



BASELINE STUDY OF THE LOCALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

Localization Perspectives in Georgia



Tbilisi, 2022






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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of GIZ.

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INTRODUCTION



In September 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/70/1 “Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,¹ which entered into force in October of the same year. The resolution outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that are interlinked and address economic, social, and environmental issues in equal measure.

Georgia was one of the first countries to join the resolution and begin the process of nationalization and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to facilitate the implementation of the goals and the monitoring of this process, an Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as the Council) and thematic working groups (hereinafter referred to as the Working Groups) have been established to assist the Council by the order of the Prime Minister of Georgia. In addition, a national agenda document for 2030 was developed - the SDGs matrix, defining national goals, targets, and indicators.

Given the universal and inclusive nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is important that both central and local governments be involved in their implementation, as it is the local self-government that can deliver the benefits to the population in the most effective and expeditious manner. To facilitate this, with the financial support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the local architecture of Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia within the frames of the programme - Good Governance for Local Development South Caucasus (GGLD). Specifically, the report covers topics such as:



Involvement of local governments in national mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs;



Identify key municipal structures for the introduction and implementation of the SDGs at the local level;



Establish links between the program budget of municipalities and the budget required for the implementation of the SDGs.

In 2019, an audit² of the readiness for the implementation of SDGs conducted by the State Audit Office revealed that the SDG matrix was not integrated into the municipal priority documents, as municipalities were not involved in the implementation of the SDGs. In order to evaluate the ongoing processes in this direction, IDFI selected 14 municipalities³ and addressed them with letters requesting public information. The letter included the following questions: Has the Council for Sustainable Development been established within the City Hall or the Municipal Council? Do they participate in the National Council for Sustainable Development Goals? Are they familiar with the national document on Sustainable Develop-

¹ UN Resolution - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

² Report of the State Audit Office

³ Tbilisi City Municipality, Batumi City Municipality, Kutaisi City Municipality, Telavi Municipality, Mtskheta Municipality, Zugdidi City Municipality, Tsageri Municipality, Akhaltsikhe Municipality, Marneuli Municipality, Gori Municipality, Keda Municipality, Senaki Municipality, Oni Municipality, Sagarejo Municipality and Ozurgeti Municipality. See the selection methodology in Appendix II.

ment Goals? Do they use the SDGs when drafting a medium-term development document for the municipality? And other thematic questions. In addition, IDFI conducted a survey⁴ on SDGs in the selected municipalities to examine the trends in the level of awareness of various stakeholders, with the goal of generalizing the results.

At the same time, based on the example of 4 pilot municipalities (Keda, Senaki, Sagarejo, and Oni), the priorities and programs defined in the municipal budgets were studied, and their possible adaptation to the nationalized goals was determined. The results of the analysis are discussed in detail in Appendix I to the report.⁵

⁴ See the questionnaire in Appendix III

⁵ Such analysis is important for planning localization process awareness and advocacy campaigns.



THE NATIONAL DOCUMENT



The national document on Sustainable Development Goals was approved by the Government of Georgia on November 12, 2019 on the basis of decree №2328.⁶ It includes the goals, targets, indicators, data sources, and responsible agencies outlined in the Georgian context for the 2030 Agenda. The local government is mentioned in the Matrix in the context of only four goals. Each of the 93 targets defined in the document has corresponding leading agencies, including the Administration of the Government, the State Security Council, the Special Penitentiary Service, the Interagency Commission on Gender Equality, Women and Domestic Violence, the National Statistics Office, the Government Commission on Migration, LEPL Legal Aid Service, Prosecutor's Office, Public Service Development Agency, and various ministries. A local government body is not named as the lead agency for any of the targets.

GLOBAL GOAL	GOAL ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA	GLOBAL INDICATOR	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND TARGET
GOAL 1. END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE			
1.5. Increase the resilience of people in poverty and vulnerable people by 2030; As well as reduce their vulnerability to extreme climate-related events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and catastrophes;	1.5. Provide forecasting and early warning of extreme climate-related cases and environmental stresses and disasters;	1.5.4: Proportional number of local governments that have adopted and are implementing local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the National Risk Reduction Strategy.	1.5.4. Percentage of municipalities that have and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the National Risk Reduction Strategy
GOAL 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS			
5.5 Ensure full and effective participation of women in political, economic, and public life and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making	5.5 Ensure full and effective participation of women in political, economic and public life and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making	5.5.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in parliament and local government	5.5.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in parliament and local government
			5.5.1.1. Proportional number of directly elected female mayors

⁶ Decree of the Government of Georgia On the National Document for Sustainable Development Goals

GOAL 11: INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS			
11.6 Reduce adverse environmental impacts per capita in large cities by 2030, including by paying particular attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management issues	11.6 Reduce adverse environmental impacts per capita in large cities by 2030, including by paying particular attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management issues	11.6.1: Proportion of regularly collected and accordingly recycled and disposed solid waste to the total amount of municipal solid waste generated, by cities	11.6.1. Proportion of regularly collected and accordingly recycled and disposed solid waste to the total amount of municipal solid waste generated, collected and distributed, by cities; Target: 100%
GOAL 16: PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS			
16.7 Ensure a responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making process at all levels.	16.7 Ensure a responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making process at all levels.	16.7.1: Proportions of positions (by gender, age, disability, and population group) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and justice systems) relative to overall national distributions.	16.7.1: Proportions of positions (by gender, age, disability, and population group) in public institutions (national and local legislatures , public service, and justice systems) relative to overall national distributions
			16.7.1.2. The share of women in the seats of parliament and councils.

Within the framework of the first goal, the local self-government are referred to in the fifth target, which aims to implement local strategies for disaster risk reduction and uses the percentage of municipalities that are already implementing these strategies as an indicator of successful implementation. The fifth target of the fifth goal is to ensure the effective participation of women in political, economic, and public life and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making, with one of the indicators concerning the proportional representation of women in municipal councils. The sixth target of the eleventh goal covers the issues of municipal waste and air pollution, which fall under the jurisdiction of the local self-government. Finally, the seventh indicator of the sixteenth goal serves to ensure an inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making process. The sixth target of the eleventh goal covers the issues of municipal waste and air pollution, which fall under the jurisdiction of local self-governments. Finally, the seventh target of the sixteenth goal serves to ensure an inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making process. One of the indicators concerns the proportional distribution of positions (including gender, age, persons with disabilities) in public institutions (including local authorities) as compared to the overall national distribution.

In the findings and future plans section of the National Voluntary Review (VNR) 2020 report⁷, it is stated that the state plans to encourage local governments to take into account SDGs during their planning and budgeting processes. To this end, the Sustainable Development Council has developed a plan for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level. IDFI requested this document from the Administration of the Government and analyzed it for this report.

The plan defines two main tasks: establish a system of local government involvement in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and raise awareness at the local level regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and their importance.

The first task will be implemented in three stages. At the initial stage, the Administration of the Government will develop SDG localization manuals, information brochures, and training modules for municipal staff on issues related to SDG monitoring and implementation. The Ministry of Finance will reflect SDG issues in the program budgeting methodology and develop corresponding recommendations. In the second phase, the Administration of the Government will hold working meetings with 5 selected municipalities (Batumi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Rustavi, and Telavi). The employees of these municipalities will also be trained in accordance with the modules developed in the previous stage. The municipalities themselves will prepare and approve the documentation for the implementation of the SDGs, and then develop monitoring reports on the implementation process. In the third and last stage, these activities are planned to be introduced in all municipalities by 2025.

As for the second task, the Administration of the Government and the municipalities will jointly plan and conduct awareness-raising activities with local stakeholders, local media outlets, and representatives of various vulnerable groups in the community. Additionally, the plan includes the implementation of media campaign and thematic conferences.

⁷ <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/45>



OVERVIEW OF THE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENTS



The main legal bases for local self-government are the Local Self-Government Code⁸ and the European Charter of Local Self-Government⁹ (hereinafter the Charter).

By ratifying the Charter, Georgia has recognized almost all the basic requirements necessary for the establishment and full implementation of the institution of local self-government. Within the framework of the 2010 constitutional reform, the constitutional guarantees of the institution of local self-government were established in Georgia, which was, at the same time, one of the requirements of the Charter. The local self-government legislation was brought in line with the Charter, with the legislation defining the concept of local self-government in Georgia, the structure and scope of competence of local authorities, separating local budget from the central state budget, and establishing an independent source for said budget. Article 4 of the Charter refers to the sphere of authority of local self-government and constitutes the following 6 points:

- 1** The basic powers and responsibilities of local governmental bodies are defined by the Constitution or the law. Additionally, this provision shall not preclude the granting of additional powers and responsibilities to local authorities for special purposes in accordance with the law.
- 2** Local governmental bodies, within the bounds of the law, have full freedom to exercise their initiative in any matter which is not excluded from their competence or which is not assigned to any other governmental body.
- 3** As a rule, state rights and duties are exercised by the body of government that is closest to the citizens. The redistribution of responsibilities to another body should take into account the scope and nature of the respective tasks, as well as the requirements of economy and efficiency.
- 4** The powers conferred on local authorities will usually be complete and exclusive. It may not be restricted by any other central or regional authority except in cases prescribed by law.
- 5** In the case of delegation of powers by central or regional authorities, local authorities shall be empowered, as far as possible, to freely exercise the delegated powers in accordance with local circumstances.
- 6** As far as possible, local authorities should be consulted at the appropriate time and in appropriate ways in the planning and decision-making process of matters that directly concern them.

The adoption of the Local Self-Government Code is intended to bring local self-government legislation in Georgia in line with the European Local Self-Government Charter. According to the Code,¹⁰ the separation of powers of state authorities and municipalities is based on the principle of subsidiarity, which ensures that the decision made in the country reflects as much as possible the wishes and opinions of each citizen. To this end, whether a decision is justified at the central level and whether it will be more ef-

⁸ Local Self-Government Code

⁹ European Charter of Local Self-Government

¹⁰ Local Self-Government Code

fective to take this or that action on the basis of a decision made at the regional or local level should be constantly monitored. This principle is closely linked with the principle of proportionality. The principle of subsidiarity is widely used in federal governments as well. There, this principle implies the implementation of certain functions and competencies at the lowest possible level of government.

The Code distinguishes between two types of municipal authorities: the powers of the municipality itself, which it exercises independently and under its own responsibility; and delegated powers of the municipality, i.e. the authority of a state body that has been delegated to the municipality on the basis of law with adequate material and financial support.

