

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Turkey is a unitary republic with two tiers of subnational government. The first, at regional level, comprises 51 special provincial administrations and 30 provincial metropolitan municipalities. The second, at the municipal level, is made up of 973 provincial and district municipalities, 386 towns and 30 metropolitan municipalities.

Turkey also comprises 18 195 villages. Even if they are not fully-functional municipalities because of their small size, they are local self-governments recognised in the Constitution and do not depend on a municipality.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

Turkey has reflected the SDGs into its **10th and 11th National Development Plans (NDPs) 2014-2018** and **2019-2023 and Annual Programmes**.

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **Presidency of Strategy and Budget (PSB)** under the President's Office is the focal point for sustainable development. Different ministries ensure coordination for each SDG.³

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

Turkey was the first MEWA country to submit a VNR in 2016 and again in 2019. Turkey's first VNR laid down a roadmap elaborating the planned steps to achieve SDGs. Its 2019 VNR focuses on the status of progress towards the SDGs. The 2019 VNR process was coordinated by the **Presidency of Strategy and Budget (PSB)**. A total of 2,962 representatives were consulted directly from government entities, 312 NGOs, 2,000 companies and 50 municipalities. A **National SDG Best Practices database** was developed as a continuous application. With the system, 400 practices by public and private sectors, academia, NGOs and municipalities were collected in the first phase. The VNR highlights examples selected from these practices.

1.3 MONITORING

The **Department of Environment and Sustainable Development (DESD)** under PSB coordinates SDG follow-up, monitoring and reporting, supported by the Turkish Statistical Institute TurkStat. Turkstat is indeed one of the most important stakeholder institutions in relation to SDG implementation in Turkey. In 2019, it published the first "SDG Indicators Newsletter, 2010-2017", composed of 83 indicators. Thematic workshops are planned in the future under the coordination of Turkstat to focus on production of new SDG indicators that are needed but yet to be produced. Also, it is planned that SDG indicators be published through a national reporting platform with powerful visual features that could be updated regularly.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The 2016 VNR granted little space to local governments. However, the national government – via the Presidential Directorate in charge of the realization of Turkey's VNR for the 2019 HLPF – has shown an increasing willingness to engage the local level. For the preparatory process of the 2019 VNR, the national local government association, the **Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT)**, was nominated to coordinate and collect information from LRGs. The UMT analyzed and mapped the link between the

1. See: https://www.sng-wofi.org/reports/SNGWOFI_2019_report_country_profiles_DEC2019_UPDATES.pdf

2. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/107102030%20Agenda%20Turkey%20Report.pdf> (2016); https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23862Turkey_VNR_110719.pdf (2019)

3. See the details of the distribution of institutional responsibilities in the VNR, 2019, p. 33

projects implemented by the municipalities and SDGs. Accordingly, it was identified that the projects mostly related to SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 10 and SDG 11, are beneficial in localizing the SDGs and ensuring policy consistency between the central and local levels. The UMT directly engaged with 50 municipalities in the process, while reaching out to over 1,400 municipalities for them to contribute to the document's recommendations. Also, the UMT attended the 2019 HLPF in New York along with the national government delegation.

The UMT, established in 1945, has a consultative role in the drafting of legislation and holds one seat in the Presidential Local Government Commission. The dialogue mechanism for SDGs strengthened the UMT's communication lines with national government organizations. Workshops on SDG implementation and VLRs also increased partnership between municipalities which are willing to prepare VLRs.⁴

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



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 is a subsection in the 2019 VNR acknowledging the role of LRGs and the UMT for the implementation of the SDGs (see VNR, 2019, p. 18),⁵ which also mentions UCLG, its regional section UCLG MEWA and the Global TaskForce of Local and Regional Governments. It contains a table listing different municipal practices. Other boxes throughout the report refer to municipal initiatives.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The **Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU)** continues to disseminate the SDGs and organized a training session entitled "Cities 2030: Sustainable Development Goals at Local Level", in 2020, in cooperation with UN SDSN and Bogazici University. In the 2020 edition of the Golden Ant Award, organized by the MMU, the LGA rewarded good practices implemented by its member municipalities which were aligned with the SDGs.⁶

► A "**Sustainable Urban Development Network**" was formed at the training organized by the Local Monitoring, Research and Implementation Association (Yereliz) with the participation of 20 municipalities from various parts of Turkey. Izmir Metropolitan Municipality assumed the first-term secretariat of the Network.⁷

