

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Italy is a unitary parliamentary democracy that has a three-tier system of subnational government. It comprises 20 regions, 107 provinces (including autonomous provinces, metropolitan cities and free municipal consortiums) and 7,904 municipalities.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 aligned with the **National Sustainable Development Strategy 2017-2030 (NSDS)**, organized according to the five sustainable development pillars: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The NSDS is an update of the former Environmental Action Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2010 and a first step towards a holistic policy framework widened to include social and economic dimensions, in line with the 2030 Agenda. The NSDS links the vision and objectives of the Ecological Transition Plan (ETP), which Italy approved in 2022, with the goals of the 2030 Agenda, building a common reference framework. The NSDS is actually under periodic revision. Three themes, namely policy coherence for sustainable development, localizing the SDGs, and stakeholder engagement, have been laid out.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **Ministry of Ecological Transition (MiTE)** created in 2021 introduced an **inter-institutional roundtable** including the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the line ministries, and the regions. Apart from the multistakeholder **National Forum for Sustainable Development**,³ a policy experiment has also been carried out to assess policy cohesion in achieving sustainability objectives. Launched in 2018, the Forum engages national and territorial institutions, non-state actors such as the academia, civil society members and experts. It focuses on linking reflections on the NSDS review to political contingency, and bridging high-level planning and programming and key actors.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The **Ministry of Ecological Transition** coordinated the 2022 VNR preparatory process at the national level, while regions, autonomous provinces and metropolitan cities have been involved through ad hoc VNR/VLR roundtables. The VNR followed the periodic revision of the NSDS, which is a three-year process mainly involving the **National Forum for Sustainable Development**. The Forum developed a position paper focusing on the three thematic areas of the 2022 VNR, which are policy coherence for sustainable development, localizing the SDGs, and stakeholder engagement. The Forum also produced a policy recommendations document about the interlinkages between the main sustainable development policies and the objectives of 6 Working Groups, which represent the following themes: “People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Youth, and Culture for Sustainability”.

On top of that, the **National Council for Development Cooperation (CNCS)** served as a key participatory mechanism set out by the 2030 Agenda where stakeholders contributed to identifying national challenges and possible SDG-related actions accounted for in the VNR.

Whereas VLRs from regions and metropolitan cities provided an integrated perspective, combining the VLR experience from a region and its metropolitan city as well as from different regions working together on common 2030 Agenda issues.

1. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Italy%20Report.pdf>

2. See: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/16341Italy.pdf> (2017);

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

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

199 civil society actors including associations, foundations, universities, private sector entities, and cooperatives are represented in the Forum.

1.3 MONITORING

In 2018, the Ministry of Ecological Transition established a **Working Group on indicators** related to the implementation of the NSDS, building on statistical measures available in the Istat-Sistan (the National Statistical System) Platform. The **National Statistical Offices** play a crucial role in delivering statistical information at the national and subnational levels for monitoring the SDGs.⁴

The **Contribution of Regions and Autonomous Provinces to the National Reform Programme** aims at fostering SDG integration in all policy sectors. Every year the Contribution is drafted by Cinsedo and Tecnostruttura delle Regioni and then approved in the "Conference of Regions" in order to "analyze the programmatic, regulatory and implementation reform interventions undertaken by regional institutions in the previous year" (see VNR, 2022, p. 14). Besides being a tool for monitoring reform interventions, the Contribution was used as an exercise for the European Semester's program linkage with Cohesion Policy and the SDGs.

Moreover, Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei has developed SDG indices including the SDSN SDGs City Index, an index for provinces and metropolitan cities with reference to the SDGs, and a tool for the Italian regions capable of deriving the relative regional positioning, with respect to the regional average, in each of the 16 out of 17 SDGs.

