



SDG Localization Marker

Adopted by Local2030 Coalition UN Directors Group on 9 February 2024

Background

Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refers to tailoring global objectives into reality at the local level, in coherence with national, subnational, and local frameworks and people's priorities. This approach acknowledges the diversity of challenges and opportunities that different territories face, ensuring that strategies for sustainable development are not one-size-fits-all but context-specific, inclusive and participatory. Localization also relies on collaboration among a multitude of stakeholders, including various levels of government and their associations, coalitions and networks, civil society, academia, multilateral and regional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, etc. whether governmental or non-governmental, each entity contributes distinct perspectives and methods in advancing the SDGs.

The United Nations Joint SDG Fund recognizes SDG localization as a fundamental element of its new strategic approach and a pivotal driving force behind all key SDG transitions. The Fund is committed to fostering targeted initiatives that propel the advancement of SDG localization through a portfolio approach. In order to translate this emphasis on SDG localization into operations, the Fund, has joined forces with the Local2030 Coalition¹, to craft a Guidance Note on the 'Localization Marker.' This tool serves to identify joint initiatives that effectively prioritize localization efforts, ensuring both policy coherence and transparent and accountable tracking of allocated financing for SDG localization, and facilitating rigorous monitoring and reporting on the progress achieved in localizing the SDGs. The Guidance is specifically designed to assist UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in applying the Localization Marker to the design, implementation, and accountability of joint programmes supported by the Joint SDG Fund.

¹ The Local2030 Coalition is the UN System-wide platform and network for supporting and accelerating the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It brings together the UN-System, local and regional governments and their associations, national governments, businesses, community-based organizations, and other local actors to mobilize, empower and support local stakeholders in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Coalition also strengthen coordination within and beyond the UN-System by enabling multi-level and multi-stakeholder collaboration, which are essential to coherent and effective actions on complex and interlocking challenges.

Localization Marker Definition

Code	Definition	Note
0	Not expected to contribute to the localizing the SDGs.	There is no consideration of localizing the SDGs in the joint programme or initiative, with no incorporation of subnational and local priorities, nor engagement with local and/or regional governments, local service providers ² , or other local actors and stakeholders ³ in the design, implementation and accountability ⁴ . Additionally, there are no results contributing directly to SDG localization.
1	Limited contribution to localizing the SDGs.	There is limited consideration of SDG localization in the design, implementation and accountability of the joint programmes or initiative. For example, while there may be limited consultations with local and/or regional governments, local service providers, and other local actors and stakeholders, or their involvement in proposed activities, the presence of direct results in localizing the SDGs is either non-existent or minimal. Consequently, the contribution to SDG localization plays a minor role in the overall outcomes of the initiative.
2	Significant contributions to localizing the SDGs.	There is a substantial contribution to SDG localization in the design, implementation, and accountability of the joint programme or initiative. This is characterized by at least one explicit result and a level of adequate funding focused on localizing the SDGs within the programme. The active participation of local and regional governments, local service providers, or other local actors and stakeholders, in programme design, implementation and accountability activities, along with results that significantly contribute to SDG localization, distinguishes this level of commitment from other pursued outcomes.
3	Principal contributions to localizing the SDGs.	SDG localization stands as at least one of the primary intended result(s) of the joint programme or initiative, with corresponding levels of allocated budget. The initiative is specifically undertaken to enhance local and regional governments, local service providers, and other local actors and stakeholders' ownership, awareness, capacities, and resources related to the localization of the SDGs or to enact policies, regulations and initiatives facilitating the local implementation and financing for the achievement of the SDGs. The localization of SDGs, embedded within a logic of policy coherence, is an overarching goal of the initiative.

² The term "local service providers" refers to public service providers at the local level, for example local entities that run transportation systems, electricity companies, or those that provide education, health or other social services.

³ The term "other local actors and stakeholders" includes a wide range of non-governmental actors such as local NGOs, community-based organizations, other civil society organisations, research and academic institutions, private companies and other private sector actors, banks and financial institutions etc – all those who might have a stake in, or influence over, the project's activities.

⁴ "Accountability" includes both monitoring and evaluation (frameworks/tools or systems).

