

## TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Greece is a unitary republic with a two-tiered subnational government structure. The country is divided into 325 municipalities and 13 regions.<sup>1</sup> Greece also has one autonomous territorial entity: the Community of Mount Athos Monasteries. Each region has a regional council and a head of the region elected by universal suffrage for a period of five years.<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

Both the **National Growth Strategy** and the **8 National Priorities for SDGs**<sup>4</sup> were adopted in 2018 and are in line with the SDGs. The national **Recovery and Resilience Plan** (RRP, "Greece 2.0") adopted in 2021 is structured around four key pillars linked to the core priorities and objectives of the SDGs, including green transition, digital transition, employment, skills and social cohesion, and private investment, economic and institutional transformation. The **National Reform Plan (NRP)** sets out reform measures and government interventions carried out by the whole government and its ministries which integrate the main objectives and priorities of the SDGs. In addition, over the last few years, multiple strategies were adopted, including the Just Transition Development Plan (JTDP), the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), the National Rural Development Program (RDP) 2014-2020, with its extension for the period 2021-2022, and the National Strategy for Research and Innovation (2021-2027).

## 1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The overall responsibility for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level lies with the **Presidency of the Government (PoG)**, which oversees the planning process and ensures the promotion of a whole-of-government approach for SDG implementation. The PoG comprises executive units and processes for policies related to SDG implementation, including the General Secretariat of Coordination (GSCO), the General Secretariat for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (GSLPA), and the Special Secretariat for Strategic Foresight (SSSF). The **Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs**, which include representatives from the ministries and other governmental bodies, acts as focal points for SDGs-related issues (see VNR 2022, p. 12).

In recent years, the **Special Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection (SPPCEP)** has enhanced its role with regard to the promotion and implementation of a wide range of SDGs. It initiates and steers debates about the SDGs, integrates the SDGs in its annual reports and monitors government initiatives on whether they are effectively and comprehensively promoting the 2030 Agenda and ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development.

## 1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The **Inter-ministerial Coordination Network for the SDGs** was responsible for the preparation and drafting of the 2018 VNR. Ministries, as well as other stakeholders (Economic and Social Committee of Greece, local and regional authorities, academia and research institutes, the private sector and civil society organizations), have contributed to the drafting of the report.

The preparation and drafting of the 2022 VNR were steered by a specific **Working Group on the SDGs** set up within the PoG in 2021, in close cooperation and consultation with key stakeholders, including the Hellenic Parliament, regional and local authorities, social partners, and civil society organizations, and guided by a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The 2022 VNR of Greece was the result of three rounds of consultations. The first and second rounds involved ministries and social partners, while the third round comprised a 10-day public deliberation and received comments from stakeholders such as civil society organizations, private citizens, ministries and UNICEF.

1. The 2010 Kallikratis Reform created 13 fully self-governing regions with new responsibilities in the area of regional planning and development, including structural funds (transferred from the prefectures) and merged municipalities.

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

3. See: [https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/19378Greece\\_VNR\\_Greece\\_2018\\_pdf\\_FINAL\\_140618.pdf](https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/19378Greece_VNR_Greece_2018_pdf_FINAL_140618.pdf) (2018); <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Greece%20Report.pdf> (2022)

4. The 8 National Strategies are presented in the VNR, 2018, p. 27.

## 1.3 MONITORING

The GSCO within the PoG manages a monitoring and review mechanism responsible for measuring progress towards the implementation of government work and evaluating systematically strategies, policies, and reform measures related to the SDGs. The whole monitoring process is performed by using a special management information system, called “MAZI”, in which all the implementation details, including responsible parties, deadlines, deliverables and intermediate milestones, are stored.

The **Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT)**, as coordinator of the **Hellenic Statistical System (ELSS)**, identifies and produces the data required for the SDGs. The ELSS is the set of rules, tasks, and competent bodies responsible for the execution of statistical assignments, with the aim of developing, producing, and disseminating the official statistics of the country. The ELSTAT website contains a section dedicated to SDG-related statistics.<sup>5</sup> In 2020 and 2022, **ELSTAT** reviewed and updated a comprehensive set of national indicators on the SDGs, after consultation with ministries, in order to monitor the quantitative progress made towards the achievement of the SDGs at the national level. These national indicators are subject to regular revisions, based on the available official statistics and data. As the statistical focal point, ELSTAT actively participates in United Nations Statistical Commission’s Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and EU Working Group on Sustainable Development meetings.

