

# AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

THE STATE OF SDG LOCALIZATION IN  
BELARUS, GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

A DESK STUDY BY  
OLEKSANDRA KHALAIM FOR  
GLOBAL UTMANING

MARCH 2021

# AGENDA 2030 IMPLEMENTATION IN THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

THE STATE OF SDG LOCALIZATION IN  
BELARUS, GEORGIA AND UKRAINE

VOLUME 1

## AUTHOR

OLEKSANDRA KHALAIM

## LAYOUT

MÄRTA WESTERBERG

## ISBN

978-91-88331-29-8

## COVER IMAGE

UNSPLASH

## PUBLISHED

MARCH 2021

THE PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE SWEDISH INSTITUTE.

Supported by  
**SI.** Swedish  
Institute

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Georgia	5
Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs	5
Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Georgia	6
SDGs progress monitoring system	7
The Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)	7
KEY PROJECTS ON SDGs IMPLEMENTATION IN GEORGIA	8
Some critical remarks on SDGs implementation	10
Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders	12
Belarus	13
Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs	13
Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Belarus	15
SDGs progress monitoring system	17
The Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)	17
Key findings	17
KEY PROJECTS ON SDGs IMPLEMENTATION IN BELARUS	18
Localizing the SDGs	18
Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders	22
Survey on the perception and promotion of SDGs in Belarus	24
Ukraine	25
Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs	25
SDGs milestones	26
Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Ukraine	26
SDGs progress monitoring system	27
The Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA)	27
KEY PROJECTS ON SDGs IMPLEMENTATION IN UKRAINE	29
Some critical remarks on SDGs implementation in Ukraine	30
Localizing the SDGs	31
Additional project details	33
Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders	34
Regional (oblasts) consultations on SDGs	34
Survey on the perception and promotion of SDGs in Ukraine	36
Summary and general conclusions	38

## INTRODUCTION

The desk study “Localizing Sustainable Development Goals in the EAP Countries” includes three country mappings of relevant stakeholders, challenges and needs and the overall state of SDG implementation in Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia. The study provides a basic overview of how these countries are working to implement the UN 2030 Agenda with a particular focus on the state of regional and local implementation of the SDGs (localizing SDGs).

Each country mapping describes the following topics:

- The general institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs at the national level, as well as linkages of SDGs with the strategic policy documents;
- The national SDGs progress monitoring system;
- The main highlights of the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA);
- Brief description of the key projects on SDGs implementation both at the national and local levels;
- Any documented critical remarks on Agenda 2030 implementation in the country;
- Any documented details and cases of SDGs localization;
- Some highlights derived from individual interviews made by author with stakeholders on SDGs localization (UNDP representatives, local experts, civil activists). The aim of the interviewing was to receive some additional sources of published/ documented information, as well as to get the problem vision “from the field”;
- Some highlights from the national surveys on the perception and prioritization of SDGs (Ukraine and Belarus only).

The desk study ends with the general summary and conclusions about common challenges on localizing SDGs, necessities and proposals indicated by interviewees for their countries, as well as recommendations by author for the Global Utmaning Eastern Partnership Leadership programme based on the analysis done.



## GEORGIA

### Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs

The key coordination body for implementation of the national SDG targets is the Sustainable Development Goals Inter-Agency Council (SDG Council), which [was formally adopted through the Ordinance](#) of the Prime Minister of Georgia, on May 2 2017. The Council is chaired by the Head of the Administration of the Government of Georgia and co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and reports directly to the Prime Minister. The meetings of the Council take place at least once a year. The Policy Analysis, Strategic Planning and Coordination Department of the Administration of the Government serves as the Secretariat of the Council and provides analytical and technical support to its operation. The Council is composed of ministries and other government agencies; however, it also allows for a possibility for the participation of representatives of UN agencies, EU delegation, non-governmental organizations, business associations and academia, without voting rights ([IDFI report](#), 2018, p.11). The Council has four thematic working groups:

- (1) Social Inclusion;
- (2) Economic Development;
- (3) Sustainable Energy and Environmental Protection; and
- (4) Democratic Governance. ([VNR 2020](#), p.12-13)

The Council engages stakeholders from the public, civil, international, academic, and private sectors in its working groups. The **Policy Planning Unit of the Policy Planning and Coordination Department at the Administration of Government of Georgia** serves as the secretariat to the SDG Council.

The design of the Coordination Mechanism has been updated by the order No 14 of the Prime Minister of Georgia on January 23, 2020 and is reflected in the last redaction of [the Statute of SDGs Council](#). In particular, now the Statute and the terms of references of the thematic working groups ensure proper participation as well as mechanisms for increasing of the ownership of the civil society of the process:

- Each working group has a chairperson (from governmental agencies) and two co-chairs: - 1 from civil society organization – elected by the member CSOs of the working group for 2-year period based on the rotation principle. - 1 from the relevant UN agency.
- Chairs and co-chairs are part of the inter-agency council participating in the decision-making process.
- Co-chairs are involved in agenda setting process of a working group and can draft and submit a motion to the council.
- Each member of the thematic working group can submit a motion to the chair and co-chairs to defer it to the council.

Keeping in mind the process of localizing SDGs, it was important step to enable mayors and deputy mayors for participation and voting at the Council meetings.

## Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Georgia

The commitment to the SDGs has thus been expressed by the adoption of the “[National Document for the Sustainable Development Goals](#)” by the Georgian Government. This document describes the nationalized targets (93) and indicators (200) and sets out the institutional and procedural structure for monitoring of their implementation. In June 2019, the Parliament of the Georgia adopted the Strategy for Supporting and Monitoring of the Implementation of the SDGs in the country. Georgia submits its Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum once every 4 years; two of them have already been submitted in 2016 and [2020](#). According to [SAOG report](#) (2019, p.6), the government has not approved the SDGs matrix yet; SDGs, targets and

indicators, presented in the SDGs matrix, are fragmentally integrated into the National Medium Term Budgetary Framework 2019-2022, National Strategic Development Documents, Ministries’ 2019-2022 Medium Term Action Plans, Program Annex of 2019 State Budget Law, Municipalities’ Priorities Documents.

## SDGs progress monitoring system

The implementation of the national SDGs is being monitored through a special electronic system at the portal <http://sdg.gov.ge>. The portal is managed by the Secretariat of the Inter-Agency Council for SDGs and was developed by the Administration of the Government of Georgia with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). Its technical development was carried out by the LEPL – Data Exchange Agency (DEA).

## The rapid integrated assessment (RIA)

UNDP Georgia has coordinated the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for the 2030 Agenda (MAPS) study in 2019. Experts assessed 55 national and sub-national policy documents with the SDGs, as well as the extent to which national budgets reflected the priorities spelled out in the strategic documents through the review of the national budget Basic Data and Directions document for 2017-2020. The EU-Georgia Association Agreement alone incorporates 63% of the country’s nationalized SDG targets –the largest share of any Georgian strategy or planning document. Taken together, the 36 national strategies plus the Georgia-EU Association Agreement cover 93% of the country’s nationalized SDG targets. In addition, the Georgian Government has ordered [the Performance Audit of preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals](#) executed by the State Audit office of Georgia (SAOG) in 2019. It was reported that SDGs as well as their targets and indicators are fragmentally scattered through various strategic documents, medium-term ministry action plans, priority documents of municipalities and the state budget. Some matters of concern were highlighted: ensuring linkages with SDGs framework and country’s budget planning instruments; clear division of responsibilities among public agencies; localization of SDGs.

## KEY PROJECTS ON SDGS IMPLEMENTATION IN GEORGIA

#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANZED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
1	<a href="#">Supporting the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Georgia</a>	United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Governance Reform Fund (GRF) through SIDA	\$140,700 2016 –2018	The national document – SDGs Matrix has been formed.
2	<a href="#">Facilitate the Landing of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the National Level</a>	United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Governance Reform Fund (GRF) through SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency	\$82,440 2017 – 2018	A report (2019) <a href="#">Extent of SDGs Integration in the National Public Policy System of Georgia: IDFI studied over 70 strategic documents</a> and ascertained to what extent they included the indicators of nationalized SDGs. Almost half of SDGs indicators are only partially reflected in national policy documents, 28% of the indicators are not reflected in any strategies or action plans and 23% of them are fully covered by national policy documents.
3	<a href="#">Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)</a>	Georgian Government by support of the UNICEF Georgia	2018-2019	The MICS included over 180 indicators and involved over 14,000 households, providing regionally representative data which can be used to target and design critical interventions. MICS provided baseline values for many indicators of the nationalized SDGs.