Article 16 of the Code regulates the municipality's own powers. The second part of the article includes a complete and exclusive list, which implies that the exercise of these powers is the sole competence of the local government. For example:

- ✓ Preparation, discussion, and approval of the project for municipal budgets;
- ✓ Disposal of budget funds in accordance with the legislation of Georgia;
- ✓ Management and disposal of property owned by the municipality;
- ✓ Management of local natural resources (water, forest, and land resources);
- ✓ Develop and approve municipal spatial planning plans, master plans, and development plans;
- ✓ Improvement of the territory of the municipality and development of infrastructure;
- ✓ Municipal waste management;
- ✓ Provision of water supply and sewerage;
- ✓ Establishment of early and pre-school education institutions and ensuring their functioning;
- ✓ Provision of shelter for the homeless and their registration.

In addition to the incomplete list of the given powers, the municipality is authorized to resolve on its own initiative any issue, the resolution of which is not within the competence of another body of government under the legislation of Georgia and doing so is not prohibited by law. Additionally, according to the fourth part of Article 16, the municipality is authorized to take measures to promote employment, support agriculture, develop tourism, provide social assistance in coordination with the state policy-making body - for the purposes of health protection, environmental protection, public education, promotion of gender equality, establishment of a healthy lifestyle, creation of a safe environment for human health, attraction of investments in the territory of the municipality, support of innovative development, and other purposes.

When it comes to delegated powers, the state authority may delegate the powers which are more effective at the local level to the municipality. The decision to delegate the powers of a state authority is

made by the Government of Georgia. An appropriate agreement is made between the municipality and the relevant ministry/state institution of a special purpose. The municipality is authorized to exercise the delegated powers in accordance with the local conditions within the limits established by the legislation of Georgia.



DECENTRALIZATION STRATEGY 2020-2025





With the coordination of the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia and with the involvement of interested organizations and specialists, a decentralization strategy¹¹ for 2020-2025 and an action plan for its implementation for 2020-2021 were prepared. The goals of the strategy are to increase the powers of local self-governing units, financial decentralization of self-government, and the establishment of a more transparent, accountable self-government.

The Decentralization Strategy document encompasses 3 main goals to be achieved in the period 2020-2025:

- 1 Increasing the role of self-governing units in managing a significant part of public affairs;**
- 2 Supporting local self-government with appropriate material and financial resources;**
- 3 Establish reliable, accountable, transparent, and result-oriented self-government.**

Each goal includes 2 or 3 objectives, and the objectives themselves encompass several activities to be implemented.

Of particular relevance in the context of localization of Sustainable Development Goals is the first main goal, the first objective of which deals with **the problem of under-implementation of the powers and guarantees granted to local governments in practice**, while the activities focus on:

-  Identification of main challenges;
-  Supporting the implementation of core competencies.

The second objective concerns **increasing the powers of local self-government based on the principle of subsidiarity**. Based on the principle of subsidiarity, local authorities should have all the powers necessary to improve the social and living conditions of the local population and to support local economic development. At the same time, the constitutional principle of separation of power between central and local authorities stipulates that the relevant competencies should be fully transferred to local authorities. Decentralization reform should increase the competencies of municipalities and transfer to them the powers that will be more effective at the local level. The transfer of additional powers to the municipalities is planned through training the necessary staff for the implementation of these powers and transferring the relevant material and financial resources. The mentioned objective comprises 3 components or activities:

- 1 Identify the powers to be transferred to the municipalities based on the principle of subsidiarity;**
- 2 Provide legal support for the exercise of additional powers by the self-governing unit;**

¹¹ Decentralization Strategy

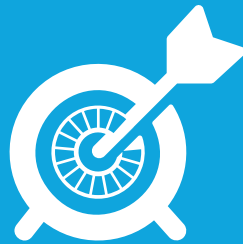
The second main goal aims **to promote the consistent growth of the local self-government's revenues and to improve the mechanisms for the allocation of state resources**. The share of local governments' revenues in relation to GDP is quite low, and there is evidence of financial inequality between municipalities. It is important for the decentralization process to introduce financial equalization mechanisms that give citizens relatively equal access to local services regardless of which municipality they reside in.

Finally, the third main goal concerns **the introduction of effective and innovative systems of management and quality service delivery at the local level, the introduction of a high standard of transparency and accountability, the promotion of high-quality engagement in local decision-making and implementation, and the establishment of a local development planning and coordination system**. The decentralization reform envisages the introduction of an automated system of modern organizational management systems, including human resource management and organizational performance monitoring and evaluation, and the improvement of the public financial management system at the local level. It should be noted that the aim of the decentralization of powers, resources, and functions is to improve the quality and efficiency of services, strengthen fiscal management, develop the private sector, including public-private partnerships, and increase the participation of local people, including young people, in the decision-making process.

In order to promote high-quality engagement in the decision-making and implementation process by the local self-government, the existing legislation is planned to be reviewed and a participatory link at the local self-government level will be created, which should ensure institutional participation of citizens in local decision-making. To achieve this, it is also planned to study, share, and/or implement relevant experiences of other countries in ensuring the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process at the local level, including civic budget (participatory budgeting). In order to successfully implement the important reforms envisaged by the strategy and gain public support for the reforms, it is important to develop and consistently implement a communication strategy that ensures both informing the public about planned and ongoing reforms and systematically receiving stakeholder feedback and opinions. Finally, within the framework of the objectives of the third goal, the following should be implemented:

- ➔ Develop standards and methodological guidelines to ensure a high standard of planning in municipalities;
- ➔ Define a list of relevant statistical data and indicators, and improve the databases required for planning in municipalities;
- ➔ Ensure compliance of municipal budgets with strategic and program planning documents;
- ➔ Harmonize national, regional, and local development strategies and programs;
- ➔ Introduce a unified automated electronic planning system.

The measures to be implemented are aimed at establishing the principles of good governance in the municipalities, increasing the competitiveness of human resources, and improving the availability and quality of municipal services, as well as developing a planning and monitoring system in municipalities and promoting result-oriented management. According to the strategy, the evaluation report will be prepared twice: interim - two years after the approval of the strategy, and final – the year following the completion of the strategy. Relevant reports for monitoring and evaluation will be prepared by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia based on the reports of the relevant agencies, which will be submitted to the Governmental Commission for Local Self-Government Reform and Decentralization and the Committee on Regional Policy and Self-Government of the Parliament of Georgia.



ACTS REGULATING THE LOCALIZATION OF SDGS AND THE 2030 AGENDA



As mentioned above, the Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals, which is accountable to the Prime Minister of Georgia, is considered to have a leading role in the SDG implementation process.¹² In addition, the Council sets up working groups to coordinate and effectively monitor the implementation of specific sectoral goals for sustainable development. According to the statute, the Council includes the heads of the Administration of the Government of Georgia (who is the Chairman of the Council), deputy ministers, representatives of the Prosecutor General's Office, the Public Defender, the Geostat, the Civil Service Bureau and the Administration of the Government, as well as mayors of municipalities or their deputies.¹³

The Council exercises its powers through meetings, which are held at least once a year.¹⁴ The meeting of the Council is recorded in a protocol, which is then signed by the Chairman. The Council is authorized to invite representatives of state agencies and non-profit (non-commercial) legal entities, non-governmental and international organizations, and specialists in the field to participate in the meetings without consultative voting rights.¹⁵

As for the decision-making process by the Council, according to the statute of the Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the decree of Prime Minister №14 of 23 January 2020, all persons participating in the Council meeting have the right to initiate a project before the Council. Additionally, the decision is made by the Council by a majority of votes of the members present at the meeting, and in case of equal distribution of votes, the vote of the Chairman of the Council is the deciding one. Should the Council fail to agree or resolve the issue, the Chairman of the Council shall submit the initiated project to the Prime Minister of Georgia for a final decision. The decision made by the Council is reflected and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.¹⁶

It should be noted that there are 4 working groups functioning within the Council (Democratic Governance Working Group¹⁷, Social Inclusion Working Group¹⁸, Economic Development Working Group¹⁹, and Sustainable Energy and Environment Working Group²⁰). Each working group has relevant guidelines, **according to which one of the tasks of the working group is to support the integration of SDGs into**

¹² Statute of the Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the Order №14 of the Prime Minister of Georgia of January 23, 2020, Article 3.

¹³ Ibid, 9(1.a-f).

¹⁴ Ibid, 4(3-4).

¹⁵ Ibid, 4(11-12).

¹⁶ Ibid, 5(1-4).

¹⁷ See. <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/41>

¹⁸ See. <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/38>

¹⁹ See. <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/39>

²⁰ See. <https://sdg.gov.ge/text-page/40>

national and local self-government policies.²¹ According to the same guidelines, the working group consists of representatives of ministries, representatives of relevant parliamentary committees, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, as well as **representatives of local self-government**, responsible for the implementation and reporting of the goals and objectives set forth in these rules.²² The full list²³ of the working group includes all the other actors mentioned in the guidelines with the exception of the representative of the local self-government for this stage. Notably, the plan for localization of SDGs envisages the addition of representatives of municipalities to the list, which will be implemented with the consideration of the mechanisms developed for their involvement.

When discussing working groups, it should be noted that their work is led by the chair of the working group in coordination with the co-chairs of the working group and the secretariat of the Council, who perform their assigned functions by mutual agreement. The chairperson/co-chairpersons will be elected for a two-year term. At the same time, the guideline sets out the rules for electing the chairperson and co-chairs of the working group. Specifically, it is indicated that the chairperson will be selected by the member public institutions of the working group. The co-chair from the NGOs will be selected by the member local NGOs of the working group. The Co-Chair from the United Nations organization will be selected by the United Nations Office of the Permanent Representative to Georgia and a member of the group from the United Nations agencies in Georgia.²⁴ It should also be noted that the functions of the chairperson, co-chairs, and secretariat are set out in Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the Working Group Guidelines.

A special electronic system²⁵ has been set up to monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, involving the agencies responsible for carrying out the SDGs targets. SDGs are monitored once a year, in early February of each year. Agencies involved in the monitoring system have a 1-month period to report to the Secretariat through the system. The annual report will be submitted to the Sustainable Development Goals Council and thematic working groups.

As for the issue of regulating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the legislative level, it should be noted that Matsne.gov.ge does not contain any normative acts on "Sustainable Development Goals"/"SDGs", except for the Government of Georgia №2328 of November 12, 2019 - "On the National Document on Sustainable Development Goals"²⁶. At the same time, it should be noted that neither the Local Self-Government Code of Georgia nor the Budget Code say anything directly about the SDGs. However, in these legislative acts we find some records related to the procedures of policy planning or budget adoption by the municipality and ensuring the involvement of citizens in the process.

²¹ Working Group Manual Rule 3 (1a) Article (identical for all four Working Group Manuals).

