



5 regional strategies for 2020-2030





2030 Agenda and SDGs

The 2030 Agenda is a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that were approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 by 193 member states. It was an agenda that gave continuity to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a programme approved in 2000 and which was to be achieved by 2015. The SDGs reiterated the need to reduce economic inequalities and poverty, but focused on sustainability, the fight against climate change, sustainable consumption and peace, and justice.



Since 2010, the United Regions Organization - Fogar has established a Post 2015 Working Group and has actively participated in the definition of the SDGs through the sectoral and territorial debates convened by the United Nations. ORU Fogar endorsed, in particular, Goal 2 Zero Hunger, in line with a trajectory of work that began in 2008 with an agreement with FAO and the holding, to date, of three regional summits on food security.

While in 2000 the MDGs did not contain any recognition of local and regional governments, the dynamics of the 2030 Agenda has meant a recognition of the role of municipalities and regions in the implementation of sustainability policies. On the eve of 2020, five years after the approval of the SDGs and ten years from the date in which they must be fulfilled, the difficulty of the objectives is becoming evident. Everything related to Climate Change is receiving great attention, but progress is not coming. However, the SDGs dealing with poverty, life under water, drinking water and sanitation do not even receive this attention.





In particular, the transcendent goal 2 "Zero Hunger" is not making progress. The 2019 report presented at the Global Forum on Food Security found that, in the last three years, hunger had increased in the world and that there were still 821 million people suffering from it. Warlike conflicts, climate change, economic crises and trade wars were pointed out as the cause of this situation. From ORU Fogar we must add, however, that bad governance in so many countries is not helping to resolve this curse

The dynamic of the 2030 Agenda has meant a recognition of the role of regional governments. However, this reality is often still too centralized and bureaucratized to allow for the efficiency of policies in the territory. Our three summits on food security, and the extensive work of our members in this field, allow us to firmly assert our conviction that decentralization, the application of the principle of subsidiarity and the existence on the ground of regional governments with a human dimension would make it possible to better address the implementation of the SDGs.

Aside from continuing to focus on this idea of decentralisation, which is part of the nature of ORU Fogar, this document aims to be a manual with ideas for regions to influence the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. There are still 10 years left. And we are in favour of accelerating their implementation. There is no time to lose.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>





Strategy 1 **Implementation**

The natural framework for the regions should be the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This, of course, in a context where regions have adequate skills, capacities and economic resources. The fulfilment of the Goals has very much to do with the provision of services and this is the area in which intermediate governments operate.

The Goal 1 fight against poverty has a lot to do with social services. Zero Hunger is linked to the development of agriculture and the structuring of markets. The Goal Healthy Living is related to the management of the health system. SDG 4 with education. The gender policies of SDG 5 affect all levels of government. The Goal 6 water management is at a municipal level, but regional planning is fundamental. The energy transition of SDG 7 must be a space in which the territory has a lot to say. The creation jobs of Objective 8 as well. And what can we say about SDG 9 construction of infrastructures... And so we could continue until SDG 17, seeing that in all the contents of the 2030 Agenda, regional governments have a wide margin for action.

The competencies, capacities and budgets of the regional governments will greatly determine the level of implementation they can deliver. No matter what framework of competencies exists, it is desirable that all regions have their own implementation strategy. Many regions do not manage either the health system or the education system, and this leaves little room for the implementation of Goals 3 and 4. Thus, the region's strategy should be an exercise in prioritizing objectives and goals.

Very often this work has many precedents. The regions almost always have general and sectoral strategic plans. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the regional strategy for implementing the SDGs be aligned with the previous planning instruments.

The 2030 Agenda is not designed to tell governments what to do. The SDGs define a universal context that can help set priorities, taking into account the reality of each place and in which politicians must have the capacity to make decisions. It is nonetheless imperative that 2030 Agenda and government plans are aligned with each other.

The 2030 Agenda is such an important reference with such a decisive impact that it is appropriate to have a regional strategy, even in a context of limited competences. This is why it is interesting to align all regional policies - whatever their size - with the 2030 Agenda. This alignment can be advantageous when it comes to obtaining investments and international cooperation; as the SDGs are a language of global reference.

The regional strategy should be coherent and complementary to the central government's strategy. The regions must, however, have the capacity to set their priorities.





An important part of this regional strategy is, on the other hand, to harmonize all the policies and strategies that may come from the local world. It is very important to have the participation of civil society and the citizenry, because this citizenry assumes the SDGs in its daily work and becomes co-responsible for its implementation. This participation, on the other hand, is an endorsement that gives a legitimacy that goes beyond political eventualities.

One implementation reference is the Agenda Euskadi Basque Country 2030 which, since 2017, has had a very complete annual monitoring report.