#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANZED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
4	Decree of the Government No. 629 “On the Approval of the Rules of Procedure for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents” under a new Policy Planning and Coordination System in Georgia.	The Decree is backed up by the detailed <a href="#">Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Handbook</a> , prepared and published by the Administration of the Government of Georgia with the assistance from the UNDP and UK Government aid.	2019	The handbook assures deep integration of the SDGs in a sector policy cycle: the newly adopted strategic documents must be drafted having in mind the linkage with the SDGs; goals that are listed in the logical framework should be connected with the Agenda 2030 commitments. The logical frameworks required for the operationalization of the strategies, align these goals closer to the budgetary planning process.
5	<a href="#">Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level</a>	UNDP With funds from the Government of Denmark Implementing partner: Min. of Reg. Devlpm. & Infra	April 2018 - March 2023	# of municipalities which apply and gender budgeting and strategic planning guidelines including localizing SDGs: Gender budgeting – accomplished in one municipality, in progress in 5 municipalities: Tbilisi municipality mainstreamed gender aspects in 2019 budget. Introduction of strategic planning is in progress in 39 municipalities: support provided to 39 municipalities in upgrading the municipal development planning documents and their methodology to integrate strategic planning elements with a focus on LED and gender equality.

## Some critical remarks on SDGs implementation

**Derived from** the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) [Comments on 2020 Voluntary National Review of SDG Implementation in Georgia](#) (2019, p. 3-5):

- There are no representatives of the central or local legislative branch among the Council voting members. According to the Rules of Operation, chairpersons of the Parliamentary committees are entitled to attend the Council meetings; however, they have no voting rights.
- The new Rules of Operation does not include any provisions on publishing meeting agendas and minutes. IDFI finds that publishing this information is crucial for ensuring that the wider public and affects transparency and accountability of the Council activities.
- According to the VNR report, the new changes in the operation of the Council were driven by the spirit of the whole of society approach. However, the implementation of the approach in practice will remain questionable as long as relevant emphases on the cooperation with the private / business sector are absent from the rules of operation.

**Derived from** the Report of the State Audit office of Georgia (SAOG) [Performance Audit of preparedness for Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals](#) (2019, p. 31):

Despite the achieved progress, adequate monitoring and reporting system has not been created yet. In particular, the following deficiencies are on the ground:

- Baselines and data sources are incompletely identified in the SDGs matrix;
- Reporting framework and timelines are not defined;
- Appropriate level of transparency about SDGs is not ensured since the aggregated information about the 2030 Agenda, SDGs matrix, corresponding SDGs and targets is not provided to the stakeholders.

Recommendations to the SDGs council and the line ministries:

To guarantee timely and efficient monitoring and reporting about SDGs, SDGs council should develop a monitoring and reporting framework, which implies:

- Timely completion of monitoring web-portal and launch in the practice;
- Development of reporting framework and timeline by ministries towards SDGs council;
- Defining timeline for national progress reporting about the achievement of SDGs.



In order to process proper monitoring of the implementation of the targets, SDGs council, in cooperation with ministries and other relevant bodies, should present information in SDGs matrix about baselines and data sources for each indicator.

**Concerns on the process of localizing SDGs** (IDFI report, 2018, p.14)

As part of the awareness-raising campaign on SDGs, IDFI together with other implementing partners conducted public lectures in 10 municipalities, launched an essay and visualization contest, carried out workshops for civil servants, CSOs and the media, held a meeting with private sector representatives, and hosted the international SDG 16 Plus Forum. Despite the considerable work conducted to raise awareness on SDG-related international and domestic developments, the lack of meaningful involvement among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the private sector and academia remains a persistent challenge. A more targeted awareness-raising approach is important at this stage to encourage greater contributions from the aforementioned groups. It is imperative to highlight the lack of capacity of CSOs involved in the implementation and monitoring processes of SDGs. Despite public lectures carried out across regions and a workshop conducted as part of the 16+ Forum, CSO involvement in SDGs processes remains low.

## Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders

[Nino Merebashvili-Fisher](#) (Senior Lawyer, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information)

### Challenges when localizing SDGs:

- Lack of the political will at the national level, which has decreased recently; it is of potential interest to investigate the reasons for that.
- Low awareness and understanding of SDGs concept among local authorities / civil servants and the wider society at large.
- Lack of data sources to monitor the progress on SDGs achievement at the local level.

### Necessities indicated:

- Local trainings for civil servants to demonstrate and practice linking their ongoing work with SDGs;
- Conducting awareness-raising activities on SDGs among the wider society;
- Local trainings on methodology of budgeting in relation to SDGs.

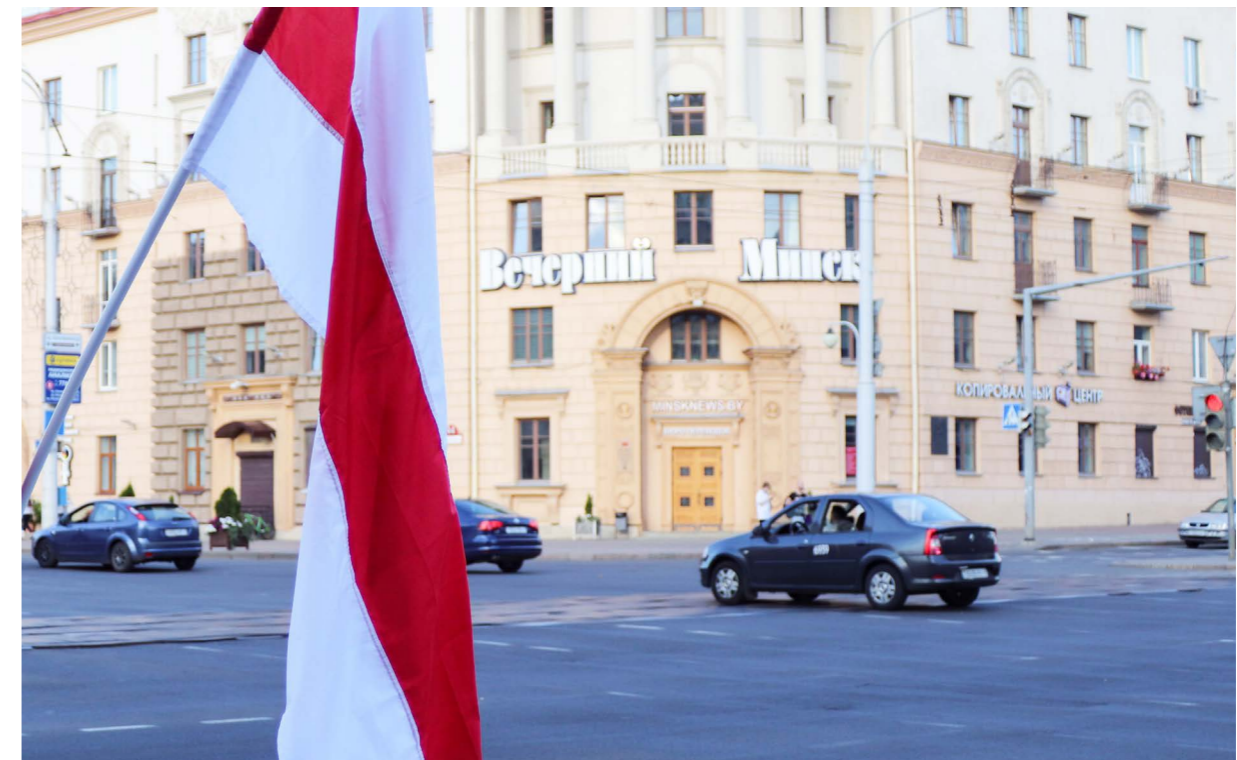
[Giorgi Nasrashvili](#) (Good Governance Expert, UNDP Georgia)

### Challenges when localizing SDGs:

- Despite the data available for the national and regional levels, there is lack of the statistical data on SDGs achievements at the local level;
- The average awareness on Agenda 2030 implementation is low among the public servants in Georgia.

[Natia Tsikaradze](#) (National Coordinator of SDGs, Policy Planning and Coordination Department at Administration of the Government of Georgia)

- The Secretariat of SDG Council is preparing a draft of Action Plan for 2020-2023 on SDGs localization for all regions of Georgia. It is expected to be finalized and adopted until the end of 2020.
- A process of SDGs localization will be initiated in three pilot regions of Georgia. It foresees awareness raising campaign, capacity development actions for local authorities, communication planning and other.
- Due to pandemic, the SDG Council will organize its work remotely in autumn 2020.