²² Ibid, 9(1).

²³ Available on the links above

²⁴ e.g. Guidelines for the Democratic Governance Working Group, Article 4.

²⁵ <http://sdg.gov.ge>

²⁶ <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4732470?publication=0> - The decree is accompanied by two appendices.

According to the Local Self-Government Code, municipal bodies develop, approve, and implement relevant programs, strategies, action plans, and projects in accordance with the legislation of Georgia during the implementation of the powers of the municipality.²⁷ The Code also sets out the authority to set up deliberative bodies, including councils, commissions, and working groups, with the purpose of studying certain issues within the powers of the mayor and preparing relevant conclusions and recommendations²⁸, although it should be noted that, according to the responses to the information requested from the municipalities,²⁹ no sustainable development councils have been established on the territory of the municipalities. Part 8 of Article 34 of the Budget Code of Georgia can be considered another means of implementing SDGs, stating that “the Government of Georgia ensures the compatibility of the draft state budget law and the document of the main data and directions of the country. The Ministries of Georgia shall ensure the compliance of their medium-term action plans approved on the basis of Part 4 of this Article with the basic data and directions of the country and the Law on State Budget.”

As for the issue of ensuring the participation of citizens in the implementation of local self-government, according to the Code, to achieve this goal, municipal bodies and municipal officials are obligated to create organizational and material-technical conditions for receiving citizens, holding meetings with citizens, municipal councils, ensuring the participation of citizens in the activities of municipal bodies, including collegial public institutions, for the sake of transparency of the decision-making process.³⁰ At the same time, any person has the right to use the forms of citizen participation in the implementation of local self-government within the limits and in the manner prescribed by other legislative and sub-legislative acts of Georgia and normative administrative-legal acts of the Municipal Council.³¹ Additionally, the Code lists the forms of citizen participation in the implementation of local self-government. Specifically, it determines the following as forms of engagement: participation in the general meeting of the settlement, petition, civil advisory council, municipal council and municipal council commission, hearing reports on the work done by the mayor and a member of the municipal council.³²

As for the preparation and discussion of the draft budget of the municipality and the involvement of the local population in this process, this issue is regulated by both the Local Self-Government Code and the Budget Code of Georgia.³³

More specifically, according to the Local Self-Government Code, the draft budget of the municipality for next year, along with the attached materials, will be submitted by the mayor to the municipal council no

²⁷ Local Self-Government Code of Georgia, Article 19.b.

²⁸ Ibid, 54(1.3.3).

²⁹ e.g. Akhaltsikhe (let. N 12-1221232121), Batumi (let. N 01-1421249251), Zugdidi (let. N 24-2421231125), Telavi (let. N 01-262123237), Ozurgeti (let. N 01-3621256248), Oni (let. N 78-782122915), Kutaisi (let. N 01-4421239180), Tsageri (e-mail).

³⁰ Local Self-Government Code of Georgia, Article 85(1),

³¹ Ibid, 85(2).

³² Ibid, 85(4).

³³ Ibid, 89(2).

later than November 15 (along with the draft budget, a document on the priorities of the relevant municipality will be submitted to the Municipal Council,³⁴ constituting the main plan for the development of administrative units, containing information on medium-term action plans³⁵), following which the draft budget of the municipal council is published for public consideration within 5 days of its submission. The Municipal Council discusses the draft budget publicly and before the start of the new budget year, decides on the approval of the draft budget of the municipality by a majority of the listed members.³⁶ At the same time, the annual budget is published and should be available to the public.³⁷

When discussing **public hearings**, it is important to pay attention to Article 87 of the Local Self-Government Code, according to which any person has the right to attend public meetings of the municipal council and the municipal council commission without prior notice and/or prior permission. Persons present at public hearings have the right, without prior permission, although only with the consent of the chairperson of the meeting, to ask questions to the persons delivering reports, to make explanations and statements, to submit information, in accordance with the rules established by the municipal council.

It should be noted that the **central government** is also partially involved in the process of drafting the municipal budget. Specifically, while the process of preparing and submitting the draft municipal budget (which also includes the development of priority documents in accordance with the recommendation methodology provided for in the decree №385 of the Minister) is coordinated by the municipal financial authority, for the purposes of preparing, submitting, and approving the draft municipal budget, the Ministry of Finance of Georgia provides the municipalities with relevant methodological guidelines.³⁸ In addition, the Ministry of Finance will inform the municipal authorities by July 15 of the current year about the main budget parameters of the planned budget year. Based on the information received from the Ministry, the financial body will calculate the forecast figures of revenues and payments and will start the relevant procedures to compile the draft budget of the municipality. The Ministry of Finance shall notify the municipal authorities no later than October 5 regarding the forecast figures for the financial assistance and tax revenues to be transferred to the relevant budget under the draft state budget.³⁹ According to the program budgeting methodology approved by decree №385 of the Minister, when preparing their detailed medium-term action plans, the ministries should consider that “if the measure implemented under the program/sub-program is part of the fulfillment of an international obligation and/or takes place within the framework of ongoing reform in the relevant field, including part of the measure envisaged by the relevant sectoral or other strategy and action plan, it is important to indicate this information, as it is possible to indicate this information according to the content, both in the description of the program/sub-program/activities, as well as in the section of expected results and evaluation indicators. It should

³⁴ Budget Code of Georgia, Article 77(8).

³⁵ Ibid, 76(1).

³⁶ Local Self-Government Code of Georgia, Article 91(1-3).

³⁷ Ibid, 91(9).

³⁸ Budget Code of Georgia, Article 75.

³⁹ Ibid, 77(1-2.6)

also indicate the compliance of the planned program/sub-program/activity with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - 2030, if any.”

In addition, the Code also stipulates the obligation of the municipal financial authority to prepare an **annual budget execution report** and submit it to the representative body no later than 2 months after the end of the budget year.⁴⁰ The municipal representative body – municipal council – publicly reviews the annual report on budget execution and decides on the approval or rejection of the annual report no later than May 1. In addition, the audit report and the annual report on the execution of the municipal budget are public information and are available to the public in accordance with the rules established by the legislation of Georgia⁴¹.

In terms of involvement of stakeholders in the process of drafting the municipal budget, an interesting entry is found in the document “**Decentralization Strategy - 2020-2025**”. Namely, one of the objectives to achieve the goal of establishing credible, accountable, transparent, and results-oriented local self-government (3.3) is to promote high-quality participation of local self-government in the decision-making and implementation process by local authorities, one of the activities of which is (3.3.1): *„Improving the legal framework and mechanisms to ensure a high degree of stakeholder involvement in the decision-making and implementation process - Involving stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process will become an important part of the budgeting process. Existing forms of engagement will be reviewed in terms of legislation, organization, and material-technical support. Additionally, based on good practice, proposals will be developed to introduce new engagement mechanisms“*.⁴² However, despite the existence of such an entry in the strategy has not been reflected in any changes in the above-mentioned articles of the Local Self-Government Code in the post-strategy period.

In addition, the same strategy document addresses the goal of establishing a local development planning and coordination system (3.4). One of the entries states that *“the perfect implementation of local self-government depends on the existence of a coherent and sustainable system of self-government unit development planning and coordination. Without a long-term strategy for the development of the municipality, it will be impossible to solve the social and economic problems in the municipality”*.⁴³ Regarding the legislative provision of development planning, it is stated that *“in accordance with international practice, legislative acts will be prepared that will define the types of territorial (national, regional, municipal) development document, hierarchy, procedures for their preparation and adoption, institutions, implementation monitoring and evaluation systems, application of the development document to the relevant budget”*.⁴⁴ However, the listed acts have not been put into practice yet and it is important to take into account the goals of sustainable development when drafting them.

⁴⁰ Budget Code of Georgia, Article 86.

⁴¹ Ibid, 88(1-2)

⁴² Decentralization Strategy - 2020-2025“ - Activity 3.3.1., 33.22.

⁴³ Ibid, Objective 3.4.

⁴⁴ Ibid, Activity 3.4.1.

Resolution №629 of the Government of Georgia of December 20, 2019, **“On the Approval of the Rules for Development, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents”** is of interest, as according to the resolution, policy document development, monitoring and evaluation rules establish common procedures, methodologies, and standards for policy document development, monitoring, and evaluation, and aim to introduce results-oriented policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation and establish quality assurance mechanisms in these areas.⁴⁵ It applies to policy documents that are submitted to the Government of Georgia for approval (this is how policy documents that fall within the competence of two or more responsible agencies are considered).⁴⁶ While this resolution does not directly apply to municipal authorities, it is important to introduce similar practices at the local level, with the consideration of the local context.

According to the decree, the development and adoption of a policy document is a multi-step process, and following the approval of the annual action plan of government policy documents⁴⁷, in order to start the development of the policy document, the public agency and/or coordinating body: a) identifies stakeholders and ensures their involvement in the policy development process; b) Conducts field/issue situation analysis in cooperation with stakeholders; c) identifies problems and their causes based on the analysis of the situation, determines sectoral priorities and reaches an agreement with their stakeholders; d) identifies agencies responsible for priority directions; e) Defines the vision, goals, and objectives of the policy document together with the responsible agencies according to the priorities; f) Establishes indicators and baseline and target indicators of impact and objective results in accordance with the defined goals and objectives; g) Identifies and evaluates policy alternatives to achieve the set impact and objectives, and selects the best one based on cost-effectiveness and realism criteria; h) develops an action plan in accordance with the selected policy alternatives; i) develops the budget of the action plan in order to determine the necessary financial resources for the activities defined by the action plan; j) Defines the methodology of implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the policy document.⁴⁸ Additionally, the resolution states that all stages of the development of policy documents must be carried out in accordance with the standards set out in the **manual**.⁴⁹

It should be noted that in accordance with Government Resolution 629 of December 20, 2019, the Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Guide envisions linking each of the goals presented in the policy documents to the Sustainable Development Goals.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Resolution of the Government of Georgia of December 20, 2019, №629 “On Approval of the Rules for Development, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Policy Documents”, Article 1 <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4747283?publication=0> .

⁴⁶ Ibid, Article 3(1-2).

⁴⁷ Ibid, Article 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Article 7(2).

⁴⁹ Ibid, 7(3).