► The number of municipalities with domestic wastewater treatment facilities increased from 126 in 2002 to 881 in 2018 and the rate of use of these services by the municipal population rose from 35% to 75%. Within the same period, the percentage of the population using safely managed drinking water increased from 95% to 99%. Following new legislation, municipalities will reduce water loss rates averaged 25% in 2023.⁸

► Within the framework of the National Waste Management Plan, the number of municipal landfills has increased to 88, which provide services to 62.3 million inhabitants in 1,160 with three incineration plants also in existence have been established. As of 2019, packaging waste is collected separately at the source in 499 municipalities. A Zero Waste Project was initiated to foster and recover recycling (within the framework of a National Recycling Strategy). Municipalities with financing difficulties are supported by the Solid Waste Programme. The metropolitan municipality of **Istanbul** has established a network of container

4. Answer of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

5. "Responsibilities and duties of local administrations in Turkey overlap directly or indirectly with a large part of SDGs. [...]Therefore, local administrations naturally contribute to the implementation of SDGs. Further, they prioritise and diversify their activities in this direction, with an awareness of the importance of sustainable development", VNR, 2019, p. 18.

6. Answer of the Marmara Municipalities Union (MMU) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

See also UCLG, 2021, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2021.pdf

7. See: <https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/presscenter/articles/2019/08/surdurulebilir-kentler-gelisim-agi.html>

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

recycling across the city, the credits of which can be spent on public transport fees.⁹

► Several frontrunning cities and municipalities have been implementing climate action plans for years, and have also been joining various international networks active in this field. For instance, 16 cities in Turkey are members of the **Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**.

► 141 Urban Regeneration and Development Projects Areas and 10 Renovation Areas in cities are being developed with the support of the government (USD 2.83 billion spent since 2012). Many cities, such as the **Kocaeli Metropolitan Municipality** are implementing a Disaster Management and Decision Support System Project (AYDES) with the national Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). The project implements an electronic tracking and management system for all stages of integrated disaster management.

► The **Bursa Metropolitan Municipality** has implemented home-based diagnosis, treatment, care, escort, referral and transport services for bedridden patients in socioeconomic poverty and deprivation.

► In October 2020, **Konya** organized the Municipality Academy, with the support of UCLG-MEWA, in order to increase cooperation among municipalities and exchange best practices under the umbrella of the SDGs.¹⁰

► In Turkey, civil society is involved in urban planning and city management through City Councils. Currently, there are 68 City Councils.

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

The municipalities of **Karatay**, **Izmir** and **Sultanbeyli** have been developing a VLR in 2021.¹¹ The district of **Avcilar** in the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul published its first VLR in 2022.¹² The **Marmara Region** published a VLR in 2022.¹³ Other VLRs are currently being prepared in the **Greater Amman Municipality** and in the **Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul**.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Since 2016, members of Parliament are briefed on the process and activities related to SDGs, during the TGNA Plan and Budget Commission meetings and presentation of budget to the General Assembly. Turkey's commitment to embed SDGs into its national policies and improve the practices is highlighted at the ministerial level during budget deliberations of the Parliament.

It is planned to start a "Gender-Sensitive Planning and Budgeting in Turkey" Project to create awareness and ownership among politicians and bureaucrats on public policies, plans, programmes and budget processes for promoting gender equality in central and local governments.

Under the Elderly Support Programme (YADES) launched in 2016, funds are transferred from the central budget to local governments for projects undertaken for the care of the elderly who need psycho-social support.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

The proportion of seats held by women in local governments was 9.9% in 2014.

3.2 COVID 19

The central government has taken measures at the national level. However, implementation of the decisions was jointly carried out. All local governments jointly formed the "Solidarity Support Group", which worked to support in particular the elderly and other disadvantaged groups. Also, temporary assignments of government employees within the government organizations were in place to ensure continuation of services during the pandemic. Data and information sharing among national and local governments increased.¹⁴

In the **Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality**, coordination with CSOs has been crucial for overcoming literacy and language barriers when implementing COVID-19 support measures for refugees.¹⁵

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

10. UCLG, 2021, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2021.pdf

11. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/karatay_2021_0.pdf; https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/izmir_2021.pdf;

https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/sultanbeyli_2021.pdf

12. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/uploaded/avcilar_2022_en.pdf

13. See: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/field-document/marmara_municipalities_union_2022.pdf

14. Answer of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

15. Answer of the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality to the GTF Survey in 2021.

See also UCLG, 2021, Towards the Localization of the SDGs, https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/hlpf_2021.pdf

4. SDG INDICATORS¹⁶

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		10.1 (2019)
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	78 (2020)
	Rural	80 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		8.6 (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)		37.2 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		100 (2017)

¹⁶ The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>.
More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/tur>