

LOCALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS — IN EGYPT —



Part III. Preparing for the Voluntary Local Reviews in Egypt

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Research Paper Prepared in the Framework of the Localization

Of the Sustainable Development Goals Project

July 2020

Introduction

Egypt is considered the first country to work on the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), following the approach of establishing quantitative targets for each governorate to achieve, with the aim of accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in Egypt.

In this context, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED), in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research (Baseera), launched the Project for the Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals at Governorate Level. Phase I focused on establishing quantitative targets for each governorate in each of the SDG achievement indicators, which helps the governorate to develop the appropriate plans, and arrange its priorities, to achieve these targets. During Phase II, five governorates were selected to host workshops attended by the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) officials in order to introduce them to the SDGs, their indicators, and the quantitative targets established for each governorate. During Phase III, the remaining governorates were covered.

Egypt was one of the first countries to submit its Voluntary National Report (VNR) to the United Nations, covering what has been achieved with respect to the SDGs. To date, Egypt has submitted two VNRs. The first VNR focused on Egypt's situation with respect to the SDGs, while the second focused on the Egyptian interventions and initiatives that aim to achieve the SDGs.

Egypt is striving to have each governorate prepare its own local report on what has been done in the governorate to achieve the SDGs. In this context, this paper was prepared as a guide for the governorates to use in preparing their Voluntary Local Reports (VLRs)

Introduction

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, to be a roadmap for world states towards prosperity, equality, inclusive growth and protection of the environment. The SDGs are interlinked and interconnected, which poses a major challenge in monitoring the progress made in achieving them. As part of the SDGs' implementation review process, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development calls on states to prepare their VNRs, which are reports that aim to review the status of implementation of the SDGs in these states, with the aim of sharing the experiences and lessons learnt, and strengthening the current policies that aim to achieve sustainable development. Egypt has submitted two VNRs to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in 2016 and 2018.

Despite the importance of monitoring the progress made in achieving the SDGs on the national level, the role local level monitoring plays in achieving the national development agenda cannot be overlooked. Both local societies and leaders are key components in achieving social inclusion, equality and economic growth, while leaving no one behind, which are the basic principles of the SDGs.

Accordingly, the localization of the SDGs on the local level requires effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to determine the extent to which the SDGs were disseminated and implemented on that level. This requires a robust local tool similar to the guide issued by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) on preparing the VNRs. It should be noted here that there are some states/municipalities/cities that have already recognized the importance of the VLRs as a tool to monitor the progress made towards achieving the SDGs. In 2018 and 2019, the cities of New York, USA, Kitakyushu and Shimokawa, Japan, Buenos Aires, Argentina and Bristol, the United Kingdom, conducted their VLRs.

It is worth noting that most VLRs conducted have relied on the guide issued by UNDESA on preparing the VNRs, taking into consideration the realities and characteristics of each state/municipality/city. Similarly, these guidelines on the

preparation of the VLRs in Egypt are based on the aforementioned guide. The guidelines aim to assist governorates in preparing their VLRs with the aim of reviewing the progress made in implementing the SDGs through a clear-cut process that ensures the participation of various local stakeholders. They also provide the main steps required to conduct the VLR process, taking the local Egyptian context into account.

and essential for each governorate, including ending poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, and quality education. Additionally, a governorate may add some goals that are not related to the SDGs, based on their relevance for the governorate in achieving sustainable development.

In order to determine the relevant SDGs on the local level, the following procedures should be followed:

- ✓ The targets under each SDG should be reviewed to determine their suitability to the governorate.
- ✓ The language of each target should be amended to reflect the local context, while remaining focused on what each target really aims to achieve.
- ✓ The target indicators should reflect the local context.
- ✓ New targets, suitable to the governorate's nature and local context, should be introduced to ensure that no one is left behind.
- ✓ The revised targets should be verified to ensure their compatibility with the governorate's obligations, in coordination with the various stakeholders.

2. Determining the Gap

There is no doubt that the indicators produced on the national level may not all be necessarily applicable on the local level. Therefore, local gaps should be identified in order to understand the current situation and the indicators needed to measure the progress made towards the implementation of the SDGs. Based on the gap analysis, the indicators should be prepared in cooperation with the information centers in the governorates, which are technically affiliated with the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). Financial data, for both current and investment figures, should be obtained from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform (MPMAR). The data provided by the information centers affiliated with the sectoral ministries should also be relied on. Additionally, the research centers and universities in each governorate may assist in collecting the data and information required for these indicators. However, preparing these indicators will depend to a large extent on the availability and quality of the data, in addition to the availability of financial and human resources.

3. Determining the Body Responsible for Coordination and Preparation of Reports

The preparation of the VLRs requires a local body tasked with coordination. In each governorate, the Executive Council should lead the VLR process, under the direct supervision of the Governor and Secretary General. Pursuant to Decree no. 43/1979 Promulgating the Law of the Local Government System, the Executive Council of the governorate is responsible for following up on the work of relevant bodies, preparing the governorate's budget draft, and proposing investment allocations. Additionally, the preparation of the VLRs will require the Executive Council to have a technical arm (a technical secretariat) to ensure the participation of relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in the VLR process, and to support the process of drafting the VLR report. The full implementation of the Minister of Local Development's decision establishing a Consultative Council in each governorate will also support the VLR process. The Consultative Council is considered generally responsible for providing advice to the governorate on various issues, studying technical proposals, and proposing development projects and policies for the various sectors.

