

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) is a unitary constitutional monarchy with 67 local governments at the municipal level. They are divided into 12 urban councils, and 55 rural councils.¹ The urban municipalities are acknowledged by the constitution as decentralized entities, while the rural municipalities have very limited autonomy.²



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).³

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The country has mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda and African Union Agenda 2063 into its strategies and plans. The SDGs were in line with **Vision 2022** contained in the **Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth 2030 (SSDIG)** and the **National Development Strategy (NDS)**, which came to an end in 2022 and is currently under review. A preliminary assessment of the performance of the **National Development Plan** adopted in 2019 has also been carried out. Eswatini is developing a new **National Development Plan 2023-2025** that will guide economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as low-emissions and climate-resilient economic transformation. In addition, the country has adhered to Sustainable Development Conventions such as the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Multistakeholder mechanisms with a more technical character are put in place.⁴ The institutional arrangement to implement SDGs involves the **SDGs Technical Working Team (SDGs TWT)** and the **SDGs Steering Committee**. The former includes representatives of government, business society, civil society organizations, academics and experts; while the latter comprises principal secretaries responsible for the overall coordination of SDGs. The **SDGs Secretariat** is under the **Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD)**.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The preparation of the 2022 VNR was led by the **Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (MEPD)**. Within MEPD, the **SDGs Core Team**, composed of MEPD officers with a representative from the Central Statistics Office, led the process of drafting the VNR and providing technical advice, in collaboration with the **SDGs TWT**. Regional level consultations involved development practitioners in government ministries, municipalities, NGOs, civil society organizations, faith-based organizations, and traditional authorities.

1.3 MONITORING

The **SDGs TWT** monitors the progress towards the SDGs at the sector level, while the **SDGs Data Matrix** was used to record performance of SDG indicators and targets. However, the 2022 VNR acknowledged several limitations such as the unavailability of timely data from periodical surveys for some SDGs indicators. Whereas some data required for reporting under the development agendas were not collected, in particular qualitative data such as perception or opinion survey.

1. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

2. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2021, "Assessing the Institutional Environment of Cities and Subnational Governments in Africa",

https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf

3. See: https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/24651Eswatini_VNR_Final_Report.pdf (2019);

<https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Eswatini%20Report.pdf> (2022)

4. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

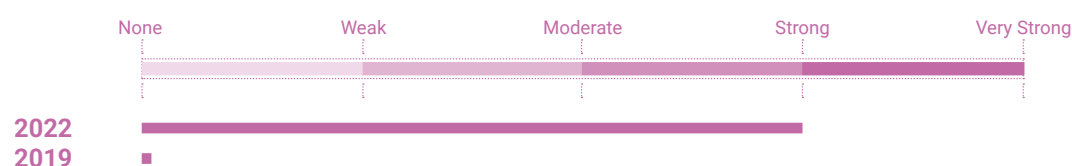
2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The 2022 VNR acknowledges that there is limited capacity for effective implementation of the SDGs at subnational levels, while calling for greater visibility at the regional and local government levels. The report also mentions the limited integration of SDGs in regional development plans. Nonetheless, the VNR accounted for the SDG domestication process, including the development and alignment of new and existing local level policies and development plans, as well as the continuous engagement of stakeholders at the regional and local levels in reviewing progress. The domestication effort has reportedly contributed to the creation of ownership of the SDGs at the regional and local levels, despite little evidence of LRG-led initiatives in the VNR.

The **Eswatini Local Government Association (ELGA)** has regularly been involved in all stages of the 2022 reporting process, although not on a regular basis.⁵

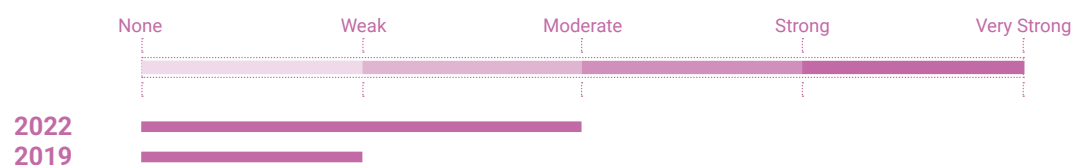
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: Municipalities were involved in regional-level consultations.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: No evidence of LRGs' involvement in the national multistakeholder mechanisms.

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

LRGs are mentioned throughout the VNR, which has displayed the desire of the Eswatini government to strengthen SDG implementation at the local level. Moreover, a chapter is dedicated to the "Review of SDGs Implementation at Regional Level", showcasing initiatives such as the decentralization of services and budget.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Action Plan has been adopted, while the proportion of local governments that implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies increased from 23% in 2016 to 29% in 2021.

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

Not applicable.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

At the national level, the fiscal challenges in the country have led to limited resources available for effective SDG implementation. The national government has provided the **Regional Development Fund** to improve infrastructure and development in general across regions. In addition, various economic empowerment funds (ie. Youth fund, Small Medium Entrepreneurs fund), which benefits all regions, can also be accessed.

5. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: In the past decade, Eswatini has carried out local government reforms. One major policy shift in line with the 2005 constitution and the **decentralization** policy in 2006 was the incorporation of the traditional authorities or Tinkhundla into the administration, through the establishment of the **Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development (MTAD)** in 2009. Key responsibilities of the MTAD include improving the capacity of regional Tinkhundla and chiefdoms to plan, implement, manage and monitor social development programs and the delivery of basic services for their constituencies. With 55 Tinkhundla that cover the length and breadth of the country, these structures bring the monarchy closer to its citizens. However, the policy reforms that have been initiated fall short of the mandate of the 2005 Constitution which calls for fully accountable and joined-up local governments, since chiefs are accountable not to their communities but to the King or Ngwenyama.⁶

In 2015, a bill was introduced to replace the 1969 Urban Government Act, which grants legal status to rural councils, but it was not passed into law. Political parties are excluded from local elections. The latest local elections were held in October 2017.⁷

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

No reference.

3.2 COVID 19

The 2022 VNR dedicated a chapter to the “Impact of COVID-19 on the Implementation of SDGs”. The national government established emergency coordination structures, including regional and sector committees.

4. SDG INDICATORS⁸

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		14.2 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	89 (2020)
	Rural	-
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 (%)		32.1 (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)		19.9 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		34.3 (2018)

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

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