

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Belarus is a unitary republic with a three-tiered subnational structure, made of 7 regional governments (6 regions and the capital city of Minsk), 128 local governments at the intermediate level (118 districts and 10 cities of regional subordination), and 1,190 municipal governments (14 towns of district subordination, 10 urban settlements and 1,166 rural councils).<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 a “cross-cutting element” of the [National Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2035](#), which was approved in 2021 (see VNR, 2022, p. 6). The Program of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus (2021-2025) approved in 2021 is closely connected with the provisions of the National Strategy and covers the first stage of its goal-setting. Action at the regional level is prioritized, and regional sustainable development groups are organized in all areas.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The [National Coordinator](#) for achieving the SDGs oversees the interaction between governmental bodies, the parliamentary body, the business community, the academia, non-governmental organizations, and SDG youth ambassadors selected from various universities in Belarus. Under the leadership of the National Coordinator, a national [Sustainable Development Council](#) was established in 2018. It includes 38 government bodies and organizations, a parliamentary group, and public associations.

### 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

There is no available information on the elaboration process of the 2022 VNR.

### 1.3 MONITORING

The [National SDG Reporting Platform](#) established in 2018 provides access to 229 out of 267 international indicators; 166 indicators correspond to the global level (131 in 2017). A regional SDG indicator list with 145 indicators is formed to monitor the SDG achievements in different regions within Belarus (85 correspond to the indicators of the national list and 26 reflect the specifics of regional development).

There has been a significant improvement on the availability of data in the past years. In 2017, for instance, complete information was only available for 38% of the indicators, partial information for 22%, and data and calculation methodology were missing for almost 40% of the indicators. In 2022, 86% of the indicators are available, with depth of time series where possible since 2000.

1. See: [https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI\\_2019\\_report\\_country\\_profiles\\_DEC2019\\_UPDATES.pdf](https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf)

2. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/16357Belarus.pdf> (2017, the report is only available in Russian); <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Belarus%20Report%20English.pdf> (2022)

3. See: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26862Belarus\\_General\\_Debate\\_English.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26862Belarus_General_Debate_English.pdf)

## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

In 2017, Belarus presented its first VNR to the HLPF on its strategy to align and integrate the SDGs into national, sectoral, regional and local development plans, as well as the expansion of LRG powers in the area of sustainable development activities. This was further supported by development strategies towards a regional approach nationwide Conference on Strategies and Partnership for the SDGs held in 2018.<sup>4</sup>

The Sustainable Development Council of Belarus includes local government representatives, although the VNR provides no specific information in terms of the quality of their participation. Some LRGs, such as Mogilev, are only involved at the consultative level in the national coordination mechanism, without any decision-making power.<sup>5</sup>

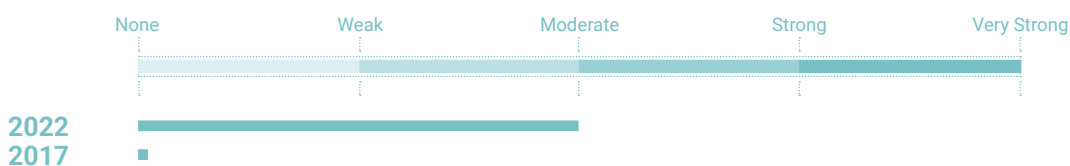
The Council upholds a commitment to build on joint efforts of central and local governments to improve monitoring of SDG implementation, as well as a commitment to localize the SDGs appears to serve as a trigger for decentralization reform in Belarus. Members of the Council representing regions and the capital city of Minsk are heading up SDG focal groups. These groups, along with local government officials, also include business and civic association representatives. Moreover, future plans pay particular attention to strengthening the capacity of regional SDG groups, introducing national SDG indicators into local-level policy documents, as well as conducting an information campaign in the regions.<sup>6</sup>

Subnational governments are required to align their plans with the national strategy, which integrates the SDGs.<sup>7</sup> Strategies for sustainable development have been developed for all six regions and for a number of cities and districts.<sup>8</sup>

The 2022 VNR provides very limited information on local governments' role in the implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the period up to 2035 and the Programme of Social and Economic Development for 2021-2025. Whereas there is no specific information in terms of the quality of local governments' participation. In terms of participation in national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation, subnational governments have representatives in the National Council for Sustainable Development. With regard to their involvement in monitoring and reporting processes, some local governments such as Mogilev participated in the 2022 VNR through a survey.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

#### ► In the VNR process



Comments: Some LRGs such as Mogilev participated in the 2022 VNR through a survey.

#### ► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: The 2022 VNR provides no specific information in terms of the quality of LRG participation. Mogilev indicates regular participation in the national Sustainable Development Council, but only at the consultative level (GTF Survey 2022).

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 2022 VNR has very limited references to LRGs and locally-led initiatives. Although it includes an analysis of SDG 11, no action carried out directly by municipalities is mentioned. The VNR also mentions reducing interregional disparities as an aim of several initiatives, but the few references to LRGs do not make them appear as strong, proactive actors.

4. See: <https://www.belstat.gov.by/en/o-belstate/news-and-events/events/belstat-representatives-took-part-in-the-conference-on-sustainable-development-strategies-and-partne/>

5. Answer of Mogilev to the GTF Survey 2022.

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

7. 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)

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

9. 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)

## 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

- ▶ **Minsk** adopted in 2005 its 2020 Strategic Plan for Sustainable Development. Minsk's strategic objective in particular is based on the "Five cities in one" formula. This implies five development priorities towards the achievement of SDG 3, 8, 9, 16, and 17.<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ The region of **Vitebsk** adopted in 2015 its 2025 Development Strategy.<sup>11</sup>
- ▶ In 2020, the region of **Mogilev** adopted its Sustainable Development Strategy towards 2035, as well as a plan for disseminating the SDGs in its territory together with the national government.<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ The **Puchavičy District**, located near Minsk, suffered greatly from unauthorized solid waste dumps which contaminated the environment. As a response, Puchavičy launched a project with the objective of improving environmental conditions in the district. The local government developed a three-year municipal waste treatment strategy (2016-2018) and established a system for collecting electrical and electronic equipment and elimination of unauthorized dumps. It also promoted large-scale awareness-raising efforts aimed at bringing waste management to the attention of the local community.<sup>13</sup>
- ▶ The national government launched the Smart Cities of Belarus project for the 2021-2025 period, as well as several wastewater treatment projects, a project to empower women's leadership and entrepreneurialism and another project called Healthy Cities and Towns.<sup>14</sup>

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

Not applicable.

## 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

It is reported that about 70% of the national budget is allocated to the implementation of the provisions of the 2030 Agenda (see VNR, 2022, p. 7). The implementation of the SDGs is also ensured through the expanded application of results-based budgeting in various sectors of the economy and areas. In the financial sector, the state programme "Public Finance Management and Financial Market Development" is implemented until 2025.

# 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments:** Although Belarus accords *de jure* autonomy to local councils, local councils have neither the real authority nor the resources to make and execute decisions. The Law on Local Government and Self-Governance, adopted in 2020, has not much altered this situation.<sup>15</sup> This law regulates competencies of local councils and of the executive committees of regions, basic (districts) and primary (towns, settlements) levels. According to the law, the regional councils are superior to the councils at the "basic and primary" levels and basic-level councils are superior to the councils at the primary level. Executive committees of the upper level of government can cancel the decisions of lower executive bodies if they do not comply with their provisions. Belarus has not signed the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

In Belarus, there are no LGAs hitherto. In 2018, the Belarus parliament conducted a seminar to discuss the establishment of local councils associations in partnership with the Council of Europe.

## 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

More than 30% of local self-government bodies are headed by female mayors.<sup>16</sup>

## 3.2 COVID 19

To foster a sustainable recovery from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Business and Career Days for Women were held. The 2022 VNR has no reference to initiatives at the local level.

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

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

12. Answer of the Mogilev region to the GTF survey in 2022. See also: 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)

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

14. 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)

15. 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)

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

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>17</sup>

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		48.2 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	-
	Rural	-
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	80 (2020)
	Rural	49 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		2.3 (2020)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		100 (2012, All areas or breakdown by cities not available)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		17.5 (2019)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		5.5 (2021)

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