

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The Constitution of Spain, enacted in 1978, established Spain as a unitary parliamentary monarchy. In reality, Spain, also referred to as “the State of Autonomies”, is a quasi-federation, with a three-tier system of subnational governments whose autonomy is constitutionally recognised. The country is divided into 17 autonomous communities (*Comunidades Autonomas, CCAA*) at the regional level, 50 provinces, 8 124 municipalities and two autonomous cities (Ceuta and Melilla) at the local level.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

In 2018, the government approved the **Action Plan for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda “Towards a Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development”**. The Action Plan was conceived as a programmatic document and transition plan until the formulation of a **Sustainable Development Strategy 2030**. It has been presented with the 2021 VNR, at the 2021 edition of the HLPF. The Strategy identifies eight challenges, whose approach will be articulated through eight accelerating policies for sustainable development, defined from a multidimensional and multilevel perspective. Meanwhile, a strategy has been approved in 2019, ending in 2023.³ The **Spanish Urban Agenda**, approved by the Council of Ministers in 2019, constitutes the roadmap that guides the strategy and actions to be carried out, with a 2030 horizon, to achieve sustainability in urban development policies.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

As of 2018, the 2030 Agenda was elevated to the ministry level and a Secretary of State was created, with executive powers and mandate for the design, preparation, development and evaluation of the plans and strategies necessary for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and, specifically, the Sustainable Development Strategy.

The governance system for SDG coordination and implementation is three-tiered. First, the **Government Delegate Commission** for the 2030 Agenda is inter-ministerial. Second, the **Sectoral Conference for the 2030 Agenda** is the cooperation body between the national government’s administration, the autonomous communities, the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla and the local authorities, through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). A Sectoral Commission has been created to support it. Third, the **Sustainable Development Council** is an advisory, collaborative and participatory body composed of representatives from platforms and entities (academia, private sector, CSOs, etc.) and of 13 advisory councils at the national level.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The 2021 VNR has two main parts. The first examines the progress made between March 2020 and April 2021 in relation to each of the nine prioritized lever policies in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda approved in 2018. The second presents the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030.

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

2. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/203295182018_VNR_Report_Spain_EN_ddghpbrgsp.pdf (2018); https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/279422021_VNR_Report_Spain.pdf (2021)

3. It pays special attention to the fight against child poverty and covers areas such as income guarantee, education equitable and inclusive, training and employment, housing, social services and dependency, health or support for families, as well as a last related strategic area with the improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of policies. Progress is presented in the first part of the 2021 VNR.

1.3 MONITORING

The 2021 VNR indicates that LRGs have committed to accountability through reports on their progress and the monitoring of statistical indicators that allow assessing the challenges and progress in achieving the SDGs. Through the 2018 Annual Program, a new statistical operation called Indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was included in the National Statistical Plan, the objective of which is to constitute a framework of statistical indicators for the follow-up at the national level of the Objectives and Goals of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The National Statistical Institute is responsible for this, in collaboration with the statistical services of the ministries. The National Statistical System is collaborating with the Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda in defining the set of indicators for monitoring the 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy.

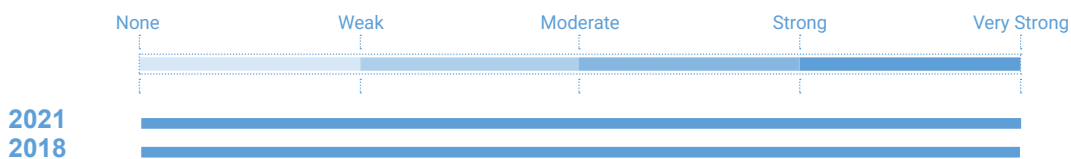
2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The **multilevel approach of the Sustainable Development Strategy** includes the commitments of the different autonomous communities, as well as local authorities. They participated in its elaboration (through a survey, then through a workshop co-organized by the FEMP).⁴ The autonomous communities and the FEMP participate in the **Sectoral Commission for the SDGs**, but without vote. Promoting the localization of the 2030 Agenda is one of the priorities of the institutional collaboration framework established between the Secretary of State for the 2030 Agenda and the FEMP, reflected in the Collaboration Framework Agreement signed between the two.

