

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Pakistan is a federal republic whose first tier of subnational government is composed of four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan), one federal territory (Islamabad Capital Territory) and two federally administered areas (Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir). The second tier comprises 684 municipal governments and 11,685 sub-municipal entities.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 embedded in Pakistan's long-term development perspective, in the **12th Five-Year Plan (2018-2023)**, and in **provincial medium-term development strategies**. At the federal level, the government has aligned the SDGs with the national **Vision 2025**. At the provincial and area government levels, the planning and development departments have developed their respective provincial SDG frameworks with targets and indicators.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI)**, the focal ministry for SDGs, is coordinating horizontally with all the pertinent ministries' focal persons. In addition, for legislation on SDG implementation, 20 sub-groups of **parliamentary task forces** on the SDGs were formed at the National Parliament. **SDG Support Units** have been established at the federal, provincial and federally administered area levels in order to improve vertical and horizontal coordination among different tiers of government and non-governmental stakeholders (more details below). Provincial governments have also established Provincial Advisory Committees (see below for specific examples). Yet, higher tiers of government (federal and provincial) tend to exclude local governments from planning and implementation of SDG-related interventions.³

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The 2019 and 2022 VNR processes were guided by the **Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI)**.⁴ The role of the planning and development departments was instrumental throughout the entire preparation processes of both VNRs, which involved conducting multi-stakeholder consultations and preparing provincial reports with extensive support of partners and experts. The cornerstone of the VNR processes was multi-stakeholder engagement and a 'whole government' approach, which saw federal and provincial stakeholders working side-by-side to maximize inclusivity (see more details below). The federal SDG Support Units and SDGs section teams of the MoPD&SI adopted a three-pronged strategy to steer the 2022 VNR. After a series of meetings with federal ministries and other stakeholders, ministries were provided a template to map progress and challenges on relevant indicators in consultation with provincial governments, reporting progress from a baseline (2014-2015) and since the first VNR in 2019. Then, ministries were requested to prepare a working paper on their respective targets, indicators, and initiatives while provincial and area governments submitted their subnational reports. National consultations were held with all stakeholders after the final draft report was drafted.

1.3 MONITORING

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) is the country's focal institution for collecting data, coordinating with federal and provincial agencies on data collection, and reporting progress on the SDGs.

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

2. See: https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/233812019_06_15_VNR_2019_Pakistan_latest_version.pdf (2019); <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Pakistan%20Report.pdf> (2022)

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

4. Previously known as the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform (MoPDR).

In 2018, Pakistan launched its **'Data Reporting Gaps Analysis' study** – a stepping stone for monitoring and reporting on progress towards the SDGs. This review was followed by a series of consultations with the PBS, the National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS), UN agencies, civil society, the private sector, federal ministries and line departments. The **National SDGs Framework** sets baselines and targets for SDG indicators and will feed into the SDG monitoring and evaluation framework.

The MoPD&SI published its first **SDGs Status Report in 2021**, which reported 133 indicators at the national level as compared to 21 indicators in 2016. Meanwhile, major national surveys, namely the **Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM)**, **Labour Force Survey (LFS)**, **Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS)**, and the provincial **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)** were reviewed from the viewpoint of SDG indicators. In addition, parliamentary task forces in the national, provincial, and special areas are also involved in monitoring the progress of the SDGs.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The 2019 VNR mentioned that the provinces have instituted **technical committees and thematic clusters** to bolster the implementation of the SDGs and alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The nomination of focal persons at all levels of government, down to the districts, is helping them to align their development priorities with the 2030 Agenda.⁵ However, the lack of legal and financial frameworks weakens the localization of the national agenda in provincial plans and the development of localized territorial strategies. There are huge challenges to coordination within the four provincial governments in terms of strategies, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.⁶