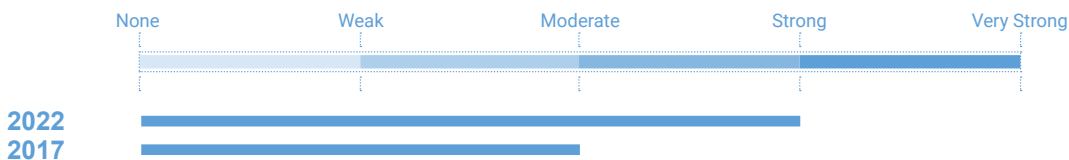
2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The Italian national government is attributing great importance to adopting an integrated territorial approach and an effective multilevel governance system. The 2017 VNR stated that "given the importance of declining the SDGs on a local scale and provided that some of the areas of competence and responsibilities rely not only on the central administration, the government, through the **State and Regions Conference**, will enhance local and regional authorities to be active and take part to the implementation process" (VNR, 2017, p. 5). Whereas the 2022 VNR confirms that LRGs will have to take part in the **implementation of the NSDS** according to their specific institutional mandates and competencies, given that the NSDS review process allows for the active involvement of regional authorities in fine-tuning the content of the strategy and identifying coordination actions.⁵

The **Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCIRE)** regretted that municipalities and provinces were not adequately involved in the 2022 VNR process. Even if AICCIRE has been presenting recommendations at an Italian side-event of the HLPF since 2019, its participation in the national reporting processes hasn't improved. In 2022, the association prepared the first Italian VSR (see below).

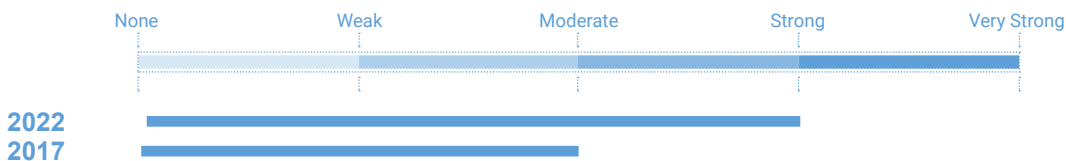
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: In 2022, regions, autonomous provinces and metropolitan cities were involved through ad hoc VNR/VLR roundtables.

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: LRGs are included in the participatory mechanisms at the national level regarding the NSDS review process and policy cohesion.

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 significantly more references to LRGs compared to the one in 2017. The effort in adopting an integrated territorial approach and an effective multilevel governance system is shown by dedicating a specific section to **SDG localization**. It is acknowledged that territories will play a key role in reaching sub-regional and sub-metropolitan governments in achieving

4. The indicators are updated twice a year. 354 statistical measures for 135 indicators were published in 2021, and 367 statistical measures for 138 indicators, including the update of 135 statistical measures and the introduction of 12 new measures, in February 2022.

5. Although the national strategy emphasized the roles of regions and autonomous provinces, provinces and municipalities have received little attention.

the 2030 Agenda. One of the annexes of the report is entirely focused on the regions and on the metropolitan areas, including 12 new VLRs.

The 2022 VNR reflects Italy's effort in the past years after the adoption of the NSDS in localizing the SDGs and improving policy cohesion through horizontal and vertical integration within Italy's governance system.⁶ Regional and local authorities have been actively engaged in the VNR and have prepared VLRs (see below). These reports highlighted the engagement of different levels of government in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, while showcasing the challenges encountered at the local and regional levels.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► **AICCRE** is a member of the **Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)**, also a multi-stakeholder initiative. With the collaboration of AICCRE, the online platform **SDG Portal 16** of the Bertelsmann Stiftung has been created.⁷ The Portal provides an intuitive and comparative presentation of the current progress of the cities (municipalities, capitals of provinces) in their path towards achieving the SDGs.