The 2021 VNR mentions participation in the reporting process from local and autonomous administrations. The FEMP participated through a survey, bilateral discussions and with a specific contribution (Survey 2021).

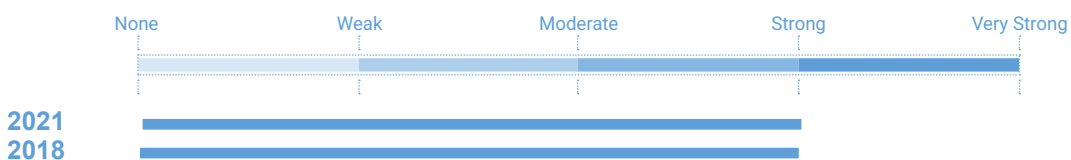
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: The 2021 VNR mentions the participation of local and autonomous administrations. It contains subsections on their role and lists many of their initiatives. The FEMP participated through a survey, bilateral discussions and with a specific contribution (GTF Survey 2021).

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: The autonomous communities participate in the Sectoral Commission for the SDGs, as well as the FEMP. Regular participation (consultative).

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 partnership with LRGs is underlined in the 2018 VNR, with a section detailing the localization of SDGs in each region and at local government level, with particular focus on the role of the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). There is a whole subtitle called "Localising the 2030 Agenda: a multi-level action" and it highlights the importance of LRGs in the implementation process.⁵ This subsection also includes specific actions that have been implemented by the LRGs in order to achieve the SDGs in each territory. In the 2021 VNR, autonomous communities and local authorities are mentioned many times throughout the report, and their role in implementing the 2030 Agenda is highlighted:

► Three tables list the initiatives of the autonomous communities and the FEMP towards the Action Plan. See the VNR, 2021, p. 45; 53; 68; 78; 87; 93; 99; 105. As part of it, initiatives towards the Spanish Urban Agenda are detailed p. 61.

4. See the report summarizing the results of this consultation here: <https://www.agenda2030.gob.es/recursos/docs/conclusiones-consulta-publica-eell.pdf>

5. "As concluded in the "Sevilla Commitment", the Final Declaration of the High Level Event on Localising the SDGs, held in Spain in February 2019 12, the SDGs can only be achieved through institutional and intersectoral coordination, in which an essential role must be played by dialogue and complementarity among local, national and international stakeholders"

► There is a subsection on the context regarding poverty and social exclusion in autonomous communities and local governments in the presentation of the first “country challenge” of the Sustainable Development Strategy (Poverty, Inequalities, Social Exclusion) (see VNR, 2021, p. 129).

► There are also lists of local initiatives from LRGs for the challenges 1 (Poverty), 2 (Climate action), 3 (Gender inequalities), 4 (Economy), 5 (Work), 6 (Public Services), 7 (Human Rights), 8 (Rural environment and demographic transition). See p. 142; 166; 194; 218; 234; 266; 288; 308.