## 2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

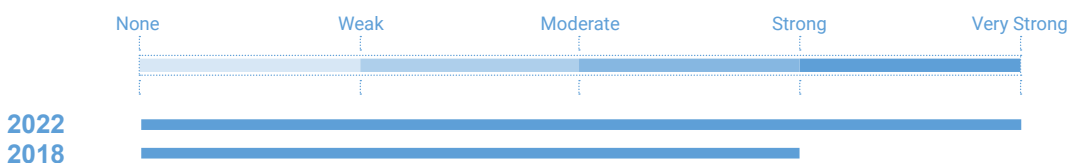
The 2018 VNR acknowledged that there were numerous important local government policies, services and actions related to the SDGs. However, the local and regional administrations that develop and execute these policies and projects were not often aware of their possible relevance to specific SDGs. Thus, the VNR stated that what was needed were actions to raise awareness and advocate for the active role of local actors, and support them in achieving the SDGs.

During the 2018 VNR process, the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), the Association of Greek Regions (ENPE) expressed their views concerning the national prioritization of the SDGs, along with many other stakeholders.

During the preparation of the 2022 VNR, regional and local authorities were consulted regularly through the **Working Group on the SDGs** within the PoG. Contributions from the **Association of Greek Regions (ENPE)** and the **Central Union Of Greek Municipalities (KEDE)** are included in the annex of the 2022 VNR.

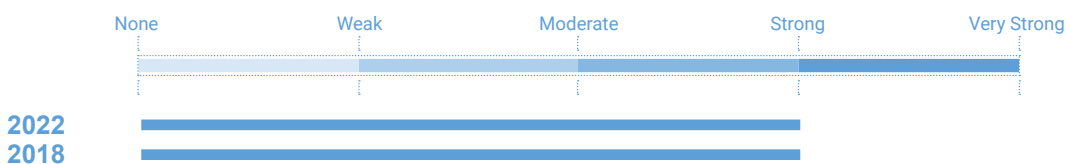
### 2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

#### ► In the VNR process



Comments: LRGs participated regularly in the 2022 VNR process.

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



Comments: LRGs are engaged in the multi-stakeholder working group on the SDGs.

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 were numerous references to the local level in the presentation of the multilevel approach to SDG implementation in Greece, in the 2018 VNR. In addition, there was a subsection dedicated to LRGs and SDG localization (see VNR, 2018, p. 85): the report highlighted that “as all of the SDGs have targets directly related to the responsibilities of local and regional governments, particularly to their role in delivering basic services, their involvement is absolutely essential for the success of sustainable development”. This section included examples of local government initiatives (see some of them below). Regions were also mentioned.

5. See: <http://www.statistics.gr/en/sdgs>

The 2022 VNR mentions local governments and includes a section dedicated to local and regional authorities, under the chapter on enabling environments (see VNR, 2022, p. 23). The VNR mentions the 2020 VLR by the municipality of Skiathos, the contributions of the Association of Greek Regions (ENPE), as well as the priorities and proposals made by the Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE). A few good practices are also mentioned.

## 2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

▶ **Athens** developed a series of policies and initiatives aligned with SDG 11, and aimed to support the most vulnerable populations of the city, address issues of transparency, social and digital innovation, as well as establish and promote a sustainable and resilient long-term strategy. The municipality managed to build a robust system for critical relief and welfare services as well as a data collection system, rationalized administrative procedures and logistics. Athens has done so with the support of a wide range of partnerships with civil society institutions and the private sector. Beyond supporting with food and other basic needs over 20,000 people per week, the municipality of Athens also established a network of one-stop-shops for health care, psychological, social and legal services, while implementing a series of initiatives for children, youth and senior citizens, and migrants and forged noteworthy partnerships that provided significant results (most noticeable in the tourism sector) addressing SDG 8.