## BELARUS

### Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs

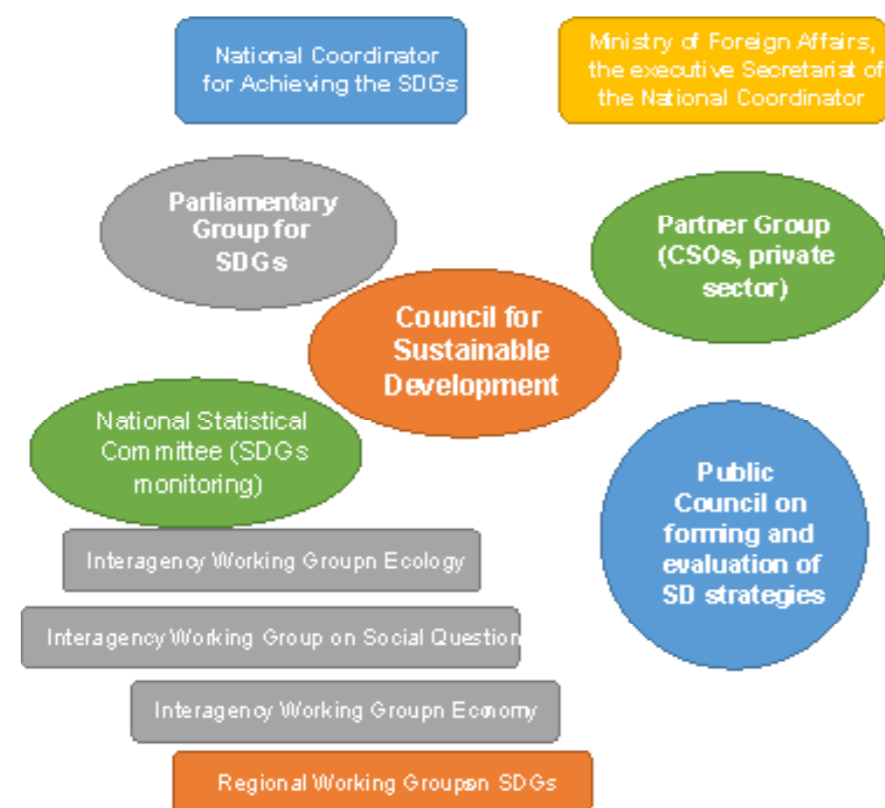
There are two coordinating bodies for SDGs implementation in Belarus. **First is the National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals** – Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus (appointed by the President of the Republic of Belarus, Decree № 181, 25/05/2017). The National Coordinator reports to the Government and the President on progress with regard to the implementation of the Goals and submits recommendations on how to improve the implementation process ([source](#)). Anatoly Isachenko, Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Republic, was appointed as the National Coordinator for Sustainable Development Goals on 13 February 2020 and thus replaced Marianna Shchetkina, who previously held the position ([source](#)).

**The second is the Council for Sustainable Development** – a consultative and advisory body under the National Coordinator for Achieving the SDGs. The Council runs regional groups and a partner group composed of representatives of non-governmental organizations, business and academia. The National Assembly has a parliamentary group for SDGs ([source](#)). Parliamentary hearings and national consultations involving a wide range of partners, including civil society, also form part of the process of implementing and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Parliamentary Group for SDGs** ([source](#), p. 5): formed in the National Assembly; includes deputies of the House of Representatives and members of the Council of the Republic. The main task is to assess the regulatory impact of draft laws on sustainable development processes and ensure parliamentary control in this area.

**Partner Group** ([source](#), p. 5): the main task is to ensure the participation of the general public in activities to achieve the SDGs. An open-ended group, formed from representatives of CSOs, public associations, business, and academia.

In 2019, the Belarusian Information Ministry has decided to set up a working group on promotion of Sustainable Development Goals, in order to promote public awareness on the SDGs in Belarus, [as notified by BelTA](#).



Translated from Russian by author (original scheme is from [The roadmap for statistics development on SDGs in the republic of Belarus](#), p.8)

## Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Belarus

At 2015, the Government approved the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus (NSSD-2030) for the period up to 2030. Belarus **NSSD-2030 is not a follow-up to the UN 2030 Agenda for SD** but a regular element within the national planning and forecasting system, a basic document for mid-term social & economic programs and annual plans at national and lower level ([source](#)). The main aims of the strategy are:

- to transform the model of the national economy from administrative to indicative planning;
- to achieve a balance between public and private sector contributions to gross domestic product;
- to develop the national economy;
- to introduce the principles of a green economy in industry;
- to promote innovative development and social support for the most in need;
- to create conditions in which every individual can achieve his or her potential ([source](#)).

Program of Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2020 is focused on economic growth mainly ([source](#)); Agenda 2030 is not mentioned. National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2035 has not developed yet, as well as state programs for the next 5 years ([source](#)). It will be a framework document for preparing strategies, programs and plans for the development of industries and regions, with the regional development's prioritization ([source](#)).

Belarus has developed a number of Action Plans on issues and policies relevant for reaching the SDGs. The National Action Plans (NAPs) identify a lead ministry for coordination of implementation of the plan, but do not usually include indicators or progress measurement or budgets. Among the NAPs relevant to taking forward the Roadmap are the National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) (2016–2019 until the next UPR cycle); the NAP on the implementation of the UNCRPD (2017–2025); National Action Plan for Ensuring Gender Equality for 2017–2020 and the National Action Plan on Green Economy ([source](#)). In July 2020, Belarus and the United Nations Organizations have distributed the finalized [country program document for Belarus \(2021-2025\)](#), a framework program settling the cooperation priorities for the implementation of international technical aid projects in the area of sustainable development ([source](#)). According to it, UNDP will continue to provide expert support to the Government of Belarus in the defined priority areas ([the Program](#), p. 5-7 and the Annex, is currently being under consideration in New York):



	NATIONAL PRIORITY OR GOAL	UNDP PRIORITY AREA	MAJOR PARTNERS / PARTNERSHIPS AND FRAMEWORKS
1	Environmental security; transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy); productive employment and decent incomes.	Economic development based on the principles of green and inclusive growth (related Sustainable Development Goals targets: 1.2; 2.3; 2a; 8.3; 8.5; 8.9; 9.3; 9.4; 12.1; and 12.6).	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MNREP) Ministry of Economy (MOE) Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) Energy Efficiency Department of the State Committee for Standardization (EEDSCS) Ministry of Industry (MOI) Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) Ministry of Forestry (MOF) State Committee on Science and Technology (SCST) National Academy of Science (NAS) Academic and educational institutions Local authorities, Private sector Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
2	Environmental security; transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy).	Implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures (related Goals targets: 1.2; 2.4; 2.5; 2a; 7.2; 7.3; 9.3; 9.4; 12.5; 13.1; 13.2; 13.3; 15.1; and 15.3).	MNREP, EEDSCS, MOE, MES, MOI MAF, MOF, Ministry of Education Ministry of Energy State Customs Committee (SCC) NAS, Academic and educational institutions, Local authorities, Private sector, NGOs
3	Environmental security; transition to rational models of production and consumption (circular economy).	Development of an effective digital ecosystem (related Goals targets: 4.3; 4.4; 9.4; 11.3; 11.7; 16.7; and 17.8).	MNREP, EEDSCS, MOE, MES MOI, MAF, MOF, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Energy, State Customs Committee (SCC), NAS, Academic and educational institutions, Local authorities Private sector, NGOs
4	Digital transformation of the economy and large-scale spread of innovations; developed business environment and sustainable infrastructure.	Fuller participation of vulnerable groups in socio-economic life (related Goals targets: 1.3; 3.5; 5.5; 5b; 5c; 8.5; 10.3; 16.7; and 17.18).	Ministry of Communications and Informatization (MCI), Ministry of Justice, National Centre of Legal Information, MOE, Ministry of Architecture and Construction, State Border Committee, SCC, SCST, NCES, Academic and educational institutions, Local authorities, Private sector, NGOs

## SDGs progress monitoring system

[The National platform for reporting indicators of Sustainable Development Goals](#) is developed by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus with the support of UNICEF and UNDP in 2018. The consolidated analytical panel of national indicators of the SDG of the Republic of Belarus provides a comparison of their total values by year.

**THE RAPID INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT (RIA)** for [Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support' \(MAPS\) mission](#).

The assessment was coordinated in November 2017–January 2018 by the United Nations in cooperation with the Government of Belarus.

RIA covered:

- national and local development plans: covered (i) 20 national sectoral development programmes implemented between 2016-2020, (ii) the NSDS up to 2030 and (iii) the Brest rayon programme for the period 2016-2020 at the level of targets and indicators;
- UN agencies: as per the UNDAF 2016 – 2020 for the Republic of Belarus;
- civil society organizations: 13 NGOs on a voluntary basis;
- private sector: 9 organizations, members of UN Global Compact in Belarus with corporate social responsibilities.