⁵⁰ Government Administration Policy Planning Division, Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, p.23. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4747283?publication=0> Appendix: „Normative-Act-2 (5171513b) –„

According to the “Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide (Appendix 2) - **Logical Framework Instruction**”, one of the mandatory components included in the Logical Framework template is: *“Relevance of the goal to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - Indicate the information from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that are most relevant to the goal presented in the strategy. The box may also indicate several SDGs.”* (An analogous statement is found in the “Action Plan Development Guide in the Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation Guide” (Appendix 4)).⁵¹


⁵¹ 1. Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, Appendix 2 - Logical Framework Instruction, p. 10.
2. Action Plan Development Guidelines, Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Guide, Annex 4, p.8.
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4747283?publication=0> Appendix: „Normative-Act-4 (2443462b) –„ and „Normative-Act-7 (987377b)–„





OVERVIEW OF STAKEHOLDERS AND THE ENGAGEMENT PLAN





In order to effectively localize Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to identify all relevant stakeholders and their interests and to ensure engagement. The following stakeholders can be identified, with their responsibilities and their possible role in the localization process:


 **The Sustainable Development Council:** Provides support for the implementation and monitoring of the implementation of SDGs at the national level and is accountable to the Prime Minister. The support of the Council will be important in the process of establishing mechanisms for localization of goals and involvement of municipalities.


 **Thematic working groups:** 4 working groups have been set up within the Council to promote and monitor the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Their other tasks include supporting the integration of SDGs into national and local self-government policies. Coordination with working groups will be important for municipalities in the localization process.

 **Municipal Budget Process Steering Working Group:** According to the methodology given in Order №385 of the Minister of Finance, a working group set up on the basis of an administrative-legal act of the mayor to lead the budget process. In the process of localization, the working group can make a significant contribution to the consideration of the set goals in the municipal budgets.

 **Municipal mayor and deputies:** The mayor, among many other powers, within the competence of the municipality, prepares relevant socio-economic development and other types of programs, strategies, and plans, submits them to the municipal council for approval and implementation. The deputy mayor is the head of a separate structural unit of the City Hall. They are responsible for performing the tasks and functions assigned to this unit. The direct involvement of decision-makers at the local level is important, providing strong political support in localizing goals.

 **The National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia:** The organization unites all local self-governing units of Georgia. The aim of the association is to improve the system of local self-government in the country and to develop local democracy, decentralization of state power, and development of local self-government institutions. National associations of local governments/authorities are successful in other countries in establishing inter-municipal cooperation, discussion platforms, and sharing good practices on the localization of Sustainable Development Goals.

 **The Administration of the Government:** Is the coordinating body for SDGs, therefore the support of the Administration of the Government during localization is vital.

 **The State Audit Office:** Has the authority to issue mandatory recommendations for implementation. In the latest report, the Audit Office issued a recommendation to ensure the involvement

of municipalities. However, when preparing various audit reports, the Audit Office considers the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and this information is provided separately on the official website of the Audit Office.⁵²



Municipal council: Approves action plans and budgets; involvement and support of the local legislature is essential to effectively implement sustainable and effective change at the local level.



Ordinary staff of the City Hall: A certain number of local government employees will be directly involved in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (Budget Process Steering Group, those responsible for monitoring performance, those responsible for producing statistics, etc.).



Local civil society and academia: Representatives of civil society and academia often possess expertise on individual issues and can play a positive role in shaping evidence-based policies. Encouraging their involvement will ensure a more complete and comprehensive course of the localization process.



Private sector: In the process of introducing the SDGs, many objectives can intersect with the activities of the private sector, as well as various programs and projects (infrastructure, social, etc.), the implementation of which will be beneficial for local companies.



Local media: The role of the media is important in the process of advocacy and raising awareness.



Local population: Citizens can contribute to the implementation of various goals and objectives, for example, in solving local problems that are relevant to them. At the same time, an informed citizen, as the main and ultimate beneficiary of the Sustainable Development Goals, selects political officials whose accountability to the population is a strong democratic mechanism for achieving the implementation of SDGs at the local level.

In order to better take into account the views of stakeholders in the localization process and to coordinate effectively, it is important to consider the specifics and characteristics of each target audience. To this purpose, stakeholders can be conditionally sorted according to their influence and level of interest. On the horizontal axis, the subjects are positioned according to the level of interest, i.e. how much the process of localization of sustainable development and the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns about it in their interest and how much impact its successful implementation will have. The vertical axis, on the other hand, presents the layout according to the impact, i.e. the degree to which individual stakeholders can influence the processes.

⁵² Assessments and recommendations on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals on the portal of the State Audit Office: <https://budgetmonitor.ge/ka/sdg>

The following matrix presents stakeholders in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, both locally and nationally:

	HIGH INTEREST	LOW INTEREST
HIGH IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administration of the Government; Sustainable Development Council; Thematic working groups; Municipal Budget Process Steering Working Group Mayor and deputies of the municipality; Ministries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Audit Office Municipal councils.
LOW IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular employees of a city hall; National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia Universities Local civil society organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local population; Local media; Private sector.

The first group of actors has a high interest in the implementation of localization of SDGs, as well as a high ability to influence processes. Maximum involvement of these subjects and intensive cooperation with them is important for localization and awareness-raising activities. Possible activities for the mentioned target groups: workshops, constant exchange of information, creation of common working formats or groups, joint initiatives.

Stakeholders in the second group have a high impact on processes, although they have no direct interest, which may be due to less awareness of the importance of the Goals and their localization. Consequently, it is important to constantly inform such subjects and get them interested. Possible activities for the target groups: information meetings/sessions, discussions, research and reporting, as well as sharing/presenting international practices, workshops, conferences, etc.

It is important to provide engagement mechanisms for stakeholders when localizing and achieving goals, since, while it is true that they have little leverage to influence the political process, their own experience can make a significant contribution to the process. At the same time, they realize that achieving goals will affect their well-being and standard of living, so they have the motivation and interest to participate in localization and implementation activities. Awareness-raising trainings, campaigns, workshops, large-scale activities, as well as consulting and/or initiative groups may be planned to involve these target groups in the process.

Finally, the fourth category of stakeholders has low interest and little opportunity to influence ongoing processes. At this stage, this category includes the local population, media, and the private sector. In this regard, it is important to take awareness-raising measures so that the above-mentioned target groups can see the benefits of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals to them.

It is important to consider these circumstances in order to develop effective communication strategies and approaches with different stakeholders in the process of localization, awareness-raising, and implementation of the Goals.






EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Before discussing the prospects for localization of Sustainable Development Goals, it is important to analyze the progress in achieving nationalized goals and the key challenges identified so far.







The State Audit Office has examined how ready Georgia is to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. In particular, the subject of the audit was the activities carried out by the SDG Council and the above-mentioned ministries to integrate the 2030 agenda into the national/institutional context between 2016 and December 2018. The audit identified 3 main objectives:

-  Integration of the Goals into the national context;
-  Identification of resources necessary for the implementation of SDGs;
-  Establishment of a framework for monitoring and reporting.

Among other shortcomings identified in the process of integrating the 2030 National Agenda, the Audit Office noted that the SDG matrix still lacks formality and that the goals, objectives, and indicators set out in it are only fragmentarily integrated in the main data and directions of the strategic documents in the country for 2019-2022, in the medium-term action plans of the ministries for 2019-2022, and in the documents of the priorities of the municipalities.

As a result of the report, the Audit Office issued 7 recommendations to the government administration and 4 recommendations to the ministries involved in the implementation of the SDGs:

TO THE SDGS COUNCIL:

-  Taking into consideration the universal and inclusive nature of SDGs, it is important to involve central and local governments in their realization. Consequently, SDGs Council should ensure that municipalities are included in the implementation of SDGs.
-  In order to position SDGs matrix as an effective formal framework of nationalized agenda, SDGs Council should make timely initiatives for its formal approval by the government.
-  In order to achieve inclusiveness and effective functioning of SDGs Council and thematic working groups:
 -  In cooperation with thematic working groups, all relevant stakeholders should be identified and after increasing their awareness, they should be involved in the SDGs council and thematic working groups, considering their relevance.
 -  In cooperation with thematic working groups, the roles and responsibilities of working group members should be determined.
 -  There should be elaborated action plans for SDGs Council and thematic working groups, presenting short-term and medium-term activities, milestones and required resources.

4 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 into practice.
- 👉 Development of a reporting framework and timeline by ministries towards SDGs council.
- 👉 Defining a timeline for national progress reporting about the achievement of SDGs.

TO THE SDGS COUNCIL AND MINISTRIES:

5 In order to eliminate the gaps in the SDGs matrix, the SDGs Council and ministries should:

- 👉 Identify specific agencies responsible for each target/indicator.
- 👉 Analyze the nature and scope of the interconnections between the goals and targets, on the basis of which, the direct responsibility of each agency will be defined in regard with achievement of each target.

6 In order to achieve SDGs and corresponding targets in a timely, efficient, and successful manner, SDGs Council and ministries, in cooperation with all relevant bodies involved in the realization of the goals, should analyze and evaluate necessary means of implementation: human and financial resources, ICT, data and statistics.

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

TO THE MINISTRIES:

8 The ministries should integrate SDGs, targets, and corresponding indicators they are responsible for into their strategies, policies, medium-term action plans, and program annex of the state budget law.

IDFI requested information from the Audit Office on the implementation of these recommendations. As of April 2021, 3 of the recommendations issued to the Administration have been implemented, 3 partially implemented, and 1 ongoing. Of the ministries, only the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development has implemented all four recommendations. Out of 4 recommendations issued to the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture, 2 have been implemented and 2 have been partially implemented. The other ministries have implemented 3 recommendations, with 1 ongoing or partially implemented.

It should be noted that the next 3 BDD (Basic Data and Directions) documents developed after the publication of the report mention the individual SDG indicators more directly and relate them to specific programs to be implemented. For example, a social security program is accompanied by an addition stating that cash disbursements to vulnerable groups under the program will help meet the 1.3.1 indicator set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (National SDG Matrix).

Additionally, the Environment and Agriculture Program is related to the implementation of SDG 15.1 and SDG 15.5 targets related to biodiversity monitoring and the creation of a unified database based on condition assessment. The environmental monitoring, forecasting, and prevention program is also linked to the nationalized SDG 11.6 and 14.4 targets, which include monitoring air pollution and the Georgian Black Sea coast, statistical analysis of inland fisheries and determination of environmental status. Finally, in the description of the infrastructure program of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, there is a general statement that corresponds to the implementation of the program in accordance with SDG 4 and its implementation indicators.

These can be found in both the 2020-2023 BDD document and the 2021-2024 and 2022-2025 BDD documents.

As for the assessment of the state of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level, the SDG matrix is not integrated into the municipalities' priority documents. This is due to the fact that municipalities are not involved in the implementation of SDGs. According to the Audit Service, at this stage there is no audit in this direction.