The 2019 VNR was led by the MoPD&SI with its counterparts at the provincial level: the **Provincial Planning and Development Departments**. However, local authorities (districts and towns) have only been included to a rather limited extent. Also, although Pakistan makes reference in its VNR to the promotion of 'vertical and horizontal policy coherence', its approach reflects a predominantly vertical vision. It can be noted that Pakistan's VNR was introduced using the 2017 Declaration of Elected Local Government Representatives.⁷

The 2022 VNR states the 'vertical linkages from federal to provincial and local government required further strengthening through SOPs and continuous engagement' (see VNR, 2022, p. 15). The sub-committee on SDGs of the National Economic Council (NEC) was formed with the Minister of Planning as chair, and the head of planning departments at the provincial and local government level as core members. By 2022, the NEC sub-committee on SDGs had met twice and given recommendations to the NEC for further debate and approval.

The local council associations have not been involved in the 2022 VNR preparation. According to a survey conducted for the purposes of the VSR produced in 2022, LRG representatives were not aware of the VNR process. The VSR states, however, that provinces and districts were consulted through the SDG units, technical committees and focal points, depending on the context of each province.⁸

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



Comments: A majority of LRGs did not participate in the VNR reporting process at all (VSR 2022).

► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



Comments: Punctual participation of the Association for Development of Local Governance; regular participation of the Local council Association Sindh, in part thanks to interpersonal relations (GTF Survey 2021); weak coordination between local and provincial governments and within various segments of government departments; LRGs were excluded from the planning and execution process (VSR 2022); LRGs are involved as core members in the sub-committee on SDGs of the National Economic Council (NEC).

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.

5. "This institutional arrangement has been instrumental in guiding the alignment of federal and provincial national policies, sectoral plans and growth strategies with the contours of the 2030 Agenda" (see VNR, 2019, p. 9).

6. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/reports/gold-v>

7. UCLG, 2019, Towards the Localization of the SDGs. https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/Localization2019_EN.pdf

8. UCLG, 2022, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/pakistan_2022.pdf

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

In the 2019 VNR, the presentation of the country's context mentions all tiers of LRGs and refers to their responsibilities (see VNR, 2019, p. 12-13). Institutional mechanisms implemented in the provinces are presented in the chapter on means of implementation (see VNR, 2019, p. 57-58, some examples are presented below). There is also a section on "Localizing the Goals", dedicated to government, civil society, private sector and academia and to the institutionalization of the SDGs in planning processes (see VNR, 2019, p. 59-63).

In the 2022 VNR, a chapter is dedicated to the localization of the SDGs, while the key findings of the VSR are highlighted in a section. Challenges of localization are also mentioned, for instance, "local and provincial governments are mostly dependent on vertical transfers from the provincial and federal governments respectively with limited capacity to generate their own revenues" (see VNR, 2022, p. 14).

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► In **Punjab**, an Advisory Council has been constituted to oversee the prioritization and sequencing of the SDGs. It has since finalized provincial baselines and targets for the SDGs. Representatives from different sectors are part of the Council, which is supported by four Cluster Groups, formed to address social, economic, environmental, inclusivity and governance issues. These ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence for designing Punjab's SDG Prioritization Framework, as well as the implementation of programmes and projects. Punjab has nominated the district administrator (Deputy Commissioner) in each of its 36 districts as the focal person on the SDGs. Punjab has also constituted District SDG Committees for the implementation of the goals at the grassroots level. Efforts were made to provide strategic guidance for inclusive economic growth and development through the Punjab Growth Strategy 2023, Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047, Medium Term Development Framework, Responsive Investment for Social Protection and Economic Stimulus (RISE) Framework and Punjab SDGs Framework.

► **Sindh** has established a Provincial Technical Committee (PTC) to guide the mainstreaming of the SDGs. In tandem, a Core Group advises on localizing the goals and formulating the province's SDG Prioritization Framework. Six additional Core Groups have been notified on different thematic areas to steer implementation efforts – specifically on health, education, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, local government and public health engineering, and the environment and energy and corresponding subcommittees have also been formed. The Sindh government has come up with Sindh Agriculture Policy, Sindh Labour Policy, Framework for industrial relations, Sindh Youth Policy, etc. The Sindh government has also initiated Sindh Enterprise Development Fund (SEDF) with a focus on both on-farm and off-farm activities and endeavors to facilitate efficient production, processing, and market linkages for wider economic gains in the sector.