**KEY FINDINGS** ([Roadmap for SDG Implementation in the Republic of Belarus](#), p.74-78):

- Strong consistency in the timeframe and availability of plan of actions for implementing national development programs – NDPs (mainly within the period of 2016-2020).
- The level of SDG alignment in 22 national development programs 2016 – 2020 and up to 2030 with SDG targets (66 versus global 169 targets) is 39%.
- Gaps in 5 Ps of SDGs (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership): Persistent shortfalls were noted particularly in the areas of planet, peace, and partnership. The 22 national planning documents of Belarus calculated a score of only 11% for partnerships, compared to 51% for people and 39% for prosperity.
- Only two national development policies – the Socio-economic development program 2016-2020 and the Sustainable Development Strategy up to 2020 – have medium-to-low level of SDG integration (26 targets and 32 targets respectively).
- The coverage of national indicators that may potentially measure SDGs in assessed national development programs is around 23%.

# KEY PROJECT ON SDGS IMPLEMENTATION IN BELARUS

#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANCED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
1	<a href="#">Support to the National Coordinator on Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and Strengthening the Role of the Parliament in the Implementation of SDGs</a>	UNDP \$318,639	February 2017- July 2020	A national review of the implementation of the Agenda – 2030 in the format of the National Forum on Sustainable Development held 24 January 2019 in Minsk (450 participants).

## Localizing the SDGs

[The Roadmap](#) (p.81) suggests piloting as an approach of localization of the SDGs, which includes enabling the space within current Belarus' sub-national planning for alignment of the SDG targets and indicators in a specific region and evaluating the process and impact. While there is no standard approach to localization to the SDGs yet.

#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANCED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
1	<a href="#">Support to Local Development in the Republic of Belarus</a> Project aimed at assisting government authorities and organizations with improvement of good governance standards through a participatory approach and strengthened dialogue between authorities, businesses, non-for-profit organizations and citizens.	UNDP Donors: United Nations Development Pro \$467.36K European Commission \$6.80M	July 2013 - December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodology Guidance on best Area-Based development (ABD) practices in Belarus (in Russian);</li> <li>Analytical Note outlining key recommendations on ABD mechanisms and participatory planning application at the local level (in Russian and English);</li> <li>20 ABD Passports of pilot districts were developed and approved by local action groups and by local authorities;</li> <li>120 local initiatives were supported for the total amount of €2,111,449 in 2017 and 6 local initiatives were supported at the total amount of USD 91,630 in 2018.</li> </ul>

2	<a href="#">Local Economic Development In Belarus</a> Project goal is to support economic initiative, competitiveness and innovation for inclusive development at the local level in Belarus. Implementation Geo is 12 pilot districts.	UNDP Donors: Government Of Poland, European Commission Total contribution: \$5,009,479 Implementing Organization: Ministry of Economy of Belarus	May 2018 - January 2022	12 DPD local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are developed with participation of key stakeholders (local authorities, District Entrepreneurship Development Councils, NGOs, businesses). 8 new innovative models of business support intuitions are selected for funding and piloting. 1674 people benefited from introduced capacity building measures.
3	<a href="#">Belarus funding program</a>	<a href="#">IBB Dortmund</a> Supported by <a href="#">Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</a> and <a href="#">the Society for International Cooperation (GIZ)</a>	Since 2002, the 9th phase in 2019 - 2022	Focus of the Belarus funding program: (1) Inclusive and equal society; (2) The localization of the SDGs; (3) Green transition and digital transformation. More than 250 German-Belarusian cooperation projects have been implemented by CSOs, educational and social institutions since 2002. 20 German-Belarusian projects are being implemented in the 9th phase of the program. Civil society and municipal organizations from 15 cities in Germany are realizing specific projects in the context of the 2030 Agenda with partners in Belarus and other countries of the Eastern Partnership.

In 2018–2019, [Belarus funding program of IBB Dortmund](#) in collaboration with [LAG 21 NRW](#) developed and held a study program “[Monitoring, evaluating and finalizing local and regional sustainable development strategies](#)”. The aim of the course was to train representatives of the Belarusian local communities with methods, technologies and tools that allow them to professionalize the work initiated in many places in Belarus on the strategic organization of sustainable development. The course and the manual are based on the [LAG 21 NRW](#) model for managing the participatory development of integrated sustainable development strategies, which is used in various projects in Germany, Belarus and other countries. Administration representatives of eight rayons (districts) of four oblast (regions) participated in the study program.

The main outcomes included as follows (derived and translated by author from [the course manual](#), in Russian):

#### **Vileika district, Minsk region**

In 2015, the local authorities initiated drafting of the Passport of Territorial Sustainable Development (hereinafter – TSD Passport) of the Vileika District under the EU-UNDP Project “Assistance to Development at the Local Level in the Republic of Belarus”. The main message of the TSD is “doing together on our own land, for ourselves and our descendants”. The TSD Passport has become a tool for sustainable development of the region for the period 2017–2025. It was developed in 2017, finalized and updated in 2019. A working body has been formed - the Public Council for Sustainable Development of the Vileika District.

#### **Berezovsky district, Brest region**

In 2015–2018, two strategic documents were developed by the local administration and interested stakeholders. First is “Strategy for sustainable development of the Berezovsky district for the period up to 2030”, developed in 2016 with the support of the project “Improving local sustainable development strategies and mechanisms for their implementation in two pilot regions of Belarus on the basis of the new NSSD-2030”. Second is the Passport of Territorial Sustainable Development of the Berezovsky district up to 2025, developed as part of the international technical assistance project in 2018.

#### **Bragin district, Gomel region**

In 2017, a Local Action Group was created as a platform for public participation and idea generation for territory-based development. The group developed the TSD Passport, which became the first strategic document based on the balance of interests and needs of all development actors. In September 2017, on the initiative of the members of the Local Action Group, the Council for Sustainable Development of the Bragin District was created (Order of the Bragin District Council of Deputies No. 13 of September 25, 2017). It included representatives of local authorities, such as rural executive committees, district organizations and institutions.

#### **Five districts of Mogilev region**

In 2019, the “Plan for Regional Cooperation to Increase the Sustainability of Development of Five Rural Areas of the Mogilev Region for 2018-2020 with Priorities until 2030” was approved. Five partner districts (Bykhovskiy, Klichevskiy, Krasnopolskiy, Slavgorodskiy and Cherikovskiy districts of the Mogilev region) signed the cooperation agreement on January 5, 2018. The Plan was developed by representatives of the public, business and authorities of these regions with the methodological support of the International Fund for the Development of Rural Areas and the German NGO Volkshochschule im Landkreis Cham e V. The development was done under the project “Networking and strategic planning for the development of depressed rural areas of the Mogilev region” (FpB-1624) with the financial support of the Belarus Support Program of the Federal Government of Germany. In Belarus, the Regional Plan is an innovative form of cooperation between districts in order to achieve SDGs.

## Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders

[Iryna Ponedelnik](#) (head of public initiative “[Youth for Sustainable Development](#)”)

Challenges when localizing SDGs:

- Until there is no position of SDG advisor in the regional and local administrations, the process of SDGs’ localization won’t be carried due to administrative burden of municipality staff;
- There are no connections between local state budgeting and Agenda 2030 realization at the local level;
- The Parliamentary Group for SDGs does not have a real impact on the situation with Agenda 2030 realization; proposals of the CSOs are purely recommendatory.

[Maria Falaleeva](#) (Chairman of the Central Council of [CSO “EKAPRAEKT”](#))

- Belarus traditionally uses a “top-down” approach in the state administration which generally impedes multi-level approach supporting sustainable development. Nevertheless the topic of SDGs and Agenda 2030 has been actively promoted by the central government since 2017, as politically neutral and generally corresponding (or rather not contradicting) to the national development agenda. The SDG implementation is also supported by the international donors and could give the country a positive international image. Therefore, local administrations are generally open for a collaboration on it.
- The general project approach of international donors in Belarus is based on the “pilot” design (localization of the funded initiatives in some “pilot” territories with the potential for further scaling up). It causes a “biased transparency” of the project outcomes, if no real scaling is being ensured after the “pilot” project is finished.
- Taking into account the political situation in Belarus, direct support of the official institutions (including local administration) is not reasonable and should be postponed until normalization of the political and social situation. Instead, support can be provided to non-state actors (e.g. NGOs) for information and capacity building initiatives, which would allow continuing efforts and preparing grounds for further activities and actions.

[Natalya Minchenko](#) (SDG advisor, UNDP/UNICEF/UNFPA Project “Supporting the functioning of the architecture for the Sustainable Development Goals management in the Republic of Belarus”)

- It could be beneficial to create a communication platform for UN colleagues (UNDP, etc) from all three countries under the Global Utmaning programme, to exchange the current initiatives and experience on work with SDGs;
- The experience of Sweden in SDGs localization could be very relevant in Belarus.