► Since 2020, **ASviS** has been publishing its "Rapporto Territori", which analyzes the progress of different territories, namely regions, autonomous provinces, provinces and metropolitan cities, and urban areas.⁸

► **Abruzzo Region** has signed an agreement with the Ministry of the Environment (MATTM) to develop a regional Sustainable Development Strategy in the framework of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. In particular, the region is coordinating with some municipalities towards the elaboration of joint local plans on sustainable energy and adaptation to climate change. The region has also identified local SDG-related indicators, and reports a challenge in connecting the local to the national set of indicators.⁹

► The metropolitan city of Bologna published its "**Agenda 2.0 for Sustainable Development**".¹⁰ The metropolitan cities of Florence, Genoa, Messina, Milan, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Turin and Venice are working on their Metropolitan Agendas for Sustainable Development as can be seen on the online portal "Agende Metropolitane per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile".¹¹

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

The **Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)** published the first Italian VSR in 2022.¹² Many VLRs were developed in 2022 as well: that of the regions of Abruzzo, Marche and Umbria, Lazio, Liguria, Emilia-Romagna and the metropolitan city of Bologna, the Metropolitan City of Messina, the Piemonte Region and the Metropolitan City of Torino, the Puglia Region and the Metropolitan City of Bari, the Lombardy Region and the Metropolitan City of Milan, the Metropolitan City of Roma, the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, the Metropolitan City of Reggio Calabria and the Metropolitan City of Genoa.¹³

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The **2017 Budget law** was set up taking into account the NSDS and the measures were taken considering the SDGs. Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei also created a financial tracking tool that identifies how EU investment funds contribute to the various SDG targets, with the aid of budget categorization available in the European Structural and Investment Funds within the EU Cohesion Policy.¹⁴ The Ministry of Ecological Transition has ensured the implementation of the NSDS by promoting coherence at the local level through the provision to subnational governments of spaces for dialogue on vertical coherence as well as financial support.

6. "To better reflect the work carried out in the past five years as well as the challenges addressed, the VNR provides three thematic insights, respectively on policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD), localizing the SDGs and stakeholder engagement. By defining these three areas, the VNR attempts to describe the level of integration of the 2030 Agenda in the planning processes at national (horizontally) and local level (vertically) as well as the efforts to ensure and support participation in decision making processes" (see VNR, 2022).

7. See: <https://sdg-portal.it/en>

8. See: https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Rapporto_ASviS/Rapporto_2021/Rapporto_ASviSTerritori2021.pdf.

9. Answer of Abruzzo Region to the GTF Survey in 2021.

10. See: https://www.cittametropolitana.bo.it/agenda_sviluppo_sostenibile/Engine/RAServeFile.php/f/allegati/QUADERNO_3_CM_Bologna.pdf

11. See: <https://www.mite.gov.it/pagina/agende-metropolitane-lo-sviluppo-sostenibile>.

12. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/italy_2022.pdf

13. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/abruzzo_marche_umbria_2022.pdf; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/lazio_2022.pdf;

https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/liguria_2022.pdf; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/emilia-romagna_bologna_2022.pdf;

https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/messina_2022.pdf; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/piemonte_torino_2022.pdf;

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https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roma_2022.pdf; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/sardinia_2022.pdf;

https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/reggio_calabria_2022.pdf;

14. See: <https://www.feem.it/en/publications/feem-working-papers-note-di-lavoro-series/the-contribution-of-the-european-cohesion-policy-to-the-2030-agenda-an-application-to-the-autonomous-region-of-sardinia/>

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Women's participation in political and economic life showed some improvements at the local level. In the regional elections held in 2020, the proportion of women chairing councils rose by almost one percentage point to 22%.

3.2 COVID 19

The 2022 VNR outlined the upcoming challenges for Italian cities and regions related to the impact of COVID-19, which includes the slowing down of transition towards a circular and greener economy, setbacks in waste collection and recycling, the rise of social inequalities at the territorial level, climate change, declining fertility rates, the lack of territorial investments, and missing out sustainable tourism objectives.

4. SDG INDICATORS¹⁵

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		32.1 (2020)
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	96 (2020)
	Rural	94 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		-
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		94.6 (2015, Milan)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		14.8 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

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