<http://www.euskadi.eus/pdf/agenda-euskadi-basque-country-2030.pdf>





Strategy 2

Disseminate and sensitize

Regardless of the competencies and capacities of each region, all regional governments can play a role in promoting, disseminating and raising awareness of the importance of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Regional governments can bring this United Nations initiative closer to citizens like no other. Public campaigns, debates, publications could have an impact at two different levels. On the one hand, they would show citizens that their daily activity and their vital commitment affects the achievement of the goals. And, on the other hand, it would influence politically so that all the governmental actors would commit themselves to the 2030 Agenda.

This dissemination should enable the regions to establish strategic relations with civil society, the educational world and academia. In this sense, the alliance with young people should be an objective to be achieved.

Among the members of ORU Fogar there are regions with excellent practices in this regard. The network must be a place where these practices can be exchanged. A regional government with an outstanding dissemination plan is the Generalitat Valenciana (Spain). Its project "Alliance of Cities for Development" deserved one of the recognitions of the Regional Good Practices Award 2017, awarded by UNDP Art and ORU Fogar.

<http://regionsunies-fogar.org/es/actividades/banco-de-buenas-practicas-regionales/378-alianza-de-ciudades-para-el-desarrollo>





Strategy 3

Show at all times that SDGs need to be territorialized

The SDGs are global. They have a universal vocation and are intended to be applied in all countries of the world. At the United Nations, the central states signed the 2030 Agenda in September 2015. They are the ones who have the primary responsibility to achieve the 17 SDGs by 2030. Their achievement must, however, take place at the territorial, regional and local levels. The 17 goals, but also the 169 targets, must be achieved at global and national levels, in all corners of the territory.

The key concept is localisation. That which is abstract and generic in the document approved by the United Nations, in the territory must become real and concrete. Many of the 169 targets point to the responsibility of local and regional governments as providers of the most diverse services. For the 2030 Agenda, regional governments are essential partners in its implementation. This support is thus a reason for regional governments to claim their role in the implementation of the Agenda in all corners of the territory.

Regional governments must not tire of repeating how necessary localization is. Nor should we tire of explaining that decentralised governance is the most suitable for this inescapable approach to territory. Thus, we must take advantage of the favourable framework for territorialisation offered by the SDGs to promote decentralisation processes. In this sense, regional governments should base their demands on the "International Guidelines on Decentralisation", adopted by the UN Habitat Governing Council in 2007/2009.

Despite all the evidence, many countries do not assume this implementing role of regional governments. Even in this scenario with competition frameworks that give little margin, regional governments -based on territorial empowerment- should promote policies that allow compliance with the SDGs.





Strategy 4

Influencing the 2030 Agenda of central governments

With more or less implication, all the central governments of the world have generated plans to implement the 2030 Agenda and, at this point, are aligning their policies to the 17 SDGs. Regional governments, besides their own policies, must participate in the elaboration and debate of the plans of their respective central governments. And, in this task, they should seek to include a regional perspective, which takes into account the responsibilities of the regions in the implementation. The central governments, on the other hand, must agree with the regions on priorities and strategies.

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The participation of regional governments in the definition of the national strategy requires an appropriate institutional framework. In this regard, Ecuador has been cited as a reference for multi-level governance. The country has promoted, with the support of the UNDP, a system whereby the national government and the decentralized autonomous governments coordinate initiatives, in the so-called Territorial Working Groups. The fact that this work is of reference is not unrelated to the dynamics that the Ecuadorian provinces, coordinated in the Consortium of Provincial Governments (CONGOPE), have been promoting for years.

https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/ECU/Informe%20Fiscal%20ART%20Etapa%20I%202008-2013%20v14_02.pdf





Strategy 5 **Monitoring**

At a time when data and information management has become strategic, regions should provide themselves with a system of reliable indicators in relation to the 17 SDGs. They should be as localised in the territory as possible. Based on this information, a highly recommended exercise is for regional governments to prepare and issue reports on the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda (today we are already talking about Voluntary Local Examinations). These reports should make it possible to monitor and evaluate performance, while at the same time being a basis for successive undertakings.

Regions can also contribute to central government reports. In the dynamic of monitoring progress, the signatory countries of the 2030 Agenda have committed themselves to carry out Voluntary National Reviews (VNR). As voluntary reports, many countries are not submitting them. In 2017 only 44 countries submitted them. And it is also worth mentioning that some of the countries that did it, presented little elaborated reports, which shows that the information collection systems of many countries are very deficient. The regions can contribute to these national reports, providing information and demanding their improvement when NRVs are incomplete or even requiring them when they are non-existent.

It is also very positive that the regions participate in international SDGs compliance reports. ORU Fogar should recommend, in any case, the participation of ORU Fogar members in the annual Regions4 (formerly nrg4SD) report on the regions' compliance with SDGs. These reports are presented either during the High-level political forum on sustainable development of the United Nations or at the COPs. These are reports in which ORU Fogar participates and promotes the participation of its members.

In all areas of monitoring, the creation of alliances with academia and universities can be very useful for the regions.

<https://sdg.iisd.org/news/iges-launches-voluntary-local-review-platform-for-sub-national-sdg-follow-up/>

<https://www.regions4.org/our-work/what-we-do/>