Challenges (steps) when localizing SDGs:

- It is a problem to find people in the local administrations in Belarus who can speak English and are involved in the localization of SDGs and the Global Utmaning programme should seriously consider it while planning the training modules;
- The systemic approach and local planning / budgeting on SDGs incorporation can be enabled after the National Strategy on Sustainable Development until 2035 is approved by the Government. It is expected to be approved in 2020.
- Regional Working Groups on SDGs need expert and technical support as they do not have enough capacity and this area of work is new for them.
- It is necessary to develop methodologies and procedures on planning of national and local budgets in connection to SDGs in Belarus.

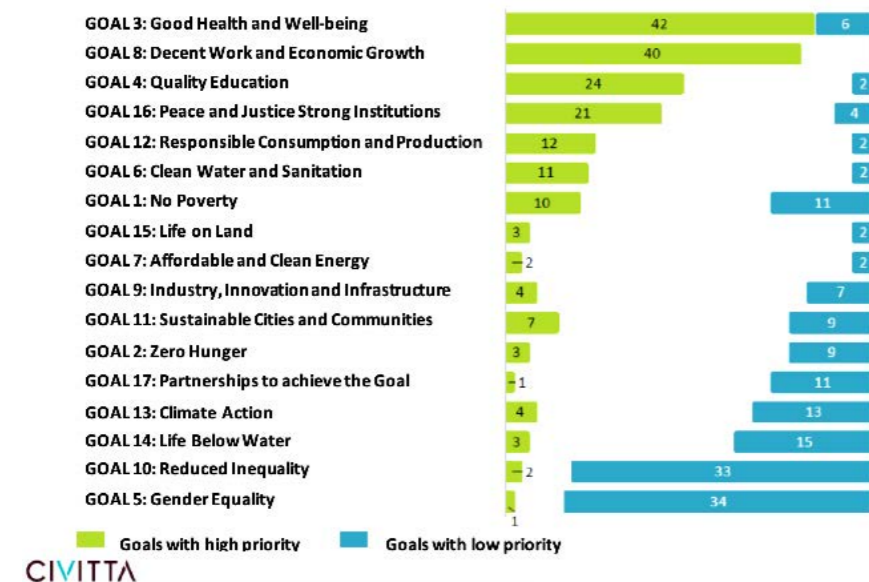


## Survey on the perception and promotion of SDGs in Belarus

([report on the results of focus groups, 2019](#) – translated by author from Russian)

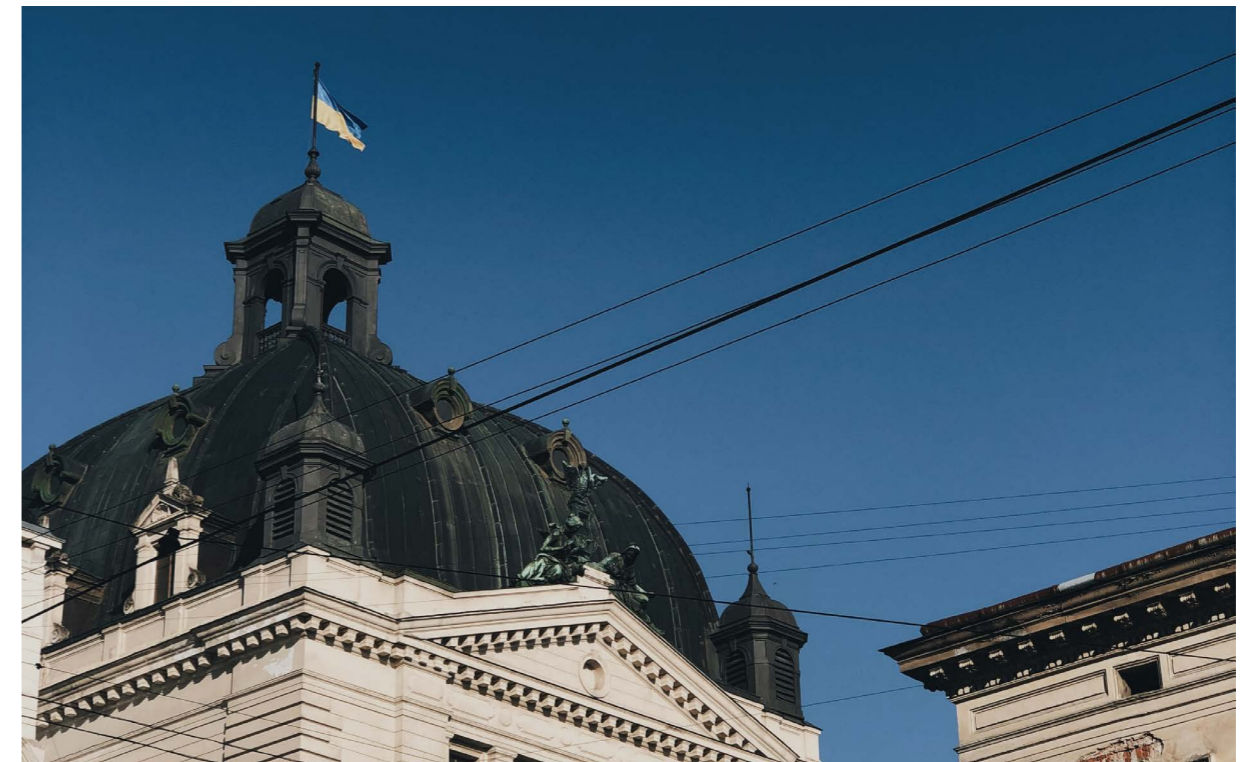
**Methodology:** 7 focus group discussions, 8 people in each focus group, men and women aged 18 and over, with different levels of education, income and professional affiliation, from the cities of Minsk, Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, and Mogilev.

**Results:** UNDERSTANDING the SDGs. The population's perceptions of sustainable development are superficial, reflecting mainly the desire to increase welfare and living standards, as well as the need for stability. Key perceptions on sustainable development included examples of improvements in the immediate environment; many examples are related to new construction and infrastructural projects (like roads), as well as improvement of living conditions. The connection of sustainable development with the presence of social changes, the development of civil society is poorly expressed.



Translated from Russian by author (original scheme is derived from the [report on the results of focus groups, 2019](#), p.10)

**SOCIAL ADVERTISING OF THE SDGs.** Most of the respondents were not familiar with the current advertising campaign for the Sustainable Development Goals, had not heard of them. Only few respondents have seen the advertisement (billboards and video) and they pointed out its incomprehensibility and unattractiveness. The Sustainable Development Goals are currently associated with national programs; in the given context, the level of trust in SDGs is low.



## UKRAINE

### Institutional setting and ownership of the SDGs

In 2017, the Government established the Inter-Agency Working Group on SDGs to coordinate the goals achievement efforts. The Group included 17 subgroups ruled by Deputy Ministers from different government ministries, representatives of UN agencies in Ukraine, and scientific institutions of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The chairperson of the Group is the First Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine – the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, Stepan Kubiv. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine is acting as executive secretariat of the Group ([source](#)).

In September 2019, the Decree of the President of Ukraine “On the Sustainable Development Goals for Ukraine up to 2030” was signed. It stated that “the Sustainable Development Goals for Ukraine up to 2030 are benchmarks for drafting of forecast and policy documents and regulatory legal acts to ensure a balanced character of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of Ukraine’s sustainable development” ([VNR 2020](#), p.8-9).

Moreover, Ukraine will establish a SDG policy advisory unit under the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to ensure continued progress over the next ten years, according to a statement issued July 2020 by UNDP and Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal ([source](#)).

### SDGs MILESTONES (source):

**2016:** SDGs adapted for Ukraine through an open process (national and local levels).

**2017:** national SDGs targets (86) with benchmarks and national SDGs indicators (183) established. The baseline report "[The 'Sustainable Development Goals: Ukraine' national report](#)" is approved.

**2018:** SDGs monitoring system is introduced.

**2019:** The monitoring report on the SDGs '[2019 Progress Report: SDGs in Ukraine](#)' (monitoring of the SDGs indicators for 2015-2018), the first thematic National Report '[SDGs for Children in Ukraine](#)' and the National Report '[SDGs in Ukraine. SDG8 Decent Work and Economic Growth](#)' are presented.

**2020:** The first [Voluntary National Review of progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Ukraine](#) is issued.

### Linkages of the SDGs with strategic policy documents of Ukraine

According to [the analysis of the Institute for Social and Economic Research \(2017\)](#), the SDG targets adapted for Ukraine have only partially been incorporated into Ukrainian government policies. Approximately the only 60 percent of the SDG targets are incorporated in the current strategic documents. At the same time, the majority of targets from strategic documents have no indicators or relevant deadlines. Specifically, the targets related to SDGs 10, 11 and 14 have no indicators at all. Not more than half of the targets from strategic documents substantially correspond to SDG targets. Moreover, the strategic documents incorporating SDGs 3, 6, 11 and 14 have no clear, officially adopted implementation plans. For example, the Action Plan for the Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine by 2020 was developed only for 2015, whereas the Strategy for the National Security of Ukraine and the Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Ukraine do not have any implementation plans at all (the [Analysis](#), p.6). It should be also noted, that the Government of Ukraine up to now has not signed [the drafted Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine by 2030](#). Thus, there is no any framework strategic document presented for realization the Agenda 2030 in Ukraine.