III. Conducting the VLRs

1– Initial Preparation and Organization of the Report Drafting Process

Conducting a VLR is a process that requires a number of arrangements and preparations. Hence, the following issues should be taken into consideration:

- **Preparing an Action Plan:** A detailed action plan should be prepared, with clear results and a timeframe. The roles of the main actors, such as the governorate's secretariat, chairpersons of districts and cities, the Consultative Council, the local private sector, civil society organizations and the local media, should be determined. Additionally, the action plan's timeframe should be consistent with the VLR process, in the sense that the former should be completed before or in parallel with the latter. This aims to assist MPED in studying the governorates' performance in implementing the SDGs, which contributes to a better preparation of the VNRs. It is suggested that the VLRs are to be completed at a date that allows the governorates sufficient time to use the reports' outputs in drafting the governorates' annual investment plans and budgets.
- **Resources:** The necessary resources to implement the VLR plan should be identified. This includes both financial and human resources. It should be noted that the governorate, in

addition to its own resources, may request support from MPED, local universities, civil society organizations, the private sector and donor organizations to obtain the necessary resources for the VLR process.

- **Scope:** The VLRs' scope should include all the SDGs. It is preferable to submit the reports on the progress made towards achieving the 17 SDGs in accordance with international standards. Therefore, the governorate should make one of the following decisions with regard to VLR's scope, in coordination with MEPD and MLD:
 - ✓ Adhering to MEPD's scope in preparing the VLRs, irrespective of whether or not it is consistent with the announced priority goals.
 - ✓ Preparing the report on the basis of the SDGs and related targets preidentified in coordination with MPED and MLD.
 - ✓ Preparing the report to cover all 17 SDGs.

During the preparation of the reports on each goal and its related targets, the governorate should cover the following:

- ✓ A Brief overview of the current status of the goals and targets.
- ✓ Achievements and good practices.
- ✓ Effect of the interventions undertaken by the governorate within its scope, and the relevant interventions on the national level.
- ✓ Gaps and challenges.
- ✓ Links to other Goals.
- ✓ Ways to improve the implementation of the SDGs and related targets in the future.
- **Data/Reports/Documents:** The preparation of the VLRs requires accurate data and information. Accordingly, the information centers of the governorates, the PME departments on both governorate and district levels, in addition to MPED and CAPMAS, should be responsible for providing the necessary data and information. Additionally, the governorate should rely on its local and sectoral plans, the plans prepared by the General Authority for Urban Planning (GARP) for the governorate and its districts, and the reports prepared by other bodies in the governorate such as universities, international organizations and projects, and civil society. The governorate should rely on the reports on it, whether produced by the government, the sectoral ministries, the directorates or the central bodies.
- **Developing a Plan to Ensure the Participation of Relevant Stakeholders:** The governorate, in the process of preparing its plans, should identify the stakeholders in the VLR process. It should also ensure the participation of a large number of stakeholders,

including the local media, civil society, the private sector, business associations, universities, the youth, the academia/women, marginalized societies, the clergy, the directorates, the districts, the villages and the satellite villages. The Consultative Council can act as a focal point to ensure the participation of all stakeholders. It is possible to reach the largest possible number of stakeholders through direct communication with universities, schools, youth centers and cultural and social centers.



Stakeholders in the VLR Process



The participation of the various stakeholders is essential to the effective achievement of the SDGs. Participation opens the door for these parties to express their opinions, needs and interests in the context of the local policies and plans that affect their lives. The plan to ensure stakeholders' participation should include the various methods to do so. These methods aim to achieve the following:

- ✓ Learning about the contribution of each stakeholder towards implementing the SDGs.
- ✓ Identifying the challenges facing each stakeholder in implementing the SDGs.
- ✓ Collecting the stakeholders' recommendations for a better implementation of the SDGs.
- ✓ Introducing the SDGs to those unaware of them and involving such parties in contributing to the implementation of the SDGs.

In order to involve a large number of stakeholders in the VLR process, the governorate should use different methods of consultation. These methods include, for example, the governorate's website, surveys conducted online, mobile phone applications as well as face-to-face measurement tools (such as workshops, focus groups and conferences). The governorate should ensure that it has access to a diverse group of stakeholders through its website, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and mobile phone applications.

2- The main issues that should be included in the VLR report.

