

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The Gambia is a unitary country with three types of local government units with councils composed of elected members, including 6 area councils, the Kanifing municipal council, and the Banjul city council. The country is further divided into 43 districts (sub-municipal level administrations). While municipal councils are headed by mayors, area councils are governed by chairpersons. Both mayors and chairpersons are elected by universal adult suffrage. The most recent local elections were held in April 2018.<sup>1</sup> Traditional authorities are represented by the *alkalos* (village head) and chiefs (district traditional head), commonly known as *seyfolu*.<sup>2</sup>



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

## 1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The government had included the SDGs into the **National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2021** and had aligned the institutional arrangements for the SDGs and the NDP to enhance effective and efficient coordination among stakeholders. A new **Recovery Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP 2023-2027)** addressing different facets of the COVID-19 pandemic and the SDGs is also expected to be implemented in 2023.

### 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The key institutions involved in oversight and policy coordination of SDG implementation are: the **Cabinet**, the **National Assembly**, and the **Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee**. For the technical and implementation function, the following structures have been adopted: the **National Technical Steering Committee (NTSC)**,<sup>4</sup> the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), the National Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) platform, the Sector Working Groups (SWG), and the Regional Technical Advisory Committees (RTACs).

### 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

A **national VNR steering committee** was set up for both 2020 and 2022 VNR processes,<sup>5</sup> comprising the government, the National Assembly, the private sector, academia, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, development partners, the youth, and women. In addition, a team from the **Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)** ensured the availability and validity of data presented in the 2022 VNR report, while the UN system provided both technical and financial support. The process also included internal consultations at the regional level across all local governments as well as the preparation of three VLRs (see below).

### 1.3 MONITORING

The 2020 VNR mentioned that there would be plans to establish an SDG coordination unit at the **Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)** for supporting disaggregated data collection, provision of quality assurance and analysis of relevant SDG indicators at both the national and subnational levels. In the 2020 VNR, The Gambia was only able to report on 52% of the SDG indicators, leading to the conduct of an SDG survey in the following year. Whereas the 2022 VNR mentions that the **Gambia Information Monitoring and Evaluation System** has been set up to monitor and report on the national development plan. The Gambia also launched a National Development Platform to facilitate online data collection and dissemination, enhancing SDG alignment

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

2. See: <https://www.sng-wofi.org/country-profiles/>

3. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/263072020GambiaVNR.pdf> (2020);

<https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/Gambia%20VNR%20Report%20%28Advance%20Copy%29.pdf> (2022).

4. The NTSC comprises all the Permanent Secretaries of the various Ministries, headed by the Secretary General and Head of civil service.

5. The National Technical Steering Committee (NTSC) is the overarching body responsible for the monitoring, coordination, and resource mobilization for the 2022 VNR.

and reporting with the National Development Plan. While the Gambia Bureau of Statistics provides leadership in the overall SDG data collection and analysis, the 2022 VNR recognizes the need to strengthen the country's National Statistical System.

## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

At the regional level, the **Regional Technical Advisory Committees** (RTACs) are supported by the Directorate of Development Planning (DDP) to ensure the technical implementation and localization of the SDGs. The 2022 VNR confirms that all local governments have formulated regional development plans that are aligned to the NDP and SDGs. In addition, the country has set up a **Planners Forum**, which brings together national and local government planners to consistently dialogue and review planning and implementation of sector policies and programmes.

Regarding the 2020 VNR process, the Team Leader of the VNR organized a comprehensive consultations with stakeholders across all local government areas. Consultations followed a qualitative approach with focus group discussions held in each of the areas. For the 2022 VNR, local level consultations targeted members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) at regional level and men, women, youth, children, persons living with disability, private sector and civil society at community level. The **Gambia Association of Local Governments Authorities (GALGA)** has been appointed a member of the 2022 VNR Project Steering Committee. Finally, the government intended to conduct a post-VNR outreach and engagement aiming at enhancing the ownership of the SDGs at the local level.

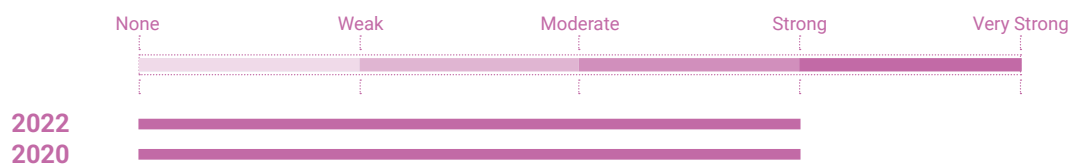
### 2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

#### ► In the VNR process



Comments: The Gambia Association of Local Governments Authorities (GALGA) was a member of the 2022 VNR Project Steering Committee.