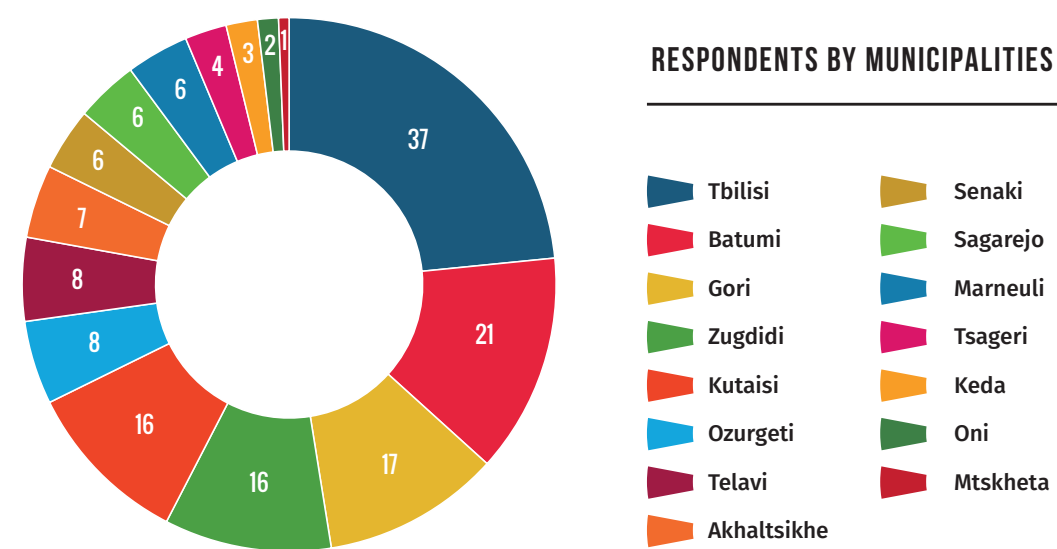
OVERVIEW OF THE AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AMONG MUNICIPALITIES



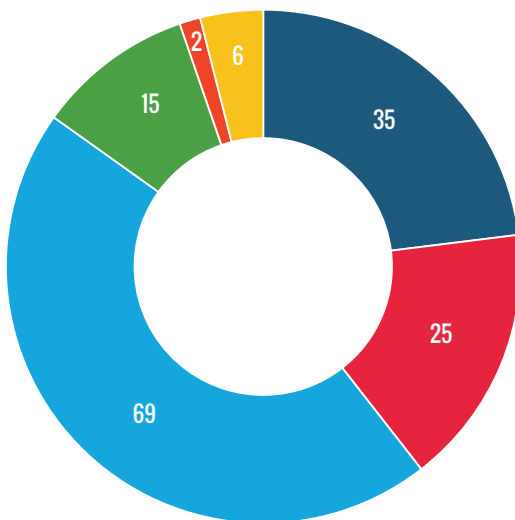
Involvement of all stakeholders in the process of localization of SDGs is no less important, as it ensures the definition and implementation of activities tailored to their needs. For this, it is important, first of all, that all target groups have information on SDGs and the role of local groups in their implementation.

To identify trends in awareness regarding the 2030 Agenda, IDFI conducted a survey of 14 selected municipalities to evaluate the awareness level regarding SDGs and identify the needs among various stakeholders (local government, civil society, media, private sector, academia, etc.). 152 people took part in the survey. It should be noted that the small number of respondents may lead to a high rate of error.

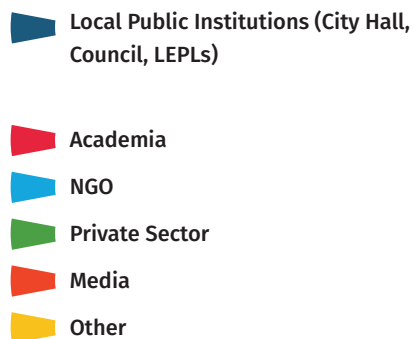
Respondents were almost equally distributed in the 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60 age groups. According to the results, 93% of them have heard about the UN Sustainable Development Goals, 82% correctly name the number of goals, 75% correctly define sustainable development.



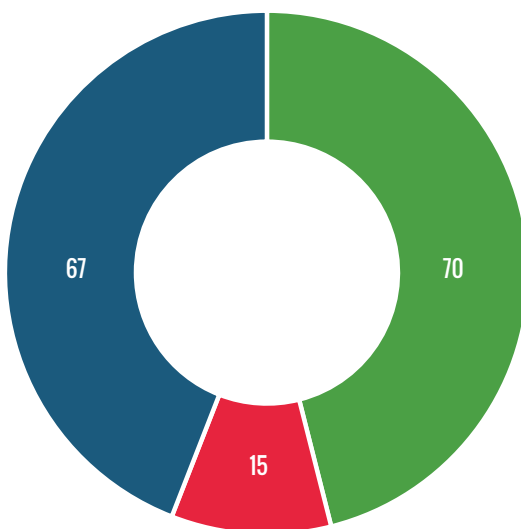
The questionnaire received the largest response from the non-governmental sector, which accounted for 45% of respondents. Representatives of local public institutions (City Hall, Municipal Council, legal entity) accounted for 23% of respondents, while representatives of academia and the private sector accounted for 16% and 10%, respectively.



RESPONDENTS BY SECTOR



It is noteworthy that 46% of respondents believe that their municipality is involved in the implementation of SDGs. Additionally, only 54% have heard of the National Sustainable Development Document, while 62.6% of respondents say that they have had contact with some of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in their work, most of them naming the first 5 goals and the 13th goal.



IS YOUR MUNICIPALITY INVOLVED IN THE SDGS IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



The majority of respondents (81.4%) have heard of the SDGs Council, 63% have correctly named the Administration of the Government as the agency that coordinates the Sustainable Development Goals, although only 5% say they participate in the council's work (mostly civil society in Tbilisi). It is also noteworthy that more than half of the respondents believe that the Government of Georgia monitors the Sustainable Development Goals and is accountable to the UN. As for the financing of SDG implementation, 6% believe that the funds come from the state, 5% believe that the funding comes from donor funds, and

the remaining 89% believe that these activities can be funded from both sources.

The questionnaire also included a question on the financial resources needed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals locally. 15.6% of respondents believe that municipalities need additional resources to implement SDGs, 8.4% think that they should do it with their own resources, while the remaining 76% believe both options to be valid.

98% of respondents believe that statistical information is needed for Georgia to measure its achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. The same percentage agrees with the view that municipalities should be involved in achieving SDGs. Respondents substantiate the statement as follows:



"In order to achieve their goals, local decision-makers in specific places and regions should actively cooperate with UN decisions in order to make bottom-up decisions and maximize information provided to higher authorities on local needs."



"Involvement of municipalities will lead to capacity building on the ground and accumulation of competencies. Decentralization of governance from the center to the municipalities will provide a flexible and rapid response to needs. However, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the representatives of the municipalities, to train them to see their activities through the prism of the Goals."



"Out of 17 SDGs, there are issues, in the fulfillment of which the municipality as a local self-governing unit plays a very large role, e.g. clean water and sanitation are the goals that cannot be achieved without the involvement of the municipality. "



"Without the implementation of these goals at the local policy level, it will be impossible to achieve national and global goals."



"The second level of governance will practically provide the largest share of public services, which will directly affect the quality of life of the population."

When asked what benefits UN Sustainable Development Goals could have for our country, respondents focused mainly on economic development and job creation. The participants answer this question as follows:



"Sustainable development goals include issues such as improving the quality of life, eradicating poverty and hunger, protecting the climate and natural resources, and so on. As for the problems that exist today, I think eliminating or reducing/alleviating these problems will enable us to solve the problems that exist among the Earth's population and in the ecosystem/nature."



"Economic development, environmental protection, poverty alleviation, etc."



"Establish a systemic approach, strengthen the national and regional social and healthcare system. Eradicate Poverty, inequality, and unemployment."



"First of all, the eradication of poverty and hunger, then the improvement of the health and education

systems, the environment, achieving gender equality and accountability, the construction of effective and inclusive state institutions – this, in short, is what it can bring our country if the state achieves these goals.”



“It will contribute to the improvement of ecological, economic, social welfare, quality of life, overcoming poverty, improving the quality of education, gaining the status of a developed country, as well as peace and security”.



“Holistic development of the country, creation of economically viable, environmentally friendly, and fair society. The goals are correct orientation, data collection, analysis and development, and introduction of an effective mechanism for making flexible decisions, raising people’s awareness”.

It is also noteworthy that three-quarters of respondents were not trained in Sustainable Development Goals, although 97% of them expressed a desire to participate in such training and learn more about SDGs. The same number of respondents expressed a desire to work with local stakeholders on Sustainable Development Goals (City Hall, Municipal Council, non-governmental sector, media, business, academia, etc.).



MAIN CHALLENGES AND NEEDS



CHALLENGES ON THE LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS



In the nationalized matrix, local government is mentioned in only 4 of the goals. Each of the 93 identified targets has a lead agency, although the local government body is not named for any of the targets. The full list of working groups includes all the other actors mentioned in the guidelines, except for the local self-government representatives at this stage. It should be noted that the plan for localization of SDGs envisages the addition of representatives of municipalities to the list, which will take into account the mechanisms developed for their involvement. It is thus important to define the roles and responsibilities of the agencies/organizations involved in the thematic working groups. Develop action plans for the SDG Council and Working Groups, outlining short- and medium-term activities, timelines, and resources required. Given the universal and inclusive nature of SDGs, it is important that both central and local governments be involved in their implementation. This recommendation was also included in the 2019 state audit report.



It is important to identify effective mechanisms for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals in the development of individual policies, strategies, action plans, priority documents, or budgeting procedures by the municipality, taking into account the views and experiences of local stakeholders. In addition to the local context, municipalities need to consider nationalized goals and their potential contribution to achieving them.



The mayor has the authority to study individual issues, to prepare relevant conclusions and recommendations, to establish councils, commissions, and working groups. However, based on public information requested from the municipalities, no local council for sustainable development or any similar deliberative body has been established within any of the municipalities at this stage. In addition, while the activities of existing councils, commissions, and working groups are linked to separate Sustainable Development Goals, nationalized goals are not taken into account.



According to the audit report conducted in 2019, the matrix of SDGs did not have a formal form and the goals, objectives, and indicators defined in it were only fragmentarily integrated into the basic data and directions of the country (BDD), 2019-2022 ministries' medium-term action plans, and the priority documents of the municipalities. Although several Sustainable Development Goals are explicitly mentioned in BDD documents issued over the last 3 years, their consideration is still fragmentary and not yet found in municipal priority documents (based on responses to public information requests). Therefore, it is important to consider the Sustainable Development Goals in the methodology for drafting the priority documents. To address these challenges, the government should consider the GIZ-supported Sustainable Development Goals budgeting methodology and practical guidebook.