### SDGs progress monitoring system

A mechanism for planning and coordination of information interaction between suppliers of data (statistical information and administrative data producers) required to ensure the SDGs monitoring was institutionalized by adopting the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Order No. 686-p of 21 August 2019 "Data collection issues for the monitoring of the SDG achievement". This document approved 183 indicators, in terms of which data is collected and disaggregated to monitor the SDGs achievement, as well as designated relevant information managers and information supply timeframe. The [State Statistics Service of Ukraine](#) coordinates data collection for monitoring of the SDGs progress and development of metadata for the defined indicators (it has established a special unit within its structure to provide information support for monitoring of the SDGs).

### THE RAPID INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT (RIA)

[The analysis of the Institute for Social and Economic Research \(2017\)](#) has indicated the following general issues and constraints impeding achievement of the SDGs:

- Lack of a policy analysis cycle in Ukraine. Some of its initial components are not linked logically. The general weakness of the government strategic planning system, target and programme management and funding accounts for the gaps between the programmes and plans at different levels and for the risks of failure to complete programmes.
- A methodology to calculate the financial resources required to attain the projected goals is also missing. Existing methodologies are not establishing a connection with the priorities of sustainable development. There is no proper programme budgeting ensured, and thus a longer-term goal setting is disconnected from any resource allocation and is, therefore, not much more than an empty commitment on paper.
- There is insufficient public/business/donor engagement in the processes of identifying the most pressing issues of public concern and potential solutions. In addition, the government's actions to communicate to the public the importance and meaning of achieving the SDGs has been lacking.

## KEY PROJECTS ON SDGS IMPLEMENTATION IN UKRAINE

- There is a lack of an effective governance system that allows coordination of the incorporation of SDG targets and indicators into strategic planning. As demonstrated by the experience of developing the most essential strategic documents, there is no practice of verifying new policies against the SDGs in either the government or the parliament.
- A number of strategic documents provide a list of various ministries and agencies that are defined as being responsible institutions for implementing targets related to the SDGs. Yet hardly any of the strategic documents identify specific responsibilities for each institution, including specific issues that are within the competency of each party.

#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANCED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
1	<a href="#">Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals Implementation in Ukraine</a>	United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Donor: Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	November 2017 - May 2018  EUR 70,000	Support to the Government of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, line ministries and State Statistics Service of Ukraine with regard to the establishment of an effective system of monitoring of the adopted national and regional/local SDGs, their targets and indicators, is provided.
2	<a href="#">Synergy of knowledge, experience and creativity for the future</a>	The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, supported by UNICEF	Since June 2019	The project is aimed to accelerate the SDGs and transformation of the national economy into sustainable advanced system ( <a href="#">source</a> ). It involved more than 50 representatives of youth from 6 top-ranked Ukrainian higher educational Institutions to <a href="#">VNR 2020</a> preparation; analysis of progress in SDGs 8, 9, 12, 17 and relevant recommendations were prepared by students and postgraduates of the Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, and the International Finance University. More than 100 representatives of youth from 11 Ukrainian higher educational institutions took part in a consensus workshop and surveys on macroeconomic development and forecasting in view of the SDGs ( <a href="#">VNR 2020</a> , p.15).

## Some critical remarks on agenda 2030 implementation in Ukraine

**Derived from** the National Report '[SDGs in Ukraine. SDG8 Decent Work and Economic Growth](#)' (p. 35), also reflected in [VNR 2020](#) (p. 10):

A large number of strategic and policy documents (in particular, the objectives and activities of 145 strategic and policy documents are directed on the achievement of 17 Sustainable Development Goals):

- forms a discrete, rather than systematic, approach to policy formulation;
- blurs goals and objectives;
- disperses rather than concentrates the necessary financial and human resources.

The outcome of such non-systemic activity is, among others, the underfunding of important objectives and activities, the low degree of their implementation, the overlapping of functions, objectives and activities among executive authorities, the low responsibility.

**Derived from** the analytical report #5 (2019) of the National Institute for Strategic Studies ([in Ukrainian](#), translation provided by the author):

- The process of the coordination of SDGs implementation is not regulated in the national legislation properly. The Inter-Agency Working Group on SDGs was established to enable the general view on SDGs implementation in Ukraine, as well as to coordinate 17 subgroups to set national targets under Agenda 2030 and to prepare the baseline national report. This mission has been already completed. At the same time, there is a lot of scientific institutions, governmental and non-governmental structures that are performing an important work on SDGs implementation, such as drafting program and monitoring documents. These initiatives are not formally included in existing procedures of the coordination and implementation of SDGs at the national level.
- The SDG indicators, listed in the Order No. 686-p of 21 August 2019 "Data collection issues for the monitoring of the SDG achievement" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, mainly are not disaggregated to the sublevels of regions and communities. They have only national level of data. Moreover, the documents related to SDGs national monitoring system do not contain any descriptions of monitoring components and corresponding tasks for the regional and local authorities. That essentially limits the possibility to track the local SDGs implementation.

## Localizing the SDGs

Few projects and publications in Ukraine form the ground for SDGs' localization in terms of:

- capacity development and raising expertise of civil servants (projects 2 and 5 in the table below);
- enforcing the cooperation between local stakeholders under sustainability initiatives (project 1),
- forming the baseline for sustainable development at the regional and local levels with data analysis on the adapted targets and indicators (projects 3 and 4).

#	TITLE	REALIZED/ FINANCED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
1	<a href="#">Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development Program</a>	UNDP Donor: Swedish International Development Cooperation (Sida)	December 2018 – July 2020 SEK 5,000,000	The project pilots a multi-stakeholder partnership approach at regional and local levels to address sustainable development challenges in Ukraine. Using the SymbioCity approach from Sweden, which integrates environmental, socio-cultural and economic solutions to develop urban and rural communities, the project facilitates collaboration between local and regional governments, councils, academia, civil society and business institutions. <a href="#">In 2019, 7 local projects were funded.</a>
2	<a href="#">Support To SDGs Localization In Ukraine</a>	UNDP Donor: GIZ	October 2018 -March 2021 \$203.59K	1. Partnership with existing knowledge-sharing platforms for joint promotion of sustainable development in Ukraine established 2. A vision, strategy and approaches to developing e-learning platform on SDGs implementation in Ukraine defined 3. Three new e-courses on issues related with sustainable development and localized implementation of SDGs developed and are available for different groups of stakeholders 4. 500 civic activists, representatives of business community, civil servants and representatives of regional/local authorities trained via e-learning platform on supporting and managing sustainable development in context of new decentralized governance.



#	TITLE	REALIZED/FINANCED BY	TIME PERIOD	SOME KEY RESULTS
3	The SDG-related research project <a href="#">“Human Development and Social Business in Kivshovata, Ukraine”</a>	Sponsored by SDGs Corporation, a parent company of Kivshovata Agro, supported by Japanese Embassy, conducted by the Cambridge University	since 2018	A Japanese investor in Kivshovata Agro hired a research team from the University of Cambridge (5-years cooperation agreement) to develop <a href="#">an SDG report for a village of Kivshovata</a> with population of about 2,000 people. This is the first attempt of applying SDGs on the village level. The report produces a table of SGD indicators based on the national baseline report developed by UNDP. Since most of data is not available, the report offers an SDG household index made of 8 available indicators (p. 61).
4	Regional reports <a href="#">“Sustainable Development Goals: Volyn-2030”</a> and <a href="#">“Sustainable Development Goals: Dnipro-2030”</a>	The publications were prepared by the Regional State Administrations with the support from the Green Economy Programme, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) in partnership with UNDP/GIZ Project “Supporting SDG Implementation in Ukraine”.	2018	Initiated by the Volyn and the Dnipropetrovsk regions, the results of the discussion on the adapted targets and indicators for their monitoring were finalized in the form of the Regional Reports that provided the baseline for sustainable development at the regional level in Ukraine. <a href="#">All 24 regions in Ukraine have finalized SDG Baseline analytical studies in 2019</a> , developed with support from UNDP.
5	The Ukrainian translation of the UCLG brochure <a href="#">“The Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to Know”</a>	The translation was performed within the implementation of UNDP/GEF project “Integrating Rio Conventions Provisions into Ukraine’s National Policy Framework”.	2018	The publication of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) explains how each of the 17 SDGs relates to the daily work of local and regional governments. It also lists the most relevant targets of each goal to local governments and highlights the relationship between the goals and other international agendas.