Scoring System for the Localization Marker

Dimensions	Criteria or eligibility	Responses	Explanation	Means of verification
Programme Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the programme or initiative explicitly include results and/or expected outcomes directly related to advancing SDG localization? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is at least 70% or more of the programmatic budget allocated specifically to activities that enhance advocacy, actions or monitoring related to SDG localization? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were local and regional governments actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were local service providers and/or other local actors and stakeholders actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase? 	Yes/No		
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the programme or initiative planned to develop new knowledge material, research, publication or relevant resources related to SDG localization, specifically building on local experience? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the programme or initiative planned to develop specific events, campaigns, communications or capacity-building activities on SDG localization, especially targeted at local or regional governments, local service providers, or other local actors and stakeholders? 	Yes/No		
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiative incorporate mechanisms, spaces or activities designed to bolster coherent policies, regulations, plans, programmes, and service-delivery approaches or models by local and regional governments and/or local service providers, facilitating their meaningful contributions to the SDGs and addressing the principles of leaving no one behind? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiative have an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder approach, involving civil society, academia, citizens, the private sector and/or others to jointly implement transformative initiatives toward localizing the SDGs? This could include, for example, mobilizing and sharing knowledge, 	Yes/No		

	expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs at the local level.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiative include a multi-level governance approach to address the SDG challenges through collaboration between different levels of government, as well as with international organizations, and local communities? This approach recognizes that effective action requires coordinated efforts at various scales, from local and regional to national and global. 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiative feature mechanisms or activities aimed at improving the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization? This may include the development of decentralized financing policies, the creation of market-ready pipeline of local actions, expansion of local fiscal space, resource mobilization by local or regional governments, participatory budgeting approaches, etc. 	Yes/No		
Accountability & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiatives include dedicated results, supported by a robust accountability framework, to systematically collect and report on contributions to SDG localization, both at the outcome and output levels? 	Yes/No		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the joint programme or initiative include a dedicated plan to ensure the sustainability, leveraging of financial resources and replication/expansion of the SDG actions in additional localities, developed in collaboration with local and regional governments, local service providers and other local actors and stakeholders? 	Yes/No		
Criteria for Scoring		Total # of Yes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marker 3: Between 9 and 12 criteria marked as Yes. Marker 2: Between 4 and 8 criteria marked as Yes. Marker 1: Between 1 and 3 criteria marked as Yes. Marker 0: None of the criteria marked as Yes. 				

Applying the Localization Marker

- The Localization Marker will undergo a pilot phase in 2024, applying to all new joint programmes supported by the Joint SDG Fund. The marker will be applied for programmes developed and launched after the adoption of the marker guidance note by the Local2030 Coalition and the Fund’s Operational Steering Committee. The proposed scoring system may be adjusted to ensure robust screening and identification of programmes and initiatives contributing to SDG localization.
- Joint programmes receiving support from resources earmarked for SDG localization must attain a Localization marker of 3. This requirement ensures that resources earmarked for SDG localization are directed to joint programmes that make principal contributions to localizing the 2030 Agenda.
- The Joint SDG Fund with the support of The Local2030 Coalition Secretariat will ensure the quality assurance of the localization marker application in all joint programmes, particularly for joint programmes marked at the level 3. This aims to guarantee the proper applications of the marker, ensuring that actions and funding genuinely flow to programmes and initiatives that mainstream and substantially contribute to SDG localization. This collaboration may include capacity building support from the Local2030 Coalition to the Resident Coordinator System and the UNSDG entities for proper marker application and advocacy for its broader use by other partners. To this end, the Local2030 Coalition will be consulted prior to fund allocation decisions of the Fund on SDG localization, and will be represented in the Fund’s Operational Steering Committee meetings.

Monitoring of the Localization Marker

In addition, aligned with the marker criteria, joint programmes or initiative assigned a marker level of 2 or 3 will be required to provide annual reports on the following specific actions and results to affirm their commitment to advancing SDG localization.

Dimensions	Indicator	Baseline (year)	Target (year)	Evidence or means of verification
Advocacy	Number and type of local and regional governments and local service providers actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase.	# (type)	# (type)	
	Number and type of other local actors and stakeholders actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase.	# (type)	# (type)	

	Number and type of specific events, publications or communication materials developed with the primary aim of sharing knowledge and lessons related to SDG localization, with a specific focus on engaging local and regional governments, local service providers and other local actors and stakeholders.	# (type)	# (type)	
Action	Number and type/description of specific coherent policies, regulations, and/or tools developed to enhance SDG localization (Disaggregation on policies, regulations or tools focused on cross-sectoral or cross-level policy coherence).	# (type / description)	# (type / description)	
	Number and type/description of mechanisms or activities developed to improve the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization	# (type / description)	# (type / description)	
	Number of people (% women, indigenous people, youth, persons with disabilities) who have undergone capacity building and/or awareness raising, facilitating their meaningful contributions to the SDGs.	# (% women, indigenous people, youth, persons with disabilities) (type of org)	# (% women indigenous people, youth, persons with disabilities) (type of org)	
	Total amount (in US\$) of financing leveraged (additional resources mobilized or unlocked) for SDG localization as a direct result of the joint programme or initiative	US\$	US\$	
Monitoring	Percentage of programmatic expenditures allocated explicitly to activities enhancing advocacy, actions or monitoring related to SDG localization	%	%	
	Percentage of results contributing to SDG localization that have met their preplanned target/milestones.	%	%	
	Number of local and regional governments and/or local service providers s integrating aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development into their monitoring and reporting processes	# (type of actor)	# (type of actor)	