It is clear from the responses to the letters requesting public information sent to the municipalities that most of them have not received an official letter from the Interagency Council for Sustainable Development Goals and therefore, do not participate in its work. It should also be noted that municipalities do not use SDGs at this stage in the development of strategies, medium-term plans, and budgets, and monitoring and evaluation systems for the implementation of action plans and strategies are not in place at the local level.



Nearly half of the municipal civil servants surveyed by IDFI had not heard about SDGs, and 80% said they had never been trained on the subject. This indicates a need for awareness-raising activities, especially given that the vast majority of participants are interested in such an initiative and express their readiness to participate.

MAIN NEEDS WITH REGARD TO MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS



The municipalities themselves have a key role to play in localizing Sustainable Development Goals, with the involvement of the **mayor, their deputies, and other decision-makers**, as the mayor forms the **working group for the municipal budget** process according to the methodology given in decree №385 of the Minister of Finance. Meanwhile, for **ordinary employees**, it is advisable to conduct awareness-raising activities.



When localizing goals at the local level, it is important for municipalities to **guarantee the involvement of various stakeholders in the process** - both by setting up new working groups or advisory mechanisms, and by incorporating Sustainable Development Goals into the activities of existing groups.



The involvement of **the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia**, an organization that unites all local self-government units of Georgia, is also important in the SDG localization process. The aim of the Association is to improve the system of local self-government in the country and to promote local democracy, decentralization of state power, and development of local self-government institutions. Consulting, providing additional information and analysis with these and **other local civil society organizations and representatives of the academia** will ensure that the localization process is more complete and comprehensive.



Finally, the municipality should take care to implement SDGs and involve the **local population** in the monitoring process and raise their awareness, as the accountability of elected political officials to the population is a strong democratic mechanism for achieving the implementation of SDGs at the local level.



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS





The indicators given in the National Document on Sustainable Development Goals should be broken down at the territorial level. That the implementation of this is envisaged in the plan for localization of Sustainable Development Goals is welcome. Given that the capabilities and data of the National Statistics Office of Georgia are quite strong in the regional and municipal context, it is necessary to analyze the existing statistics and disaggregate the indicators of Sustainable Development Goals at the municipal level. This will require the creation of a separate document by the central government, which will allow all stakeholders and decision-makers to view and analyze baseline and target data across all parties/municipalities according to the geographical map. For example, if the goal of the central document 1 includes country-wide statistics: “Proportion of the population living in extreme poverty: 2015 - 3.8%”, the disaggregated document at the regional level should provide information on the data of this indicator (e.g. Poverty rate – 2015 – Guria, Kakheti, Racha, etc.). The addressee of this recommendation is the Administration of the Government of Georgia, which is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the country and creating a regional document proposed by this recommendation.



The involvement of local self-government representatives in both the decision-maker (council) and the working level (council working groups) should be intensified in the National Council for Sustainable Development Goals. That the implementation of this is envisaged in the plan for localization of Sustainable Development Goals is a welcome step. This will require the implementation of the State Audit Office’s recommendations and the effective involvement of municipalities in the central government’s Sustainable Development Goals platforms. Effective support can be provided through their invitation and attendance at the meetings, sharing any SDG-related information and news with them, offering a common platform for SDG information exchange between municipalities, involving municipal SDGs in awareness-raising campaigns and decision-making in local government.



Support the development of the production of municipal statistics, both at the central and municipal-administrative levels. As statistical information is the main source for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, it is necessary to strengthen the production of municipal statistics and allocate additional financial and human resources to this purpose. At the same time, it is necessary to adopt common guidelines and standards for the production of statistics at the local level, especially in the context of nationalized SDGs, in which case it is important to work closely with the the National Statistics Office of Georgia. No less important is the training of public officials in the field of statistics production, especially in accordance with the guidelines and standards developed for municipalities. All of this is also very important in the context of the decentralization reform. To this purpose, it will be necessary at the central level to identify in terms of statistical production those parties and municipalities where data collection is either not taking place or the quality and quantity of data obtained is very low.



Given the structure and content of the budget documentation prepared by the municipality during the budget process, the links between the programs and sub-programs of the municipalities for the Sustainable Development Goals should be reflected in the priority document and program budget, allowing municipalities to calculate the budget for the implementation of each goal. In case of a deficit, it is necessary to begin looking for additional financial resources with the involvement of both the private and international sectors. This process should be planned and implemented openly, with maximum adherence to the principle of inclusivity. This will additionally enable them to determine what it achieving 1 goal would cost 1 municipality.



It is important to increase the integration of Sustainable Development Goals into municipal policy-making. As the implementation of the goals is not a parallel process and is not separated from the domestic policy-making of the country, it is necessary to have separate policy documents to be developed at the municipal level: in the process of defining and creating strategies, action plans, concepts and priorities, the municipality should ensure the integration of Sustainable Development Goals. This entails the following: all priorities and plans should be in line with the goals and objectives of sustainable development, and directly or indirectly respond to their implementation, and the mentioned connection and compliance should be able to be verified in all relevant policy documents of the municipality.



It is recommended to establish advisory bodies for SDGs at the level of city halls, which will be composed of representatives of public and private sectors, international and local civil society. The function of these deliberative bodies will be to determine compliance of municipal policy with sustainable development and to oversee the implementation of objectives. The bodies should work closely with the national council. **The activity and involvement of the National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia in the process of cooperation between these deliberative bodies and the Interagency Council is of vital importance.**



It is recommended to establish supervisory boards for the Sustainable Development Goals at the municipal council level, the main function of which will be to monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals agenda by the city hall, identify challenges in this process, and launch reciprocal legislative or other initiatives. This model will increase the openness of municipal efforts to achieve the goals and make the process more transparent.



Raise awareness of the local public and civil society sector through regular trainings and information campaigns. That the implementation of this is envisaged in the plan for localization of Sustainable Development Goals is a welcome step. It is desirable that awareness-raising about thematic goals take on the character of a local campaign and be based on municipal needs. For example, in a municipality where clean drinking water is a problem, it is important to spread information about the relevant goals and objectives of thematically sustainable development - what does the international standard offer? What do the Sustainable Development Goals tell us about this problem? What is the local government's problem-solving plan for 2030? Who is responsible for solving the problem?



In addition, it is critical to train and support public servants employed in self-government, especially decision-makers, in understanding the importance of sustainable development. That the implementation of this is envisaged in the plan for localization of Sustainable Development Goals is a welcome step. In-depth and substantive knowledge of the Goals is a natural and irreplaceable lever for local government officials to pay attention to the issue, put it on the political agenda, and give it due importance. In addition, according to a survey conducted within the project, the majority of officials are willing to engage in educational activities related to the SDGs.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MUNICIPALITIES



In addition to the general recommendations developed based on the research, additional recommendations were developed specifically for the municipalities, based on the results of the analysis of the 4 municipalities targeted by the research. Accordingly, several measures can be identified to help municipalities effectively localize the Sustainable Development Goals:

- ! The local challenges and needs of these municipalities should be analyzed, on the basis of which the National Sustainable Development Goals Document (SDG Matrix) should be adapted to take into account the specifics of the municipality.

EXAMPLE:

MUNICIPAL DOCUMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ADJUSTED NATIONAL DOCUMENT)						
GOAL ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND TARGET VALUE	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND BASELINE VALUE	BASLINE VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	TARGET VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	SOURCE OF DATA	RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
GOAL 1. END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE						
1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty for all people living in Georgia by 2030; Extreme poverty is currently measured as people living on less than \$1.9 a day	1.1.1: Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line (\$1.9 per day) = (<1%)	1.1.1 Proportion of the population living in extreme poverty: 2015 - 4%	1.1.1.1. Proportion of the population living in extreme poverty: 2021 - 6% (conditional)	1.1.1.1 Proportion of the population living in extreme poverty: 2030 - 2% (conditional)	Geostat * Note - Poverty data is collected by Geostat at both regional and municipal levels (although the latter is not published and is made available on request by the National Statistics Office).	Please indicate the relevant municipality
GOAL ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND TARGET VALUE	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND BASELINE VALUE	BASLINE VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	TARGET VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	SOURCE OF DATA	RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
GOAL 4: ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL						
4.a Build and upgrade gender- and gender-sensitive educational institutions for children and people with disabilities. Provide a safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all	4.a.1.1. Proportional amount of schools where coal and/or firewood are used as the main source of heating and food Target: Do not exceed 30%	4.a.1.1 38.5% of public schools have a central heating system. The rest of the schools use coal and firewood as the main sources of heating.	4.a.1.1.1 40% of public schools (conditional) have a central heating system. The rest of the schools use coal and firewood as the main sources of heating.	4.a.1.1 .1 60% of public schools (conditional) have a central heating system. The rest of the schools use coal and firewood as the main sources of heating.	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia Municipality	Please indicate the relevant municipality

GOAL ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND TARGET VALUE	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND BASELINE VALUE	BASELINE VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	TARGET VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	SOURCE OF DATA	RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
GOAL 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND IMPROVE THE CAPABILITIES OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS						
5.5.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in parliament and local government	5.5.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in parliament and local government	5.5.1. 2016: a. Proportional number of women in the National Parliament: 16% b. Proportional number of seats occupied by women in local government: 11.6%	5.5.1.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in the municipal council at the municipal level 2021 Year: 10% (conditional)	5.5.1.1 Proportional number of seats occupied by women in the municipal council at the municipal level 2030 Year: 40% (conditional)	Central Election Commission of Georgia Municipality	Please indicate the relevant municipality
	5.5.2 Proportional number of women in leadership positions	5.5.2. 2017: Proportional number of women in leadership positions 32.0%	5.2.2.1 Proportional number of women in senior positions in the municipal Council and the City Hall 2021 Year: 20% (conditional)	5.2.2.1 Proportional number of women in senior positions in the Municipal Council and the City Hall 2030 Year: 50% (conditional)		

GOAL ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND TARGET VALUE	INDICATOR ADJUSTED TO GEORGIA/NATIONAL INDICATOR AND BASELINE VALUE	BASELINE VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	TARGET VALUE OF THE MUNICIPAL INDICATOR	SOURCE OF DATA	RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT
GOAL 8: PROMOTING STABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT, AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL						
8.5.2: Unemployment rate by gender, age, and disability	8.5.2: Unemployment rate by gender, age, and disability 2015 - 12.4%	8.5.2 Unemployment rate by gender and age groups. Goal: 9.5%	8.5.2.2 Unemployment rate at the municipal level 2021 - 19% (conditional)	8.5.2.2 Unemployment rate at the municipal level 2030 - 12% (conditional)	Geostat * Note - Unemployment/employment data is collected by Geostat at both regional and municipal levels (although the latter is not published and is made available on request by the National Statistics Office).	Please indicate the relevant municipality

