GHANA

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Ghana is a unitary republic with a single tier of subnational government, composed of 6 metropolitan assemblies (Accra, Tema, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi, Kumasi and Tamale), 117 municipal assemblies, and 138 district assemblies.[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

The SDGs are integrated in Ghana's development agenda as well as planning and budgeting processes. The SDGs are mainstreamed in the government's **Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017-2024)**. The policy objectives, strategies, and result matrix of the **Medium-term National Development Frameworks (2018-2021 & 2022-2025)** are also consistent with the SDGs. In particular, the **Medium-term National Development Policy Framework (2022-2025)** has integrated the 2030 Agenda with emphasis on "emergency planning and COVID-19 recovery response". The national development blueprint, **An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All (2017-2024)**, also reflects the SDGs.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

As stated by both 2019 and 2022 VNRs, the architecture for coordination of SDG implementation operates within the decentralized planning system of the country. It is made up of the **High-Level Ministerial Committee (HLMC)** which is responsible for providing leadership and strategic oversight of the implementation process, the **SDGs Implementation Coordinating Committee (SDGs-ICC)** and a **Technical Committee (TC)**. The SDGs-ICC and TC have representatives from government, civil society and the private sector, while the UN Country Team has observer status on the HLMC. There is also a **CSOs Platform on SDGs**.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The 2019 VNR was conducted with the active participation of a wide range of state and non-state actors (parliamentarians, civil society organizations, the private sector, school children, traditional authorities and academia) at both national and subnational levels. The VNR process was coordinated by the **SDGs-ICC** under the supervision of the High Level Ministerial Committee on SDGs. A team of local experts was constituted to support data collection, analysis and drafting of background technical papers for the VNR. They comprised experts in youth issues, governance, economics, an economist, a research science, and a social science. Whereas the 2022 VNR process was similarly coordinated by the **SDGs-ICC** hosted at the **National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)**. The **Technical Committee (TC)** was reactivated to provide technical backstopping to the entire process. The 2022 VNR is the result of a consultative and participatory process involving national ministries, departments and agencies, metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies, civil society organizations (including representation of youth, women, children and persons with disabilities), the private sector, UN agencies and development partners. A total of 102 indicators were assessed in the 2022 VNR compared to 66 in 2019.

1.3 MONITORING

Both 2019 and 2022 VNRs state that access to reliable and timely data at the appropriate levels of disaggregation is a major concern across sectors and at all levels. The Statistical Service Act 2019 placed the **Ghana Statistical Service (GSS)** as the core institution for the National Statistical System and the strengthening of the production of quality, relevant, accurate and timely statistical information for the purpose of national development. The **GSS** conducted a review of data availability for SDG indicator production at all levels, which resulted in the creation of the **National Data Roadmap**, to be implemented through a

multi-stakeholder advisory committee. An **online SDGs data reporting platform** was launched to make disaggregated data easily accessible.

The 2022 VNR highlights the need for strengthening monitoring systems and improving collaboration between local and international research institutions and implementers at all levels. Since the National Statistical Development Plan was implemented, statistical departments have also been established at the local level, to help improve and ensure conformity of data generated to the principles of official statistics.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

Ghana has taken advantage of its decentralized planning system to ensure better coordination of the SDG implementation process: the national government decided to reinforce the regional and local coordinating councils to ensure vertical and horizontal coordination.

Local government assemblies are required to follow guidelines laid down by the national government and to align their medium-term development plans and activities with the SDGs. The **National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)** works with the local assemblies and the NDPC to assist such alignment in order to aid standardization and localization, as well as local reporting.[3] The NALAG also supports these alignment efforts through training and awareness workshops in partnership with Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs).[4]

Regarding the VNRs, metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies in Ghana are acknowledged as key stakeholders in the reporting processes- They also submitted case studies and best practices.[5] As part of the 2019 VNR process, a four-day campaign was carried out concurrently in the cities of Cape Coast, Kumasi and Tamale to engage with selected stakeholders and mobilize support for the implementation of the SDGs. The 2022 VNR states that the policy objectives, strategies, and result matrix of the Medium-term National Development Frameworks (2018-2021 & 2022-2025), which are consistent with the SDGs, are translated into actions by metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies. The 2022 VNR mentions the participation of metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies as key stakeholders in the reporting process; a case study template, developed to receive information on innovative interventions, was shared with them.

Renewed partnership with traditional authorities is being mobilized to strengthen local governance for sustainable development actions around specific SDGs in local communities. More recently the Kyebi Traditional Area has shown commitment towards accelerated climate action.[6]

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

▶ **In the VNR process**

Comments: Metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies are mentioned in a side note among the stakeholders involved in the 2022 VNR consultation process.

▶ **In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation**

Comments: LRGs' involvement in national mechanisms is limited.

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 last item of the conclusion of the 2029 VNR concerns LRGs: "Strengthening Local Government Capacity" (see VNR, 2019, p. 93). Local assemblies are referred to throughout the 2019 report, without examples of locally-led initiatives for SDG implementation.