During the preparation of the VLR report, some main issues should be taken into consideration, as follows:

- **Mainstreaming the SDGs in the Local Framework:** The governorate's plan, as well as that of the districts, should cover the SDGs. The report should reflect the extent to which the SDGs were mainstreamed in the plans, rules, procedures and laws, in addition to the challenges the governorate is facing in mainstreaming the SDGs.
- **Integration of the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development:** The VLR report should reflect the interconnectedness between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It should also clarify the institutional arrangements made to ensure their integration. Additionally, the report should include the challenges some sectors faced in the integration of these dimensions, and the methods of communication that could ensure better integration.
- **No One is Left Behind:** The VLR report should include the procedures and interventions implemented to ensure that no one is left behind, such as cases of poverty and its distribution according to demographic and geographic factors. This can also include methods of identifying marginalized groups, data and statistics on their ratios and characteristics, and the interventions made to empower them socially and economically.
- **The Institutional Mechanism:** In the report, the governorate should highlight the institutional mechanism that was created or strengthened to follow up on the implementation of the SDGs, which also acts as a coordinator between all local parties.
- **Implementation Method:** In the report, the governorate should reflect the resources necessary for the implementation process. It should also reflect the financing mechanisms used in implementing the SDGs, such as the budget, public private partnerships (PPPs), and social responsibility. Additionally, it should reflect ways to mobilize local resources for implementation, as well as the contributions of foreign investors and donors in this regard. It should also reflect the governorate's plan to finance the implementation of the SDGs. However, in light of the nature and differing capabilities of the governorates, it is expected that they will not be able to determine the required resources in a sound and integrated manner. However, the central government may assist in this regard.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation departments on both governorate and district levels should play a fundamental role in the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made towards implementing the SDGs.

4. Structure of the VLR Report

In order to ensure consistency in the preparation of both the VNR and VLR reports, the governorate may use the same VNR structure provided in the UNDESA guide, taking the local context into consideration.

Framework 1: Structure of the VLR

Introductory Statement: The introductory statement should be presented by the governor, reflecting the importance of the localization of the SDGs and the progress made in this regard.

Highlights: One or two pages that highlight the VLR process and the progress made towards implementing the SDGs, some examples and lessons learnt, the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and some issues the governorate needs support in.

Introduction: General overview of the nature of the governorate and the objectives of the VLR, in addition to the main issues and the results of the VLR process.

Methodology and Preparation Process: The methodology followed by the governorate in conducting the VLR, and the process of ensuring stakeholders' participation.

Policy Enabling Environment: Includes the following:

Establishing ownership of the SDGs on the local level: Includes the efforts of the governorate to ensure stakeholders' participation in the VLR process.

Integrating the SDGs in the Local Framework: The steps taken to integrate the SDGs in the local frameworks of the governorate and the district.

Integration of the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development: A statement on how the three dimensions of sustainable development were integrated in the governorate's plans and interventions, including examples.

No One is Left Behind: The procedures taken to ensure that no one is left behind.

Institutional Mechanisms: The institutional mechanisms established or strengthened to coordinate efforts and follow up on the progress made in implementing the SDGs.

The Progress Made on the Level of the Goals and Targets: Description of the progress made in implementing all 17 SDGs, with/without focusing on the governorate's priority goals, if the governorate has decided to focus on the goals relevant to its local context.

Implementation Methods: The allocated and required resources to implement the SDGs, and the contributions of the private sector and any other financing mechanism in this regard.

Next Steps: The steps the governorate plans to take based on the VLR results.

Conclusion: A summary of the VLR analysis and results.

Appendices: May include statistics, data and best practices, as well as any other issues the governorate deems fit to include in the report.

5. Presentation of the Report

It is suggested that the VLR report is to be presented in the Conference on the Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The presentation should highlight the main issues covered in the VLR process, including the governorate's contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs, the challenges it faces in this regard, and the next steps. Additionally, simplified versions of the VLR report should be prepared and shared with the various stakeholders and categories of civil society using all means of communication. The Conference may also include a presentation of the Competitiveness Indicator at governorate level.

The following table presents the proposed timings for the steps of preparing the report, based on the calendar rather than the fiscal year. This is due to the fact, as clarified below, that it is suggested that the report is presented in the Conference on the Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals in September. This will take place before the process of preparing the plan and the budget begins in October. This aims to allow enough time for the VLRs' results to be used as a main tool in preparing the governorates' plans and directing investments therein, with the aim of strengthening the implementation of the SDGs.

Steps	Description	Suggested Timing
Drafting the action plan to prepare the report	The Executive Council of the governorate drafts a detailed action plan for the VLR report preparation process, including the parties that will be involved therein, the responsibilities of each, the available resources, the report's scope, the sources of data on which the report will rely, and a list of the stakeholders in the VLR process.	1st of April
Approval of the action plan	The governor approves the action plan for preparing the report	Last week of April
Implementation of the action plan	All stakeholders are to implement the approved action plan, while the Executive Council, in cooperation with the Consultative Council, monitors the preparation process	1st of May
Completion of the first draft of the report.	The Executive Council presents the first draft to the Governor and the Secretary General for opinions and comments.	1st of August
Final report submitted to the Governor.	The Executive Council presents the final report to the Governor, including all the comments on the first draft received from the Governor, the Secretary General or any of the stakeholders	Last week of August
Presentation of the report in the Conference on the Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.	Presentation of report results, including the challenges facing the implementation of the SDGs, and the next steps.	Mid-September