- ! The selection of goals and targets is at the discretion of the municipality and should be done in accordance with the challenges at the local level. In this process, it is recommended that the municipality select at least 10% of the total number of targets in the national document. In order to select goals and targets, it is necessary to conduct municipal socio-economic, environmental, institutional, and gender assessment by the relevant administrative bodies of the municipality, so that the prioritization of goals and targets of sustainable development is based on evidence and is supported by the results of objective research.
- ! The goals/targets/indicators selected and adapted by the municipality should be integrated into the municipal strategies and action plans, as the established target indicators should be taken into account in the municipal thematic planning process. For example: consideration and understanding of poverty and unemployment indicators in the municipal social policy strategy and action plan; Consideration of school infrastructure indicators in the municipal education infrastructure rehabilitation policy and plan; Consideration of waste management indicators in municipal environmental policy priorities, etc. Similarly, national objectives should be linked to the strategies already adopted by municipalities, their action plans, and outcome indicators, in particular, in reviewing/evaluating these documents and monitoring their implementation.
- ! It is necessary to specify which administrative body is responsible for the performance of this or that target in the municipal adjusted document of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ! The municipality should develop a monitoring and evaluation system for this document, which in the beginning can only be a monitoring and evaluation methodology, based on which the responsible public institution will monitor the achievement of goals and objectives and evaluate the results in real time. In the future, it would be for the best to make an electronic monitoring program (so-called “software”): an e-government system that provides automatic data generation, while a universal database of e-systems will allow other municipalities to get involved and work through the program. At the same time, it is important to integrate this program and/or link it to the national platform for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals, which will make it easier to reflect the results achieved at the municipal level in the national report.
- ! It is desirable to name the relevant structural unit of the municipality as a public institution responsible for monitoring and evaluating the objectives.
- ! The city hall of a specific municipality should be accountable to the municipal council and report on the results of the systematic monitoring of the implementation of the measures required for the implementation of this document. The recommendations of the municipal council should be mandatory for the city hall to consider.
- ! In the process of prioritizing and implementing the goals/targets/indicators, the city hall should involve the local thematic civil society, academia, and the private sector within the platform of the relevant thematic council.

- ! In order to integrate municipal priorities, strategies, action plans, and Sustainable Development Goals, it is necessary to consider all the indicators that measure the achievement of SDGs in the budget planning process. To achieving the goal, the implementation process needs the appropriate financial resources, which must be considered by the municipality when preparing the budget. In this process, the municipality should be guided by the “Methodology of Reflection of Sustainable Development Goals in the Budget by Municipalities.” In case of a lack of financial resources, it is necessary for the municipality to work actively to seek international donor funds.
- ! The municipality should be actively involved in the work of the National Council for Sustainable Development Goals, attend meetings and working group meetings, share information on activities carried out at the municipal level, and voice municipal needs and share response action plans within the framework of sustainable development. This process naturally lays the foundations for healthy competition between municipalities and activates and engages municipal civil society and the private sector in the implementation of SDGs. As the implementation of the goals is not only the responsibility of the government, it is important that the process become more active with the help of local entrepreneurs and NGOs, effective and result-oriented, adhering to the core principle of SDGs: “Leave No One Behind”, which facilitates the production of statistical information on vulnerable populations at the municipal level in the process of achieving the goals, analysis and taking this into account in the process of developing and expanding municipal state programs.



APPENDIX





APPENDIX I.







BUDGET PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS OF THE SELECTED / PILOT MUNICIPALITIES

As part of the analysis, IDFI sought to examine the preconditions for localizing Sustainable Development Goals in four target/pilot municipalities. For this, the Institute studied the priorities and programs defined in the budgets of Keda, Senaki, Sagarejo, and Oni municipalities, and determined their possible adaptation to the nationalized goals. Such analysis is important for planning awareness and advocacy campaigns on the localization process.

The methodology of compiling the budget of the local self-government unit in the program format is defined in the decree №385 of the Minister of Finance of Georgia. The budget process begins on March 1 of each year. In order to coordinate municipal services, a working group is set up on the basis of an administrative-legal act of the mayor, often headed by the mayor himself or the deputy mayor overseeing the budget process, who oversees the budget process, and the group should include the deputy mayors, the heads of the structural units of the executive power of the municipality, and leading officials of all spheres. If necessary, a specialist in the relevant field may be invited to the commission for consultations when drafting the budget in the program format.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS WILL BE DEVELOPED IN THE PROCESS:

The local self-governing unit priorities document, which includes 6 main directions:

-  01 00 Governance and General Expenses
-  02 00 Development of Infrastructure
-  03 00 Sanitation and Environmental Protection
-  04 00 Education
-  05 00 Culture, Youth, and Sport
-  06 00 Healthcare and Social Protection

In case a priority that is not presented in the above list of priorities is financed or planned from the budget of the municipality, it is possible to add the name of the priority to the list, in the following serial code. For example: Priority Code - 07 00 "Promoting Economic Development". However, no similar addition is found in any of the studied municipalities.








Program budget of the local self-governing unit

The program is a set of measures to be implemented in order to achieve the goals set by the local self-government, grouped according to similar content and implemented in the long run to achieve a single final result.

Medium-term action plan of the local self-governing unit

The priority document is more global in nature and includes funding for key priority areas and programs, while the action plan describes the specific measures needed to achieve the objectives set out in the priority document for the same period.

For each program, sub-program, and event, it is advisable to submit the following information for the current planning year and subsequent 3 years:

-  Description and purpose of the program/sub-program/activity;
-  The municipal service in charge of implementation;
-  Expected final and intermediate results;
-  Baseline and target indicators of performance appraisal indicator;
-  Source of funding;
-  Estimates required for the implementation of the event in terms of existing funding and in its entirety (if the activity may develop differently in case of additional funding);
-  Change in target indicators if additional source is available;

Annual budget of the local self-governing unit

The municipal financial service provides the working group with the forecasts of the financial resource indicators for the coming years in the form of data. The financial service, taking into account the medium-term action plans prepared by the relevant services of the municipalities, will also present its forecast on the distribution of payments for the coming years to the working group. The working group will review the submitted information and, within the available resources, prepare proposals for determining the marginal volumes of the allocations. The thresholds of the allocations are determined by the mayor's priorities document for the next and +3 years.

The decision on the level at which the annual budget priorities, programs, sub-programs, and measures will be presented is broken down by self-governing unit.

Annex to the Program Budget of the Municipality

Information in this appendix to the annual budget is presented according to priorities. It includes the final outcome of each program and the evaluation indicators for that outcome, as well as the expected interim results of the implementation of sub-programs/activities to be implemented within the programs and their evaluation indicators. This chapter should provide a description of all the programs/sub-programs/activities that have been assigned a separate program code in Chapter 2 of the Annual Budget and have been allocated the appropriate resources for the planned year. The only exception is the governance and general-purpose expenditures given by the 01 00 program code, the description of the program codes of which is not mandatory. The indicators for evaluating the results achieved in the priorities/programs/sub-programs presented in this appendix are informational in character.

CORRESPONDENCE OF PRIORITIES WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The main directions of the municipal priorities partially cover the targets set for the Sustainable Development Goals. Based on the indicators and sub-programs outlined in the Indicators and Municipal Priorities documents in the SDG matrix, the 4 main priorities meet the following 9 Sustainable Development Goals, while the rest of the goals can only be linked in fragments:

PRIORITIES OF THE MUNICIPALITY	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL
02 00 Development of Infrastructure	Goal 1. No poverty
	Goal 6. Clean water and sanitation
	Goal 8. Decent work and economic growth
	Goal 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
	Goal 11. Sustainable cities and communities
03 00 Sanitation and Environment Protection	Goal 13. Climate action
	Goal 15. Life on land
04 00 Education	Goal 4. Quality education
05 00 Culture, Youth, and Sport	Goal 5. Gender equality
06 00 Healthcare and Social Security	Goal 1. No poverty
	Goal 2. Zero hunger
	Goal 3. Good health and well-being

PRIORITY	SENAKI MUNICIPALITY	ONI MUNICIPALITY	KEDI MUNICIPALITY	SAGAREJO MUNICIPALITY
Development of Infrastructure	Infrastructure Develop- ment, Road Reconstruc- tion and Maintenance	Development of road infrastructure	Development of road infrastructure	Development of road infra- structure
	Rehabilitation and oper- ation of outdoor lighting network	Water system devel- opment	Development of basic utility infrastructure and services	Water system development
	Agricultural event	Street light	Improvement measures of the municipality	Street light
	Procurement of project documentation and export services	Construction, rehabili- tation of damaged fa- cilities and buildings	Project Development Expenditures, Registra- tion, Supervision and Expertise Expenses of the Municipal Develop- ment Plan	Rehabilitation of damaged buildings and houses
	Improvement activities	Improvement activi- ties	Improvement in agri- culture	Improvement, rehabilitation and operation of irrigation canals and shoreline structures
	Maintenance of cem- eteries	Procurement of proj- ect documentation and export services	Restoration of electrical farming in non-residen- tial buildings	Rural Support Program
	Tourism Development Promotion Program	Rural Program Support	LLC Keda Tourism Devel- opment Support Center	
	Regional fund co-fi- nancing	Arrangement, rehabili- tation and operation of drainage canals and embankment structures		
Sanitation and Environment Protection	Regular cleaning of the city, waste disposal	Cleaning and waste disposal	Other unclassified activities in the field of cleaning and environ- mental protection	Cleaning and environmen- tal protection
	Creating green places for the city and taking care of the existing one	Care and develop- ment of green plants		Care and development of green plants
	Isolation of unattended animals	Arrangements for transporting stray animals to a shelter		

Education	Preschool Education Support Program	Preschool Education	Preschool upbringing and education	Functioning of preschool institutions
	Public school funding	Rehabilitation of pre-school institutions, construction		Rehabilitation of preschool institutions, construction
	Program of education activities			Functioning of out-of-school institutions
				Small rehabilitation works of public schools and provision of transportation for students
Culture, Youth, and Sport	Promoting the development of sports	Promoting the development of sports	Promoting the development of sports	The development of sports
	Promoting the development of culture	Promoting the development of culture	Promoting the development of culture	Developing culture
			Promoting youth development	Supporting the youth
	Youth events program	Promoting religious organizations	Construction of houses of culture, clubs and libraries - rehabilitation and equipping	Publishing activities
	Municipal Cleaning and Cemetery Maintenance Program	Funding of student youth activities		
	Promoting religious organizations			
	Information Support Program			
Healthcare and Social Security	Healthcare	Public Healthcare Service	Healthcare	Healthcare
	Social Security	Social protection	Social support	Social protection

In the infrastructure development priority, 3 municipalities (except Senaki) have a water system development program and use the number of people with uninterrupted water supply as one of the indicators of its implementation, which coincides with the measurement indicator of the first target of SDG 6. Within the same priority, we find the works carried out by the municipality for protection in case of disasters, in the implementation of which the number of the population protected from the disaster and the area of new developed areas is considered as an indicator. Despite the different indicators, this direction is

in line with SDG 1's Fifth National Target (providing for forecasting and early warning of extreme cases related to climate and environmental stresses and catastrophes).