The Athens Resilience Strategy aims to create a city that is open, green, proactive and vibrant, setting forth concrete actions that address issues of maintenance, safety, efficiency and accountability, crisis preparedness and management (more details in the VNR, 2018, p. 86-87).

Moreover, **Solidarity Cities** is an initiative on the management of the refugee crisis proposed by the Mayor of Athens. It seeks to constitute a framework under which all actions and initiatives could represent the city's political leadership in addressing social crises.<sup>6</sup>

▶ The municipality of **Thessaloniki** is promoting urban agriculture by allocating small plots to vulnerable groups. The municipalities of **Thessaloniki** and **Livadeia**, a city of central Greece, launched two programmes supported by the UNHCR and funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid. Both projects, "REACT" and "ESTIA", aim to ensure decent living conditions, and provide health care and education to refugees and their children.

▶ The municipality of **Trikala** established five social structures: the Social Restaurant, the Social Grocery, the Social Pharmacy, the Homeless Daily-care Center and the Homeless Overnight Structure. In Trikala, technology-driven solutions are integrated into the daily life of the municipality, and government services are delivered to citizens through e-governance. From free Wi-Fi service throughout the city to tele-health care for the elderly, from driverless buses to the e-Dialogos platform where citizens can participate in the public life of the city and its decision-making, Trikala is using technology to increase transparency and improve citizen services.

▶ The municipality of **Halandri**, along with the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), and within the framework of the Horizon 2020 programme Waste4Think, has developed a pilot programme for waste separation at source and the valorization of household food waste for the production of products and energy.

▶ Some municipalities, like **Agios Dimitrios**, published a Sustainability Report, according to the G4 Guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative, setting 2016 as a reference year, and adopting the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact. The report presents the city's sustainable development strategy and initiatives, and it was based on a Materiality Analysis process, in which all the stakeholders were actively involved. In addition, the municipality has decided to take action towards the promotion of the SDGs by including initiatives and actions aiming to increase awareness by informing the citizens.

▶ A recent good practice example is the public agricultural livestock center of the city of **Kozani**. It consists of (i) a modern Agricultural and Veterinary Laboratory that will operate in collaboration with the Hellenic Agricultural Organisation Dimitra (ELGO DIMITRA) as a center of excellence in the agricultural and veterinary sector; (ii) the Agri-Food Partnership of Western Macedonia; and (iii) the Municipal Veterinarian. Supporting livestock as a natural environmental manager, utilizing innovative renewable energy sources and energy storage systems, and promoting triple-propeller partnerships, will result in enhanced cooperation on research, education and innovation.

▶ Another good practice example is the region of **Attica's** initiative "Social Network Attiki". It monitors, evaluates and implements social policy actions, related to social inclusion, employment, preventive healthcare, education and culture, and social and solidarity economy.

▶ The **Central Union of Greek Municipalities (KEDE)** participates in the national effort to formulate a realistic plan for efficient use of the resources coming from the Recovery Fund, which will have a positive impact on the implementation of the SDGs. KEDE proposes projects and interventions that enhance extroversion, promote innovation and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the integration of new technologies in the daily operation of the Greek multilevel governance system. It supports horizontal actions aimed at both the alleviation of intra-regional inequalities and decentralization.

▶ According to the **Association of Greek Regions (ENPE)**, the regions have thus far implemented 30,000 projects promoting regional development and local economies, creating new jobs, supporting social solidarity structures, improving the environment and upgrading education, health, tourism and culture.

The ENPE has committed in: (i) the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity by utilizing modern grazing management plans that do not harm the environment and the water resources, and contribute instead to the enrichment of aboveground and underground water tanks; and (ii) the protection of the environment through many actions aiming at saving energy, reducing water waste, reducing mileage, and raising public awareness about environmental issues.

