council and governors**. This discussion was constituted in a first approach towards subnational governments and had the objective of generating greater awareness of the SDGs at the local level. Based on this discussion, the STP will work on the design of a roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs at the local level in Paraguay, together with local and departmental governments. Moreover, the recent creation of the **Committee for the Localization of the SDGs** is aimed at coordinating action between the main actors at the national level and the representatives of departmental and municipal governments. However, it is not specified whether this committee directly includes LRGs or their associations.

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: The Paraguayan Organization of Intermunicipal Cooperation didn't participate in the 2021 VNR process (weaker involvement than before) (GTF Survey 2021). However, LRGs were involved through a survey and a discussion (VNR 2021). LRGs are mentioned throughout the report, with specific examples.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: The Paraguayan Organization of Intermunicipal Cooperation doesn't participate in national coordination mechanisms (GTF Survey 2021). A Committee for the Localization of the SDGs was created (but the 2021 VNR doesn't specify whether LRGs are represented in it or not).

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

The 2018 VNR includes a specific section on LRGs' role for the implementation of PND 2030. The report reflects the adoption of 17 departmental development plans and 244 district development plans 'elaborated in light' of the PND 2030. The creation of follow-up bodies was also planned, but precise information on the degree of implementation is lacking. In the 2021 VNR, there is a brief chapter on “Localization”, whose main section is entitled “Local governments and the SDGs” (see VNR, 2021,

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

p. 129).⁵ This chapter discusses the role of the **Committee for the Localization of the SDGs** and presents two examples of municipalities that aligned their plans with the SDGs (see below). In addition, some projects led by municipalities are presented in boxes entitled “Innovative solutions for SDG challenges”.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The indigenous communities of the municipality of **Teniente Martínez**, rural and rather isolated, didn't have access to drinking water until the project implemented by the municipality with the support of the National Environmental Sanitation Service (SENASA), to distribute water to around 40 households (more details in the VNR, 2021, p. 41). As well as in the municipality of **Hernandarias** for flood problems (see VNR, 2021, p. 42), a participative approach involved different stakeholders and the residents themselves.

► The municipalities of **Yaguaron** and **Iturbe** had the support of the Paraguay Global Pact Network, within the framework of the project Together for Sustainable Development in Paraguay,⁶ to carry out the local development plan and its corresponding link to the SDGs.

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

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Ministry of Finance, through the **General Budget Directorate (DGP)**, makes the budgetary link of the General Budget of the Nation (PGN) to the SDGs. To this end, starting in 2017, the practice of “**Linking the General Budget of the Nation to the Sustainable Development Goals**” began, with the aim of quantifying the contribution of each program, subprogram and project to each SDG. Subsequently, this initiative led to the development of a Methodological Guide, launched in 2019, which constitutes a mechanism that serves to clearly and concisely quantify the contribution of the public sector in budgetary terms to each SDG. The country also has a **Financial Inclusion Policy (PIF)**, which is directly related to the objectives of the National Development Plan 2030, and transversely to the SDGs.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: The autonomy of municipalities and departments in Paraguay is recognized in legislation, but departmental governors act mainly as representatives of the central government in the territories. Subnational governments participated in the construction and validation of PND 2030. Progress towards decentralization has been slow and coordination with departments minimal, whereas the central government has increased its control.⁷

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Women participation in local councils (departmental and municipal) is not making much progress: 20,4% in 2015, 18,8% in 2016, 19,0% in 2017 and 20,1% 2018. However, it is slightly more important than women participation in the national parliament (about 18-19%).

3.2 COVID 19

The measures taken by the national government to face the impacts of pandemic are detailed in the 2021 VNR (see VNR, 2021, p. 109-110). However, there is no mention of any locally-led initiative.

5. The introductory paragraph of this chapter states that: “Considering that the 2030 Agenda is a territorial agenda and includes issues that affect all departments, the location of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is of fundamental importance. In this sense, support to departmental and municipal governments is crucial to achieve this location, which refers to the implementation, dissemination and monitoring of principles, objectives and goals at that level. Therefore, local policies and actions are required in synergy with policies and actions at the national level for the effective achievement of the SDGs. That is why, when thinking about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, it is imperative to start jointly designing a roadmap towards the localization or territorialization of the SDGs.”

The conclusion of the report states that: “Finally, one of the most challenging central issues that lies ahead refers to the territorialization of the SDGs. To achieve this task, it will be necessary to seek coordinated action between the main actors at the national level and the representatives of departmental and municipal governments. We can only achieve the reduction of regional inequalities through joint and articulated work, which recognizes the specificities and needs of each territory.”

6. This project is led by the Global Pact, the Center for Information and Resources for Development (CIRD) and the European Union (EU).

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

4. SDG INDICATORS⁸

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		20.8 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	72 (2020)
	Rural	51 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	54 (2020)
	Rural	71 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		17.1 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		-
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		11.9 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

⁸ The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/pry>