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Annex 1: Indicative table on examples of qualifying activities for the Localization Marker

This table has been prepared to provide indicative examples of qualifying activities that meet the criteria for select actions under the programme design, advocacy, action, and monitoring & replication dimensions building on examples of real programmes and initiatives supported by the Joint SDG Fund and other UN entities. The table seeks to guide the scoring and provide useful examples for UN country teams' scoring process. The examples are not intended to limit but rather to guide marking and will be updated throughout the piloting phase of the Localization marker.

Dimensions	Criteria	Examples of qualifying activities (This list is non-exhaustive)
Programme design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were local and regional governments actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase? • Were local service providers and/or other local actors and stakeholders actively engaged and consulted during the programme design phase? • Is at least 70% or more of the programmatic budget allocated specifically to activities that enhance advocacy, actions or monitoring related to SDG localization? • Does the programme or initiative explicitly include results and/or expected outcomes directly related to advancing SDG localization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring voices of the communities are heard during joint programme design through the engagement with local community platform (e.g. Engaging with local innovation labs in Costa Rica focused on co-creating solutions for local women with the focus on increasing their opportunities for income generation). • Form task forces or dialogue spaces with local and regional government officials and civil society leaders to address specific challenges or opportunities identified during the programme design phase, ensuring their active involvement in finding solutions (e.g. In Bangladesh the tea garden women workers and adolescents' needs are identified and addressed through the creation of a dedicated dialogue platform that includes local government, tea garden authority, local administration, and panchayat leaders.) • Establish a civil society reference group to provide ongoing guidance throughout the programme design and implementation, fostering a collaborative and consultative approach. • Conduct comprehensive surveys and consultations in collaboration with the local government and local community-based organisations to assess community needs, ensuring that programme objectives are aligned with the priorities identified by stakeholders.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme or initiative planned to develop new knowledge material, research, publication or relevant resources related to SDG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned and developed new knowledge material, research, publication and resources on SDG localization.

	<p>localization, specifically building on local experience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed and published a whitepaper on a subnational or local actor experience on localizing the SDGs to document and share experience with other localities. • Developed and published a report on best practices for financing SDG localization through innovative financing mechanisms at the local level.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the programme or initiative planned to develop specific events, campaigns, communications or capacity-building activities on SDG localization, especially targeted at local or regional governments, local service providers, or other local actors and stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned and organized meetings of local and regional governments, local service providers and local actors and stakeholders on SDGs. For example, organized an event with a network of mayors in Costa Rica, Red de Cantones PRODS, to encourage adoption of SDGs as the vision for local development of municipalities. • Devised a concrete communication plan to share best practices of SDG localization and published a feature series in the local newspaper on localizing the SDGs. • Develop and implement workshops aimed at enhancing the capacities of local governments, providing them with the necessary skills to contribute effectively to SDGs. For example, in Albania, officials from municipalities received training and mentoring for the development of social care plans, accessing the Social Fund and to use management Information System on social care services.
<p>Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the joint programme or initiative incorporate mechanisms, spaces or activities designed to bolster coherent policies, regulations, plans, programmes, and service-delivery approaches or models by local and regional governments and/or local service providers, facilitating their meaningful contributions to the SDGs and addressing the principles of leaving no one behind? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and adopt local economic development plans, policies, strategies, roadmaps backed by concrete funding to accelerate SDGs at the local levels. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo developed a provincial aid strategy for pilot provinces to enhance their management, mobilization, and coordination of aid to support the implementation of the SDGs. The strategies are accompanied by operational institutional frameworks and digital platforms for data management and monitoring.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the joint programme or initiative have an inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder approach, involving civil society, academia, citizens, the private sector and/or others to jointly implement transformative initiatives toward localizing the SDGs? This could include, for example, mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs at the local level. • Does the joint programme or initiative include a multi-level governance approach to address the SDG challenges through collaboration between different levels of government, as well as with international organizations, and local communities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form task forces or dialogue spaces with local and regional government officials and civil society leaders to address specific challenges or opportunities, ensuring their active involvement in finding solutions and in programme implementation (e.g. In Bangladesh the tea garden women workers and adolescents' needs are identified and addressed through the creation of a dedicated dialogue platform that includes local government, tea garden authority, local administration, and panchayat leaders.) • Establish a civil society reference group to provide ongoing guidance throughout the programme implementation, fostering a collaborative, participatory and consultative approach. • Establish platforms or mechanisms that facilitate or support local actors and stakeholders, including marginalized groups such as women, indigenous people, youth, and persons with disabilities, to actively engage in policy advocacy, ensuring their perspectives are considered.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the joint programme or initiative feature mechanisms or activities aimed at improving the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of localized financing policies, strategies or plans that empower local and regional governments and other local actors to mobilize and allocate resources for SDGs (e.g. Malawi supported the development of a Fiscal Decentralization Strategy in partnership with the World Bank; Nepal helped facilitate the Revenue Improvement Action Plan in 11 municipalities). • Support governments in the development of dedicated financial mechanisms that can support the implementation of national policies for subnational and local development (e.g. The Regional Development Fund in Albania supports local development and is included in the