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

► The **Antonis Tritsis Programme** is a broad national initiative, involving 5000 projects and 3 billion euros. It provides the foundation for local and regional sustainable development. It includes actions for social protection and cohesion, schemes to improve water and wastewater, waste management, road safety and climate resilience, smart city schemes, flood protection, earthquake protection in schools and improving public health measures against COVID-19. In addition, the Antonis Tritsis Programme includes, among others, plans to invest in the exploitation of geothermal fields, renewable energy sources, smart distribution, storage, and energy consumption systems. The new sustainable urban investment initiative will scale up priority investment including urban regeneration and increase renewable energy use to improve the quality of life of local residents and attractiveness for business and tourism.

► Other social programmes implemented locally include “Help at Home” and “Prevention at Home”. The first one has been running successfully since 1998. It is implemented by the municipalities of the country and the primary objective is to provide assistance to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those living alone or having a low income, through the provision of a wide range of services, from at-home medical and nursing treatment to the supply of food and other basic necessities. The latter is a new preventive healthcare programme aimed at supporting the inhabitants of mountainous and remote/inaccessible regions, by making possible, on the one hand, medical examinations at home for the inhabitants of the above regions who belong to vulnerable groups of population and, on the other hand, the automated dispatch of the results to contracted practitioners through the use of information and communication technologies.

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

Not applicable.

## 2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

In Greece, there is a wide range of financial instruments and means contributing to sustainable economic growth and the achievement of the SDGs, including the Public Investments Programme, the new Investment Law, the Public-Private Partnerships, the Hellenic Development Bank as well as the support provided by international financial institutions and other sources. They are presented in the 2018 VNR.

In 2021, the Greek government integrated sustainability and environmental footprint indicators in the process of drafting and implementing the state budget, within the framework of green budgeting, performance budgeting and spending review reform. The new Strategic Investment Framework is aligned with SDGs 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 17.

In 2020, the PoG published a new comprehensive and redesigned manual on **Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)**, which incorporates, for the first time, the SDGs into the regulatory policy and governance. The RIA plays a pivotal role in the promotion, integration and evaluation of the SDGs in the legislative process, mainly through the “explanatory report”, which describes, in a coherent and thorough manner, the main scope and objectives of the proposed legislative initiatives. The PoG is in the process of publishing a new comprehensive manual on **Ex-post Evaluation of Legislation**, which addresses the extent to which the existing legislation has contributed to the achievement of the SDGs.

## 3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

**General comments:** The contribution of other major stakeholders was mentioned as crucial in the 2018 VNR, including that of the **Economic and Social Committee of Greece (ESC)**, which is the constitutionally recognized institution responsible for the conduct of social dialogue, and in which the social partners and other key stakeholders are represented. More specifically, the ESC is working, following the model of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), on the basis of a tripartite structure representing the interests of three main groups: (i) one of employers-entrepreneurs; (ii) one of public and private sector employees; and (iii) one including other categories of interests groups such as farmers, self-employed people, professionals, consumers, environmental agencies, disabled people’s confederation, gender equality, multi-child parents associations, and **regional and local government** (through the **Central Union of Municipalities of Greece - KEDE**).

Greece’s process of decentralization entered its third phase in 2018. The country introduced a new electoral system with local and regional elections, a new system of representation in local and regional councils and a reorganization of supervisory authorities. In 2020, a draft law on multilevel governance was introduced to further increase subnational governments’ independence vis-à-vis the state and to extend their responsibilities, resources and staff accordingly.<sup>7</sup> The **Annual Action Plan of the Ministry of Interior** for 2022 outlines key actions that aim to strengthen multilevel governance by redistributing responsibilities vertically among the national, regional, and local governments, as well as to clarify the framework for responsibility allocation.

### 3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

In 2021, legislation was passed to encourage the participation of women in elections of local and regional authorities by setting a 40% quota.

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)

## 3.2 COVID 19

The Greek government adopted a vaccination program through multi-sector collaboration between the central government, local authorities, and civil society. The program involved local authorities and, in particular, social services, migrant integration centers and community centers.

## 4. SDG INDICATORS<sup>8</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	100 (2020, all area)
	Rural	100 (2020, all area)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	97 (2020)
	Rural	-
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		3 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		100 (2011, Athens)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		16.2 (2019)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

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