► **Balochistan** has notified a Provincial Technical Committee (PTC) to steer the localization of the goals and advise the SDG Support Unit. In addition, five Thematic Committees have been formed on employment generation and management, water, energy and the environment, health, agriculture and education. District Coordination Committees on the SDGs will help to align the province's Comprehensive Development and Growth Strategy 2018-2024 with the SDGs.

► **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's** Provincial Technical and Steering Committee is actively involved in mainstreaming the SDGs in the province, and oversees the localization of specific goals. Also, the province has set up a District Performance Management Framework, through which district authorities are evaluated using an online monitoring system.

The planning and development partners in **Azad Jammu** and **Kashmir** have established four Thematic Working Groups on the SDGs, with members from the government, academia, civil society, youth and the private sector. These working groups meet periodically to take stock of progress on the SDGs in the administrative area.

► In partnership with UCLG ASPAC, and with financial support from the EU, in March 2019, the **Association for Development of Local Governance (ADLG)** launched a four-year pilot initiative called LEAD for SDGs (Local Empowerment, Advocacy and Development for SDG Localization). The project seeks to accelerate localization efforts by supporting the monitoring and evaluation systems used in two selected pilot districts.

► Regarding resilience building, local governments have adopted and implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies with a progress of 3% (see VNR, 2022, p. 17).

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

The first VSR of Pakistan was published in 2022, presenting the progress of SDG localization in the country as well as identifying the local governments that have integrated the SDGs in their plans and policies.⁹

9. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/pakistan_2022.pdf

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

In 2014, the government of Pakistan established a 'Pak SDGs & Community Development Programme'. Its objective was to divert a sizable portion of public investments by the federal government to fulfill the basic needs of communities at the local level.

The 2022 VNR states that domestic resource mobilization and private-sector financing are insufficient. Pakistan needs a consistent and reliable supply of international financial aid flows, specifically Official Development Assistance (ODA), in order to achieve sustainable development. The federal government has also worked closely with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for future financial projections on five key areas of SDGs i.e., education, health, water supply and sanitation, electricity, and roads.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: The devolution of power to the provinces in the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010 has enabled the country to establish a decentralized development approach, while all four provinces have different local governance systems in terms of administrative and financial powers. Local governments are recognized as the third tier of government in the 18th Constitutional Amendment. The 2022 VNR also acknowledges that "local governments have mostly remained under the administrative control of non-elected administration due to lack of consistency in local government elections" (see VNR, 2022, p. 14).

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Following elections in 2013 and 2015, approximately 19.6% of councilors were women. There is a reservation for women councilors: 33% in Balochistan, 22% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, 15% in Punjab. In the 2013 Balochistan local council elections, 2,335 out of 7,169 councilors were women: 2,332 via reserved seats and three via non-reserved seats. In the 2015 cantonment elections, 2 out of 199 seats were won by women, and the 33% reservation was not implemented.¹⁰ The **Local Government Ordinance 2001** allocated 33% reserved seats for women, empowering women for the first time in the history of local government in Pakistan.¹¹ The 2022 VNR states that women's engagement in formal political processes has steadily improved over time, however, "it still does not commensurate with their share of the population" and gender inequality is deep-rooted in Pakistan.

3.2 COVID 19

There is no reference to initiatives for nor from the LRGs.

4. SDG INDICATORS¹²

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		16.8 (2018)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	40 (2020)
	Rural	33 (2020)
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 (%)		40.1 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		77 (2009, Lahore)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		58.8 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-

10. See: https://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Pakistan.pdf

11. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/pakistan_2022.pdf

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