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



Comments: There are different committees/platforms/forums implemented to ensure SDG localization at the local level.

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

There are no specific references or subsections dedicated to local government actions in the 2020 VNR. In the 2022 VNR, there are references in different subsections to local governments with regards to consultation and SDG localization, as well as the production of VLRs.

### 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► **Kanifing** Municipal Council (KMC), **Banjul** City Council (BCC) and **Brikama** Area Council (BAC) have joined forces in an organic waste management project. The initiative is financed by the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona (Spain) to the tune of 100,000 euros (nearly 6.25 million Gambian dalasis).<sup>6</sup>

► The Gambia has developed local and national strategies for disaster risk reduction and mainstreamed them into local plans. The country has also developed the National Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan 2019 – 2030 in the wake of "Building Back Better" initiative during and post disasters, taking into account the local needs and contexts.

► In **Banjul**, the first woman mayor Rohey Malick Lowe created a microfinancing scheme to help homemakers become market traders. Such measures increase women's financial independence and personal autonomy.

► The **Gambia Association of Local Governments (GALGA)** led a project named Localising SDGs: Improving the Livelihood of Vulnerable Women and Youth around the Senegambia Bridge.<sup>7</sup>

6. More information about this project here: <https://www.afrik21.africa/en/gambia-an-organic-waste-management-project-is-launched-in-greater-banjul/>

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)

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

The national government and GALGA promoted, with the support of the United Nations, the production of three VLRs that feed into the 2022 VNR. The VLRs gave the local councils the opportunity to review their progress in localizing the SDGs.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The Gambia launched the SDGs through a development forum in 2015. The national launch focused on the theme ‘the post 2015 Agenda and its financing at local level’ and provided a platform for the government to locally adopt the post-2015 agenda. In line with SDG 17, the government of The Gambia recognizes the role of development financing, technology transfer and adoption, and capacity building in the attainment of the SDGs targets. In this regard, the government is currently leveraging information technology in managing government financial accounting and reporting, revenue generations, records keeping and monitoring and evaluation, procurement, debt management, etc. The **Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS)** has been fully rolled out to all sub-treasuries, embassies and local government councils. An integrated monitoring and evaluation platform is used to monitor progress of SDG implementation and e-procurement. The 2022 VNR also mentions that the government of The Gambia is planning on digitalizing the revenue collection and has initiated the processes of developing a new Payment Gateway Platform, which will interface with the core banking system of the Central Bank of The Gambia, the Gambia Revenue Authority, commercial banks and the IFMIS. Other means related to SDG implementation such as enhancing domestic borrowing and improved revenue collection mechanisms are also highlighted.

## 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments:** A National Policy for Decentralization and Local Development (2015–2024) has been formulated. It will be implemented in two phases, during 2015–2019 and 2020–2024 respectively.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

In The Gambia, a new draft constitution has been completed which advocates for gender balance and fair representation of women (along with youth and persons with disabilities) at decision-making levels. Although there are still several constraints in the area of gender equality, it is important to note that in 2018, a woman was first elected mayor of **Banjul**, the capital city. Two of the five governors are females, and there is one female among the eight heads of local councils. At the national level, the National SDGs Steering Committee also includes women representatives. Finally, women participated in the development of the 2020 VNR: the national VNR Taskforce set up by The Gambia included women along with other stakeholders. For the 2022 VNR, women also participated in consultation at community level.

### 3.2 COVID 19

The 2020 VNR very clearly highlighted the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the multi-dimensional impacts of the health crisis indicated the integrated nature of sustainable development as reflected in the SDGs, the VNR highlighted the challenges ahead for the country to achieve the SDGs, since a large part of its resources have been diverted to fighting the pandemic. Finally, the report recalled the importance of partnerships to cope with the crisis. The private sector, civil society organizations and individual philanthropists were then mentioned. On the other hand, local governments are not mentioned at all in both 2020 and 2022 VNRs.

8. The three local government areas include Kuntaur Area Council, Brikama Area Council and Kanifing Municipal Council.

See: <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/un-galga-and-partners-commence-vlr-exercise-in-gambia>

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

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>10</sup>

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		-
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	67 (2020)
	Rural	8 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	32 (2020)
	Rural	24 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		27.1 (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)		57.7 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		100 (2018)

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