In the priority of sanitation and environmental protection, all municipalities have a municipal solid waste collection/recycling program, and the amount of waste disposed of in the landfill during the year (kb.m) is used to measure the result. The first indicator of the second nationalized target of SDG 11, meanwhile, relates to the ratio of regularly collected and consequently recycled solid waste to the total amount of municipal solid waste generated. **Although the target includes only large cities, it is possible to generalize it to the 4 selected municipalities**, given that this activity is already underway and a mechanism for measuring its implementation has been developed at the local level.

Compared to other priorities, youth and sports priorities have the least connection to the SDGs. For example, Keda Municipality implements various measures to promote gender equality within this priority, although even in this case the indicators used do not match the nationalized indicators of the relevant SDG.

The sixth priority, healthcare and social security, is almost identical for all four municipalities. The evaluation indicators of a number of healthcare programs match or are easily adaptable to the SDG 3 indicators. For example, the total number of beneficiaries of health services, the number of nurses and doctors per 100,000 population, the number of beneficiaries receiving free medicines, and so on. The programs given in the social services section are fragmentarily consistent with the targets of SDG 1 and SDG 2, despite different measurement indicators. For example, a program of daily, one-time free meals for the socially vulnerable, one-time material assistance to families with four or more children (children under the age of 18), the main indicator of which is the number of beneficiaries. In this regard, it is possible to adapt the third target of SDG 1 at the regional level, which entails assistance to recipients of subsistence benefits, recipients of social benefits (excluding subsistence benefits), and recipients of old-age pensions (excluding subsistence benefits).

ALIGN LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLANS WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Local Economic Development Action Plan is another important strategic document at the municipal level. In the 4 municipalities surveyed, the main themes of these plans address common issues, namely, external positioning and marketing, land and infrastructure, skills and human capital development/access to financial resources. The approach of Keda Municipality is different, providing a 10-year strategic plan for Socio-Economic Development (2012-2020), which also includes education, culture, health and communication in response to requests for public information.

The strategies of all four municipalities follow a similar structure and their thematic directions include such main goals as raising the awareness of the municipality and further development/promotion of tourism opportunities, creating an attractive environment for investment, increasing entrepreneurial opportunities by creating business support services for small and medium enterprises, developing local

skills and capabilities, and more. The actions to be taken under these objectives can be related mainly to the targets and indicators of SDG 8 and SDG 9. For example, according to the Oni Municipality Action Plan, 2020-2021 should create a job seeker base and promote economic empowerment for young people, women, and start-up entrepreneurs, which will directly contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the fifth and sixth targets of SDG 8.

Within the framework of the action plans of all four municipalities, a number of activities are planned in the direction of tourism development, which is in line with the ninth target of SDG 8: development of policies that promote sustainable tourism, create jobs, and promote local culture and products. Both indicators of this target, the share of GDP generated by tourism in the total GDP, and the number of people employed in the tourism industry, are adjusted to the national scale, although it is easily possible to adapt them to the local level.

Municipalities have also outlined capacity-building activities for locals and entrepreneurs, such as training courses, international cognitive tours, and more. These are indirectly applicable to the first and second targets of SDG 8, the same targets can be applied to activities and goals aimed at attracting investment.

At the same time, in addition to these four target municipalities, the responses to the letters requesting public information sent to an additional 14 survey municipalities⁵³ show that none of the municipalities has a Sustainable Development Council within the City Hall or the Municipal Council. Most of them also report that they have not received an official letter from the official Council for Sustainable Development and therefore do not participate in its work. It should also be noted that municipalities do not currently use the Sustainable Development Goals in the medium-term plan and budget development process, and monitoring and evaluation systems for the implementation of action plans and strategies are not implemented at the local level.

⁵³ Tbilisi City Municipality, Batumi City Municipality, Kutaisi City Municipality, Telavi Municipality, Mtskheta Municipality, Zugdidi City Municipality, Tsageri Municipality, Akhaltsikhe Municipality, Marneuli Municipality, Gori Municipality, Keda Municipality, Senaki Municipality, Oni Municipality, Sagarejo Municipality and Ozurgeti Municipality. See the selection methodology in Appendix II.



APPENDIX II.

METHODOLOGY USED TO SELECT THE SURVEY MUNICIPALITIES

- I. For maximum effectiveness of the analysis, in the first stage of the selection, priority was given to the municipalities distinguished by population size. Based on the demographic data⁵⁴ of Geostat, 2 municipalities were selected for each region.
- II. Subsequent selections from the two selected municipalities were based on the existence of local strategies and action plans, based on the LSG index⁵⁵ and previous IDFI experience. Attention was also paid to involvement in national strategies, the Open Government Partnership (OGP), and other international initiatives.
- III. Finally, in order to develop a comprehensive and inclusive analysis, priority was given to one municipality with the status of a highland settlement (which was organically included in the shortlist based on the above criteria) and one municipality where an ethnic minority constituted the majority of the population.

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	EXISTENCE OF A STRATEGY (INCLUDING THE EXISTENCE OF ONLY A PRIORITY DOCUMENT)	PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS INITIATIVES (OGP, OTHER GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS)	MINORITIES AS THE MAJORITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION	SELECTED
AJARA A/R					
Batumi City Municipality	172.063	✓	✓		✓
Kobuleti Municipality	71.843	✓			
Khelvachauri Municipality	52.737	✓			

⁵⁴ <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/41/mosakhleoba>

⁵⁵ <http://www.lsgindex.org/>

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	EXISTENCE OF A STRATEGY (INCLUDING THE EXISTENCE OF ONLY A PRIORITY DOCUMENT)	PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS INITIATIVES (OGP, OTHER GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS)	MINORITIES AS THE MAJORITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION	SELECTED
GURIA					
Lanchkhuti Municipality	29.893	✓	✓		
Ozurgeti Municipality	59.357	✓	✓		✓
IMERETI					
Kutaisi City Municipality	134.378	✓	✓		✓
Zestaponi Municipality	55.142				
Tskhaltubo Municipality	46.803	✓			
KAKHETI					
Gurjaani Municipality	51.814				
Telavi Municipality	55.113	✓	✓		✓
Sagarejo Municipality	52.335		✓		
MTSKHETA-MTIANETI					
Dusheti Municipality	26.328				
Mtskheta Municipality	53.006				✓
RACHA-LECHKHUMI AND KVEMO SVANETI					
Ambrolauri Municipality	10.405	✓	✓		
Tsageri Municipality	8.505	✓	✓		✓

MUNICIPALITY	POPULATION	EXISTENCE OF A STRATEGY (INCLUDING THE EXISTENCE OF ONLY A PRIORITY DOCUMENT)	PARTICIPATION IN VARIOUS INITIATIVES (OGP, OTHER GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS)	MINORITIES AS THE MAJORITY OF THE LOCAL POPULATION	SELECTED
SAMEGRELO-ZEMO SVANETI					
Poti City Municipality	41.536	✓			
Zugdidi Municipality	99.542	✓	✓		✓
SAMTKSHE-JAVAKHETI					
Akhalqalaqi Municipality	41.026	✓			
Akhaltsikhe Municipality	39.463	✓	✓		✓
KVEMO KARTLI					
Rustavi City Municipality	130.072	✓	✓		
Marneuli Municipality	107.824	✓		✓	✓
SHIDA KARTLI					
Gori Municipality	120.569	✓	✓		✓
Khashuri Municipality	51.028	✓			
Tbilisi Municipality		✓			✓
FOUR ADDITIONAL MUNICIPALITIES					
Keda					✓
Senaki					✓
Oni					✓
Sagarejo					✓



APPENDIX III.

ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN MUNICIPALITIES

QUESTIONNAIRE

- ❓ Your municipality
- ❓ Which sector do you represent
- ❓ Sex of the responder:
- ❓ Age of the responder:
- ❓ What is sustainable development?
- ❓ Have you heard about the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Do you know how many Sustainable Development Goals there are?
- ❓ Is your municipality involved in the implementation of the goals?
- ❓ Have you been involved with any of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in your work? If yes, then please indicate which:
- ❓ What was the date of approval of the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN?
- ❓ In your opinion, is Georgia involved in the global process of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?

- ❓ Do you have information regarding the National Sustainable Development Document?
- ❓ What does it mean to nationalize Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Does a national council function in the country that would coordinate SDGs?
- ❓ In your opinion, which of the following agencies coordinates SDGs?
- ❓ Are you involved in the National Council for Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ During your tenure, did you receive any assignments related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals? If the answer is yes, can briefly describe the content of the assignment.
- ❓ Are tackling poverty and eradicating hunger the aims of the Sustainable Development Agenda?
- ❓ Is statistical information needed to measure Georgia's achievement of Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ In your opinion, what benefits can the UN Sustainable Development Goals bring to our country?
- ❓ In your opinion, should the municipality be involved in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals? Please briefly substantiate your answer:
- ❓ Do you know if environmental protection is part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Do you know which Sustainable Development Goal concerns economic development and job creation?
- ❓ Do you think the Georgian government monitors the Sustainable Development Goals and is accountable to the UN?

- ❓ Do you think it would make it easier for you to have activities, goals, and pre-defined objectives that you need to achieve in the coming years?
- ❓ Do you think that having accurate statistical information about the issues within your competence would help you in your work?
- ❓ In your opinion, who will provide funding for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Which of these is correct:
 - a) The municipality needs additional financial resources to achieve the SDGs;
 - b) For the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals, the municipality can use the existing budget funding.
 - c) Both of the above are correct
- ❓ In your opinion, is the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals mandatory for Georgia?
- ❓ In what year should the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals be completed?
- ❓ Have you been trained with regards to Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Would you like to participate in training on Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Would you like to learn more about Sustainable Development Goals?
- ❓ Do you think such information will be useful in the future?
- ❓ Would you be willing to work with local NGOs on issues related to Sustainable Development Goals?



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