		<p>annual national budget adopted by Parliament; Support sub-national authorities issue municipal bonds for SDGs).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of management instruments and guidelines to support local and regional governments and other local actors in improving financing for key social services (e.g. Bolivia supported the formulation of the National Budgetary Formulation Guidelines which lead to all 339 municipal governments in the country to incorporate budget allocations in favor of children and adolescent). • Implement initiatives that aim to expand local fiscal space, allowing local and regional governments to generate additional revenues through innovative financing mechanisms, such as local taxes, fees, or public-private partnerships. • Provide training and capacity-building initiatives for local finance officials and civil society to effectively integrate SDGs into their budgeting processes, ensuring alignment between budget allocations and SDG priorities. For example, in Rwanda, the programme trained members of local children committees from 13 districts in participatory planning and budgeting.
Accountability & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the joint programme or initiatives include dedicated results, supported by a robust accountability framework, to systematically collect and report on contributions to SDG localization, both at the outcome and output levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a monitoring system to collect localized data on key SDG indicators at the local level. • Support the establishment of community-level monitoring mechanisms to track progress on SDG-related goals and targets. • Assist national governments in preparing localized VNRs that highlight achievements, challenges, and contributions to the SDGs at the sub-national and local level. • Work with subnational and local actors to develop monitoring frameworks for localized INFFs that align with national strategies and contribute to the financing of SDG-related activities at the local level.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the joint programme or initiative include a dedicated plan to ensure the sustainability, leveraging of financial resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with subnational and local actors to develop strategic plans for the sustained implementation and replication of SDG actions, ensuring alignment with local development priorities (e.g. Bolivia supported the formulation of the National Budgetary Formulation

and replication/expansion of the SDG actions in additional localities, developed in collaboration with local and regional governments, local service providers and other local actors and stakeholders?

Guidelines which lead to all 339 municipal governments in the country to incorporate budget allocations in favor of children and adolescent).

- Identify successful SDG initiatives and models from one locality and work with local stakeholders to replicate or adapt them for implementation in additional localities, promoting scalability and impact. Ghana developed successful pilot SDG financing strategies or 5 district assemblies that are anticipated to be upscaled to cover all the district assemblies towards the establishment of the integrated National Financing Framework through a bottom-up approach.
- Create local SDG hubs or centers that serve as knowledge-sharing platforms, connecting local actors, government agencies, and civil society organizations to share best practices, resources, and innovations.

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Annex 2: Additional reference materials and website on SDG Localization

- **Recommended reading:**

- [SDG Localization Training Modules](#)
 - [Training Module 1: Localizing the SDGs / Introduction](#)
 - [Training Module 2: Territorial Planning and the SDGs](#) (currently being updated)
 - [Training Module 3: Reporting to national and local reviews](#)
 - [Training Module 4: Localizing the SDGs through Decentralized Cooperation](#)
- [Towards the Localization of the SDGs – Reports to the HLPF](#)
- [Proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for the VNR](#)
- [Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews Volume 1 - Towards a New Generation of VLR](#)
- [Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews Volume 2: Towards a New Generation of VLRs: Exploring the local-national link](#)
- [Multilevel Governance for SDG localization Research](#)
- [New Urban Agenda](#)
- [International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning](#)
- [UMF Metadata](#)
- [Building Participatory Accountability Systems for City Policies – Handbook](#)
- [State of the Voluntary Local Reviews 2022: Overcoming Barriers to Implementation](#)
- [Voluntary Local Reviews, VLRs toolbox: From data analysis to citizen engagement when monitoring the SDGs](#)
- [Local and Regional Voices on the Global Stage: our Post-2015 Journey](#)
- [Getting started with the SDGs in Cities: a Guide for Local Stakeholders](#)

- [Localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Dialogues on Implementation](#)
- [Delivering the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Opportunities at the National and Local Levels](#)

- **Recommended websites:**
 - Local2030 Coalition: <https://www.local2030.org/>
 - SDG Localization Platform: <https://sdglocalization.org>
 - Multilevel Governance Platform: <https://www.multilevelgovernance.org>
 - Global Urban Monitoring Framework - Explainer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djqX96i00q0>

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