### ADDITIONAL PROJECT DETAILS

**PROJECT 2** (E-learning courses for civil servants, civic activists, and businesses):

The online course [“Act further: Sustainable development for civil servants”](#) has been developed in cooperation of the Prometheus education platform, National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service, National Academy of Public Administration and Ukrainian School of Governance. As of 01/07, the online course attracted 5,203 unique subscribers, out of which 2,072 completed the course and get certified (39,8%). The average age of the audience is 38 years. 62% of the audience are women. 28 trainers for the target audience civil servants have been certified by the project.

To advocate the course, trainers started to conduct online events round the Ukraine recently. Online session took place in Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Cherkasy, Rivne, Khmelnytskyi, Sumy, etc. The course became an integral part of the certificate program for advanced training of civil servants, “Sustainable development goals for civil servants”. The program is certified by the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service. The online course [Act further: Sustainable development for civic activists](#) continues to collect subscribers. As of 01/07 there are 1,300 unique subscribers, out of which 157 completed the course and get certified (12,1%). We expect these figures to increase further as far as 16 certified trainers continue their advocating campaign among the target audience. The online course [Act further: Sustainable development for businesses](#) has been finalized and opened recently in August.

**PROJECT 3** (Human Development and Social Business in Kivshovata):

The [annual interim report \(2018-2019\)](#) forms part of the research project “Human Development and Social Business in Kivshovata, Ukraine”. The project is sponsored by the SDGs Corporation, a parent company of Kivshovata Agro, which made a five-year research agreement with the University of Cambridge in 2018. The SDGs Corporation was founded in 2018 with the aim of coordinating economic and social progress in the village. This report provides and analyses background information about the village of Kivshovata, the Kivshovata Agro Company, and the landowners in contract with the company. It serves as a base for the forthcoming five-year development plan. The long-term purpose of the project is to help villagers to flourish on measures extending beyond economic growth in line with 17 SDGs.

## Some highlights from interviews with stakeholders

[Mustafa Sait-Ametov](#) (Programme Manager, UNDP Ukraine) and [Maria Gutsman](#) (Programme Analyst, UNDP Ukraine)

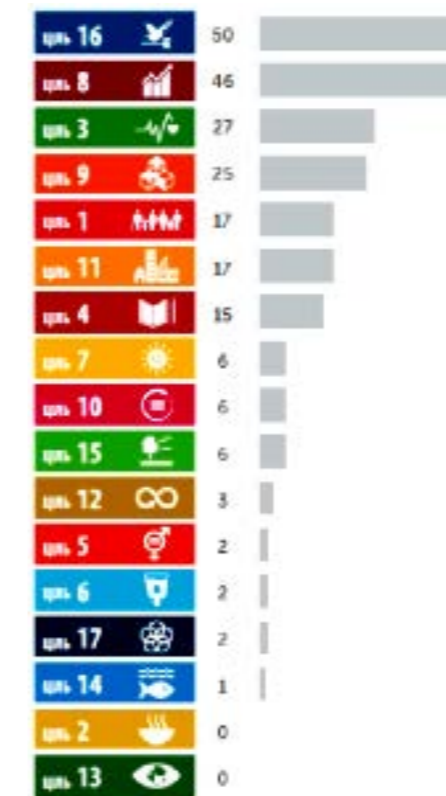
Challenges when localizing SDGs:

- Missing data for some indicators at sub-national and local levels; even less data is available at the local level to track the progress towards SDG.
- SDGs are not sufficiently integrated in the public finance planning; since August 2020 UNDP Ukraine in partnership with other UN agencies has launched a 2-years program to address the issue of integrated financial system for local implementation of SDGs in two pilot oblasts.
- Low level of awareness about SDGs among the population and key development actors, including local authorities;
- Insufficient engagement of all sectors towards Agenda 2030 implementation;
- Insufficient capacity of local authorities to align their development plans with SDGs and address the challenges in participatory and collaborative manner;
- Risk of losing the focus on SDGs in times of COVID-19 pandemic, which cause local budget shrinking and increases the uncertainty. COVID-19 should be regarded as a trigger to accelerate Agenda 2030 realization, with the forced digitalization as a positive outcome of lockdowns.

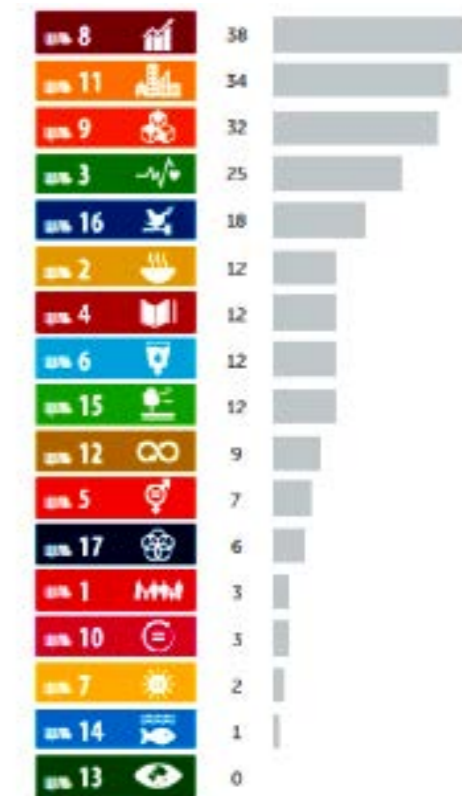
## Regional (oblasts) consultations on SDGs

(Derived from [the report \(2016\)](#) and translated by author from Ukrainian)  
In order to identify priority Goals and ways to achieve them, ten regional consultations on the adaptation and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals were held in Ukraine in July-September 2016. The consultations took place in Dnipro, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhia, Lutsk, Mariupol, Sumy, Ternopil, Uzhhorod, Cherkasy, and Chernivtsi, with more than 500 participants representing regional and local authorities, civil society organizations, international organizations, and scientific institutions.

National development priorities for Ukraine identified during the regional consultations on SDGs in 10 oblasts



Regional development priorities for Ukraine identified during regional consultations on the SDGs in 10 oblasts



The results of the consultations show that, in general, peace and / or good governance are the main priorities for stakeholders at the national level in Ukraine. At the same time, priorities differ at the regional level: SDGs 8, 11 and 9 have become the most popular for oblasts, because local stakeholders see the possibility of change at the oblast level by improving the economic situation in communities and building economic and social integration. It is important to note that the conclusions of 10 regional consultations were similar to the results of national expert consultations held in Kyiv on July 5-6, 2016. The national consultations, attended by about 300 participants - representatives of government agencies, UN agencies, academia, civil society and think tanks - selected SDGs 3, 8, 9 and 16 as priorities ([the report, p. 6](#)).

## Survey on the perception of SDGs in Ukraine

(Derived from the [analytical report \(2017\)](#) – translated by author from Ukrainian)

### Methodology

Individual interviews, 1200 respondents in total (45% males and 55% females), among them 23% from large cities (500K+), 23% from middle size towns (50-500K), 22% from small settlements (up to 50K), and 32% from villages, with equal distribution among age groups. All regions of Ukraine are covered.

### Results

The tables and graphs presented below derived from the report (p. 52-53 and p.21), and translated by author from Ukrainian. In general, it is clear that the level of understanding and awareness on SDGs among citizens is rather low. The majority of responders were not sure if SDGs could trigger positive change in Ukraine, highly relying on the Government.

DO YOU KNOW THAT UKRAINE HAS ALSO STATED SDGS FOR ITSELF?	FREQUENCY	%
Yes, I have a notion about that	105	8,8%
I have superficial knowledge on that	407	33,9%
I know nothing about that	688	57,3%
TOTAL	1200	100,0%

WILL THE SDGS BE ABLE TO STIMULATE TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES IN UKRAINE THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING EQUALITY, PEACE, SOCIAL WELL-BEING FOR ALL AND THE ENVIRONMENT?	FREQUENCY	%
Yes	218	18,2%
Maybe	648	54,0%
No	233	19,4%
Other	8	0,7%
Hard to answer	93	7,8%
TOTAL	1200	100,0%

WHO DETERMINES THE SUCCESS OF THE SDG'S ACHIEVEMENT IN UKRAINE?	FREQUENCY	%
The government	930	77,5%
Citizens	675	56,3%
Business companies	378	31,5%
International organizations	352	29,3%
Other	7	0,6%
Hard to answer	31	2,6%

Typically, among the most relevant problems respondents indicate those related to economic development, poverty, and corruption. The quality of education is remaining not of big importance though.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS IN UKRAINE, %	2014	2017
CORRUPTION	34,9	37,6
LEVEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	28,4	29,1
POVERTY	23,5	32,7
TERRORISM	20,5	12,1
QUALITY OF MEDICAL CARE	20,2	18,7
UNEMPLOYMENT	19,6	20,0
CRIMINALITY	14,9	15,9
ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION	12,9	13,4
DEPLETION OF NATURAL RESOURCES	6,0	5,8
POSSIBILITIES TO INFLUENCE STATE DECISION MAKING	5,0	4,4
QUALITY OF EDUCATION	3,9	6,9

# SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

## 1. INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF UN 2030 AGENDA

**1.1. In Georgia**, the Coordination Mechanism has a clearly described structure updated in 2020 by the Prime Minister's decree: the SDG Council and four working groups. The SDG Council is subordinated to the Administration of the Government of Georgia. The Rules of Operation of the SDG Council are being criticized by local think tank NGO IDFI in terms of transparency, as there are no representatives of the central legislative branch among the Council voting members, as well as any provisions on publishing meeting agendas and minutes. At the same time, the new structure increases the SDG ownership of the civil society: each working group has a co-chair from a civil society organization, as well as municipality mayors with voting power.