► Two subsections are dedicated to autonomous communities and cities, and to local authorities, as part of the presentation of the multistakeholder and multinivel approach of the Strategy (see VNR, 2021, p. 322 and 324). In addition to mentioning their crucial role in, and commitment to implementing the SDGs, it is indicated that the Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 will highlight the important international role that the autonomous communities have to play in achieving the 2030 Agenda. The role of the FEMP is also mentioned, as well as the Network of Local Entities for the 2030 Agenda created in October 2020.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► In 17 autonomous communities, there are government structures with specific responsibilities on the 2030 Agenda, mostly aimed at promoting, coordinating and monitoring policies for SDG implementation. These actions are carried out through cross-sectional coordination between different departments, as occurs in the **Autonomous City of Melilla**, where the seven ministries have competencies in the matter, or through an interdepartmental commission for this purpose headed by the President of the Autonomous Government, as it happens in the **Autonomous Community of Navarra**. In some cases, shared governance is carried out, such as in **Galicia**, where the Ministry of the Environment, Territory and Housing leads the 2030 Agenda while coordinating three working groups: environment, social and economic. Something similar happens in the **Valencian Community**, where the General Directorate of Social Dialogue has a coordinating role and each department develops its competences regarding the 2030 Agenda, and in the **Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands**, where the General Directorate of Research and Coordination of the Sustainable Development, dependent on the Presidency of the Autonomous Government, receives support from the Modernization, Transparency and Participation and Telecommunications and New Technologies departments. Finally, in **Catalonia**, the competence is assigned to the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, configured as a strategic advisory body of the Government of the Generalitat in the field of sustainability. It should also be noted that in 15 cases, the autonomous communities have interdepartmental committees or commissions within the administration itself, to coordinate the alignment and implementation of the 2030 Agenda in all government action.

► The **Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)** adopted a resolution on the SDGs at its General Assembly in September 2019 and an implementation strategy in May 2018.⁶ Since the approval of the strategy in 2018, a **Network of Local Entities for the 2030 Agenda** and a specific **Sectoral Commission on the SDGs** were created in 2020 within the FEMP. In order to establish a local SDG Observatory, the FEMP has created a diagnostic map of localization actions associated with the 2030 Agenda, a training school on SDG-related issues and a digital platform for Ibero-American cities and the SDGs. The FEMP and regional governments drafted a document detailing subnational SDG achievements to be incorporated in the 2021 VNR; organized the Local Week for the 2030 Agenda and a decentralized cooperation meeting to share experiences and discussion around the SDG localization with national and international peers, and organized training sessions on SDG localization aimed at LRGs.

► In 2016, the **Barcelona Provincial Council**, with its 311 municipalities, made a strong commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. It developed a comprehensive strategy to implement the SDGs within the institution while providing support to the province’s municipalities to localize the SDGs in their territories. A virtual web space was made available to local authorities to attend to the demands and needs of city councils. An internal working group of the Provincial Council has been working on the definition of a system of indicators of the social, economic and environmental reality of Barcelona: a set of local indicators to measure the municipal contribution to the 2030 Agenda, which will be published in early 2021. A tool that will incorporate disaggregated indicators at municipal level that will allow local authorities in the province to measure their degree of contribution to the Agenda and that will also provide provincial data, useful for the Provincial Council’s strategy.

► The government of **Viladecans** has started working on “the Viladecans 2030 Agenda” which defines a new strategic perspective of the city towards 2030 in accordance with the Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

► **Terrassa** City Council has been actively working on the alignment and localization of the SDGs in municipal policy since the previous mandate plan. In the current mandate, the SDGs have already been incorporated into the municipal software structured in 10 major city goals and 178 lines of action, aligned with the Strategic Goals and 178 lines of action aligned with the SDGs, with a firm commitment to their implementation. Awareness-raising material has been published to facilitate the localization of the SDGs in the day-to-day activities and municipal services.

► The government of the **Balearic Islands** is currently formulating a governance model to incorporate the SDGs into government action in a cross-cutting, systematic way.

6. To know more about this strategy: www.localizandoods.es

► The Strategy for Sustainable Waste Management in **Madrid** 2017-2024 was established for more responsible and sustainable production and consumption and to move towards a circular economy model, with the ultimate aim of “zero waste”.