The conclusion of the 2022 VNR states that "promoting the 'Leaving No One Behind' agenda requires strengthening the

3. In this framework, the CLGF has been undertaking a programme on achieving the SDGs through LED in Ghana to improve the capacity of four Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to align their development plans to LED and SDG targets. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
4. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf
5. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf
6. The Kyebi declaration calls for increased urgency for climate action with local communities.

research capacity, especially at the local level. This can be achieved through collaborative efforts to build the capacity of metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies, and national ministries and development agencies" (see VNR, 2022, p. 132) While there are some references to local assemblies and very few examples, most national programmes in the territories are implemented from a top-down approach. There is also no reference to the VLR of Accra.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

►The **National Association of Local Authorities of Ghana (NALAG)** undertook SDG awareness training for staff and its national executive council. It also organized nationwide SDG sensitization workshops in all ten regions in 2017 'to educate [its] members and the local authorities on what these targets and goals are and why it is important to carry everyone along' and the benefits these have for District Assemblies. In collaboration with UCLG Africa and the Ghana Institute of Management and Public and Administration, NALAG organized a training of trainers' workshop in 2019 to build the capacities of local government officers to localize the SDGs and adopt strategic planning at the local level. NALAG has also been working with the CSO Platform on SDGs and development partners such as the German Society for International Development (GIZ) and CLGF on SDG localization.[7]

►In the city of **Accra**, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) is incorporating the informal waste collectors into the contracts signed with waste collection companies, as part of its membership of the 100RC initiative. In 2017, the city commissioned a waste transfer station that serves as a transit point for waste hauled from other parts of the city by informal collectors who service communities located in poorly planned areas of the city. Because of the success of this approach, AMA is in the process of registering all informal waste collectors to regulate their operations.[8] **Accra** has also devised programmes that help empower market women to become familiar with basic financial management, the city's economic strategies and the processes for obtaining permits.[9]

►In **Kumasi**, a comprehensive decongestion effort of the city center is being implemented by an interdepartmental local government team together with other local governments and stakeholders such as 'market queens', transport unions, and the university.[10]

►In **Sekondi-Takoradi**, citizens have access to scorecards to assess their satisfaction with the quality of public service delivery to the poorer communities. With the support of the Open Government Partnership, the metropolitan assembly of these twin cities has made considerable progress in obtaining better sanitation, access to toilets, and street lighting (which has resulted in a reduction in nighttime crime).[11]

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

The city of **Accra** published a VLR in 2020.[12] However, it is not mentioned in the 2022 VNR.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The national budget has been aligned with the SDGs, with budget codes linked to at least one SDGs target. To raise adequate resources to finance the SDGs and to ensure that each of the goals is adequately funded, Ghana has adopted the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA)** as the main framework for mobilization of resources. Ghana's Budget has been aligned with the SDGs, with budget codes linked to one or more of the SDGs targets. The **Ministry of Finance** has developed a tool that helps track government allocations and expenditure on each SDG target. The allocations provide a measure of the government's actual commitment to the goals, while information on actual spending shows whether the government has followed through on the planned budget expenditure. Also, a **Green Fund** has been created to support the scaling up of interventions in the renewable energy sector, and, most especially, transitioning towards widespread use of solar power.
According to the 2022 VNR, annual allocation and expenditure aligned to SDGs allows for tracking of financing through SDG budgeting reports, enabling the government, private sector, partners, civil society organization and traditional authorities to better engage on funding for the implementation of the SDGs. It is also mentioned that Ghana's fiscal **decentralization** drive and the changing development finance landscape informed the decision to adopt a bottom-up approach. In addition, diaspora funds, SDGs Investor Maps and SDGs Investment Fair, integrated national financing frameworks, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement are also opportunities of innovative financing (see VNR, 2022, p. 129).

7. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
8. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf
9. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/accra_2020.pdf
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. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/accra_2020.pdf

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: Regarding the decentralization process, local governments and decentralization are explicitly mentioned in Article 240/1 and Article 241/3 of the current 1992 Constitution. The **Decentralization Policy Framework II (2015-2019) and National Decentralization Action Plan (2015- 2019)** were launched in 2015 and 2016 respectively, while the Local Government Bill consolidated the legal provisions. In 2017, a tentative proposal to introduce direct universal suffrage for the election of local executives was abandoned. The last local assemblies' elections were held in 2019.[13] The district chief executive, as well as 30% of municipal council members are appointed by the central government following consultation with local primary actors.[14]

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

According to the 2019 VNR, the proportion of women appointed as chief executives of local governments increased from 10.3% in 2016 to 14.8% in 2018. The proportion of women elected as members of local governments declined from 11% in 2009 to 5% in 2017. As a total of 30% of municipal council members are appointed by the central government, legislation stipulates that half of the appointed members of local assemblies must be women, and 30% of the representatives of traditional authorities must be women as well.[15] However, there is no reference in the 2022 VNR.

3.2 COVID 19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ghana has explicitly integrated a new development pillar to the three pillars of sustainable development, on emergency planning and response, aimed at building resilience to withstand different types of shocks, including COVID-19. The medium-term National Development Framework emphasizes "emergency planning and COVID-19 recovery response".

4. SDG INDICATORS[16]

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		3.8 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	60 (2020)
	Rural	16 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	12 (2020)
	Rural	15 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		30.4 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		58.8 (2015, Accra)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		54.5 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		1.1 (2020)

13. 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
14. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2022.pdf
15. 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
16. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/database