**1.2. In Belarus**, the design of the Coordination Mechanism is more complicated, with the National Coordinator for Achieving SDGs subordinated to the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and the Council for Sustainable Development subordinated to the National Coordinator. In addition, there are the parliamentary group of the National Assembly, the public Council, the partner group of NGOs, a few interagency working groups, and regional working groups. There is lack of clear descriptions of the Coordination Mechanism available publicly.

**1.3. In Ukraine**, the Coordination Mechanism includes the Inter-Agency Working Group on SDGs subordinated to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, and 17 subgroups for each SDG. In addition, Ukraine plans to establish a SDG policy advisory unit under the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in 2020. The National Institute for Strategic Studies is criticizing the existing Coordination Mechanism as out-of-date one, which does not include many other initiatives and working groups actively engaged in Agenda 2030 realization at the national level.

## 2. LINKAGES OF SDGS WITH STRATEGIC POLICY DOCUMENTS

**2.1. In Georgia**, there are key framework documents adopted by the Government, such as the National Document for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Strategy for Supporting and Monitoring of the Implementation of the SDGs. The Government has not approved the SDGs matrix yet; SDGs, targets and indicators, presented in the draft SDGs matrix, are fragmentally integrated into the National Medium Term Budgetary Framework 2019-2022 and National Strategic Development Documents. Reporting framework and timelines are not clearly defined. According to different estimations, the 36 national strategies together with the Georgia-EU Association Agreement cover 93% of the country's nationalized SDG targets. At the same time, 28% of the indicators are not reflected in any strategies or action plans and only 23% of them are fully covered by national policy documents.

**2.2. In Belarus**, there is no any key framework documents on SDGs achievement. There is the National Strategy for Sustainable Social and Economic Development by 2030, which is not regarded as a follow-up to the UN 2030 Agenda for SD but a regular element within the national planning and forecasting system. The National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2035 has not developed yet; instead, Belarus has developed a number of Action Plans on issues and policies relevant for reaching the SDGs. The level of SDG alignment in 22 national development programs with SDG targets is 39%.

**2.3. In Ukraine**, there is no any key framework documents on SDGs achievement also. The Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine by 2020 was approved by President in 2015 and does not have any Action Plans developed, except the only one in 2015. The draft of Sustainable Development Strategy for Ukraine by 2030 has been prepared under the assistance of UNDP but not adopted by the Government. There is a lack of an effective governance system to coordinate the incorporation of SDG targets and indicators into strategic planning. About 60% of the SDG targets are incorporated in the current strategic documents, but the majority of targets from strategic documents have no indicators or relevant deadlines, as well as linkages to state budgeting.

### 3. KEY UN PROJECTS ON SDGS IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

3.1. They have the common design, aims, and approach in all three countries.

3.2. The Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) has been held in all three countries; but only in Georgia two more assessments were made in 2019: the “Performance Audit of preparedness for Implementation of SDGs” by SAOG, and the “Extent of SDGs Integration in the National Public Policy System of Georgia” by IDFI. It increased significantly the objectivity of the assessment. Unlike Belarus and Georgia, in Ukraine RIA has been performed by one national scientific institution (ISER), without involving other stakeholders.

3.3. The national surveys on the perception of SDGs, as well as on national priorities on SDGs were held in Ukraine (2016, 2017) and in Belarus (2019). There is no information available publicly about such surveys in Georgia; it could be of potential interest to organize a national survey on SDGs here as well.

### 4. SOME COMMON CHALLENGES ON LOCALIZING SDGS:

4.1. SDGs progress monitoring system has been established in all three countries, but provides the data at the national level, mainly not being disaggregated to the sublevels of regions and communities. All interviewees admitted lack of data sources to monitor the progress on SDGs achievement at the local level.

4.2. Reporting framework and timelines are being missed for the SDGs targets in the strategic policy documents.

4.3. There is a lack of stronger linkages and systemic approach to local planning / budgeting with SDGs incorporation. There are no any methodologies and procedures on planning of local budgets in connection to SDGs; a political goodwill is missing also, regarding the specificity of political situation and influence of COVID-19.

4.4. The division of responsibilities among governmental bodies, line ministries, and public agencies in SDGs achievement is not clearly defined and has some overlapping.

4.5. The framework for the localization of SDGs is not efficiently set up at the national level. The process of SDGs localization is at the very initiate state in Georgia, and with some good examples and ongoing pilot projects in Ukraine and Belarus.

4.6. There is low awareness and understanding of SDGs concept among local civil servants and citizens, as well as lack of capacity to implement SDGs locally. The national surveys in Ukraine and Belarus show that respondents understand the sustainable development concept as a way to constant economic growth and increasing the country welfare. It could potentially lead to misprioritization of SDGs in local municipal planning.

### 5. NECESSITIES AND PROPOSALS INDICATED BY INTERVIEWEES:

5.1. To organize local trainings for civil servants in order to demonstrate and formulate the links between their actual ongoing work and SDGs;

5.2. To organize local trainings on methodology of budgeting in relation to SDGs;

5.3. To form a communication platform for UNDP colleagues from all three countries under the Global Utmaning programme, to exchange the current initiatives and experience on work with SDGs;

5.4. To support Regional Working Groups on SDGs, or to introduce the positions of SDG regional coordinators as it is done by UNDP in Ukraine.

To sum up, the analysis of available information sources (legislation documents, projects reporting, SDG-related official websites, articles in mass media etc.) and the interviews show the general lack of connection between national SDGs framework and local governance structures. At the moment, none of analyzed countries has established a systemic working scheme both of local statistical data collecting for SDGs proper monitoring and of SDGs localization in terms of including national sustainability goals in local strategic documents and local budget planning. Both in Ukraine and Belarus there are already presented pilot projects on SDGs localization; it is time to systemize the gained experience and to scale it for the rest of municipalities. In Georgia, the piloting is at the initial stage and requires more time. Interviews and the analysis of international aid projects related to Agenda 2030 implementation show that a stronger joint efforts and collaboration between donors is necessary; for example, some project ideas presented in Ukraine could be highly relevant in Belarus.

Some projects initiated by different donors overlap each other in terms of development local planning guidelines for the authorities on SDGs localization. It should be fixed by more effective communication between different donors dealing with Agenda 2030 realization at the country level. In this perspective, the Global Utmaning programme can serve as a communicational platform for sharing the experience and further funding plans for them.

There are few questions and concerns that remain open: on the sufficiency of governmental efforts to provide equal opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in the Agenda 2030 realization at both national and local levels; on the role and functions of the national SDGs coordinator in the process of SDGs localization and linking the national framework with local governance.

Regarding the fact that in all three countries a low level of awareness and understanding has been indicated both of local authorities and citizens towards SDGs, it is recommended to design the Global Utmaning programme in a way to provide the very basic initial knowledge to the participants on SDGs and sustainable development concept in general. It is important to avoid misunderstanding of sustainability in relation to constant economic growth that could lead to a wrong prioritization of SDGs in the local planning.

# GLOBAL UTMANING

Global Utmaning (Global Challenge) is an independent think tank based in Stockholm that promotes long-term solutions to ecological, economic and social challenges through collaboration between research, business, politics and civil society. The think tank is a node within international networks, working with strategic analysis, policy solutions and advocacy by producing policy dialogues, seminars and publications. The think tank is a non profit association funded through grants from institutions, authorities, organisations and companies.

[www.globalutmaning.se](http://www.globalutmaning.se) | [facebook.com/globalutmaning](https://facebook.com/globalutmaning)

[twitter.com/globalut](https://twitter.com/globalut) | [instagram.com/global\\_utmaning](https://instagram.com/global_utmaning)

Birger Jarlsgatan 57 C 113 56 Stockholm

[info@globalutmaning.se](mailto:info@globalutmaning.se)