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

At the municipal level, **Barcelona** has published a VLR in 2019, 2020 and 2021, and **Malaga** in 2018.⁷ The province of **Jaen** published a VLR in 2019 and that of **Cordoba** in 2020.⁸ At the regional level, the Basque Country in 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2021, and the **Valencian Country** in 2016.⁹

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda includes a transformative measure called “Budgeting for the SDGs: Alignment of the General State Budgets with the 2030 Agenda”. A report was developed on the Alignment of the General State Budgets with the SDGs, the first edition of which accompanied the Draft Law of the General State Budgets for the year 2021.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: The 2021 VNR highlights that the autonomous communities stand out for the effort made in terms of collaboration with social and economic actors (civil society, private sector and academia), in addition to the implementation of other public participation mechanisms open to all citizens. In general, local and regional governments recognize and promote the work and key role of social, economic, cultural and environmental actors in the process of defining, promoting and monitoring policies aimed at implementing the SDGs. Cases such as the **Autonomous Community of Aragon** with the Council of the Future of Aragon, which also advises on the 2030 Agenda, or the **Community of Madrid** with the Advisory Council for the Development of the 2030 Agenda, illustrate some of the examples of multi-stakeholder dialogue at the regional/state level.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Currently, the process of defining a new Strategic Plan is being concluded. It is now called the **Strategic Plan for Effective Equality between Women and Men (PEIEMH) 2021-2025**. It is conceived as a Master Plan whose basic principles are: gender and intersectionality, the sustainability of life, strategic planning, participation and advocacy as levers of transformation, transparency and accountability, and the sustainability of policies for the equality of women and men. Among other actions, there is the agreement for the distribution among the **autonomous communities** and the cities of **Ceuta** and **Melilla** of the appropriations earmarked for the development of the “Corresponsable Plan”, conceived as a seed policy that will make possible the creation of quality employment in the care sector, in addition to dignifying and certifying the professional experience of non-formal care, thus facilitating their transition to the formal labor market. This Plan is the first step towards the creation of a state care system that goes beyond welfare models to promote support models centered on people and based on a framework of rights. It focuses on the care of children and young people up to the age of 14. Similarly, another measure of enormous importance in the COVID-19 context was the agreement authorizing the proposal for **territorial distribution** among the autonomous communities, for submission to the Territorial Council of the System for the Autonomy and Care for Dependency within the Framework of **Inter-administrative Cooperation**.¹⁰ The 2021 VNR presents other actions for gender equality, and contains a table listing the initiatives taken by the subnational governments (see VNR, 2021, pp. 46 and 53).

3.2 COVID 19

A COVID-19 Fund to support the autonomous communities has been approved, which involved a transfer of 16,000 million euros to the Autonomous Communities to finance the expenses derived from the pandemic, especially in the health system, as well as in education, offsetting the fall in tax revenues and guaranteeing the provision of essential public services. The **FEMP** launched a dedicated website¹¹ and created a specific response unit. It also elaborated a set of sectoral proposals for the recovery.

7. See: [https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Barcelona%20\(2019\)_0.pdf](https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Barcelona%20(2019)_0.pdf) ;
https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/barcelona_2020.pdf ; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/barcelona_2021_es.pdf ;
[https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Ma%CC%81laga%20\(2018\)_0.pdf](https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Ma%CC%81laga%20(2018)_0.pdf) ;

8. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/jaen_2020.pdf ;
https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/cordoba_provincial_council_2020.pdf
9. See: https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/euskadi_2017_eng_0.pdf ;
https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/basque_country_2019.pdf ;
https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/basque_country_2020.pdf ;
https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/basque_country_2021.pdf ;
[https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Valencia%20Region%20\(2016\).pdf](https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Valencia%20Region%20(2016).pdf)

10. This measure has had and continues to have a huge direct impact on caregivers, most of whom are women, who, because of the pandemic, have been severely overburdened and have suffered a significant loss of quality of life.

11. See: <http://covid19.femp.es/>

4. SDG INDICATORS¹²

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		38.5 (2020)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	100 (2020)
	Rural	99 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		5.5 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		94.3 (2015, Madrid)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		9.2 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

¹² 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/esp>