CARTOGRAPHIES OF HOPE

Innovations in Effective Local Governance for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Executive Summary

The United Nations Development Programme's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 seeks to respond to the complexity, uncertainty and urgency of today's development challenges with systemic and transformative responses on a large scale. These responses are anticipatory, adaptable and agile, in a world that requires stronger and better capacities to manage multiple crises, with comprising interconnected and simultaneous layers, and as well as promote structural changes in which no one is left behind (UNDP, 2021).

In this context, innovation must be a key focus visible on of the strategic horizon and in the capacity development promoted by UNDP, which requires a different level of ambition and courage to address shared challenges. This implies a different/distinct and broader modality of collaboration, which goes far beyond the isolated implementation of projects, the conventional organizational and vertical boundaries in the forms kinds of intervention, and the deployment of capacities that are neither connected nor synchronized with each other. No single organization, government or entity can navigate and cope on its own with the complexity, volatility and uncertainty we currently face on the planet.

In this regard, the UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (2022-2025) is closely aligned with three directions of change present in the strategy, namely: structural transformation, particularly green, inclusive and digital transitions; leaving no one behind, i.e., a rights-based approach centred on people and human development; and building resilience to respond to systemic uncertainty and risk. Based on these and leveraging the three enablers for change, namely digitalization, strategic innovation and financing for development, efforts are aimed at achieving four programmatic outcomes for the period 2022-2025: 1) inclusive and sustainable growth; 2) equity and inclusion; 3) resilient sustainable development and ecological recovery; and (4) effective governance.

Within these challenges, effective governance is an essential foundation for the three aforementioned directions: it helps manage the risks and impacts of structural transformations; it helps to ensure empowerment and inclusion that guarantee that no one is left behind; and it contributes to strengthen capacities and increase resilience, helping to prevent setbacks in development gains and relapses during periods of conflict or crisis. The outcome of governance focuses on addressing structural challenges related to how actors reach and sustain agreements to resolve conflicts and promote development. The theory of change underpinning this states that: if mechanisms to foster participation, engagement and inclusive civic dialogue, particularly for women, are improved and thus the legitimacy of institutions is strengthened and trust is built; if solutions to strengthen the rule of law, citizen security and access to justice are enabled in order to improve social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and the protection of human rights; and if capacities at national and local levels for evidence-based decision-making and leveraging innovation are increased; then countries will benefit from structural transformations towards more resilient and sustainable societies, underpinned by effective governance (UNDP – Regional Hub, 2022).

The territorial approach and local governance processes make it easier to address sustainable development in its multiple dimensions —social, economic and environmental—, since they capitalize on the natural integrity of the territory as a strategic point of reference, revaluing its endogenous potential and taking into account the cultural identity, dynamics and priorities of all the stakeholders who inhabit it, under an approach of policy coherence for sustainable development. Within this framework, the institutional arrangements that promote Effective Local Governance, under a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach, guarantee the coherence of sectoral priorities and an integrated, multisectoral and multidimensional framework, both at national and local levels in the region.

This document reflects a rigorous and exhaustive process of identifying, surveying and analysing various innovation initiatives in local governance in Latin America and the Caribbean, which complement and broaden the perspective of a previous effort prepared in the context of the effects and impact of the global pandemic (UNDP, 2021). Not only does it update and reinforce the evolution of various transformative projects in the region, in which UNDP has played a key role regarding SDG localization with a territorial approach, but it also contributes to shaping an emerging cartography of innovations that evidence a set of new response capacities rooted in governance models and collaborative work approaches with development actors.

In some cases, the possibilities of digital tools and technological platforms are used to good advantage, yet methodologies that enable innovation are also recognized and applied, ranging from the human-centred approach and design thinking, to the development of spaces for co-creation and the use of collective intelligence. In addition, the implementation of processes that may refresh planning and public management practices at the local level is encouraged, articulating various levels and stakeholders on the path towards authentic sustainable development.

The UNDP Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean is committed to further strengthening these initiatives and promoting effective governance as a key tool to address structural challenges and achieve sustainable development in the region. Through collaboration and strategic innovation, we will work hand in hand with countries and local stakeholders to build a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable future. Together, we can overcome challenges and seize opportunities to transform our societies and ensure a better future for all.

Finally, this work is closely related to the process of co-creating a strategy for the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Effective Local Governance (GLE) in collaboration with the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID).

Introduction

Latin America and the Caribbean have more than 16,000 local and subnational governments, all marked by a context of uncertainty and structural challenges. These challenges are systemic in nature and include low economic growth, barriers to access to employment, the climate crisis, gender inequality and citizen insecurity, which impede the comprehensive development of societies. The principles expressed in the publication 'Effective Governance, beyond Recovery'[1] remain valid, as well as the need to remain committed to a sustainable recovery aimed at achieving the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in this decade.

In this context of uncertainty, the local level is the everyday scenario where people face structural challenges. For example, according to the 2021 Human Development Index (HDI), violence can destabilize local economies in disadvantaged areas, condemning them to a lower economic growth. Similarly, in terms of the climate crisis, permanent damage to natural resources and ecosystems predominantly harms local livelihoods. Regarding local governance, the HDI points out that any form of violence can directly worsen the quality of local institutions, modifying political activities through the threat of political assassination, the erosion of public trust, the repression of demands for transparency and accountability, as well as the subversion of the judiciary and the implementation of extrajudicial measures for conflict resolution.

In terms of gender equality, the HDI shows that women's political leadership still faces significant gaps; in 2021, women held only 24.5% of leadership positions in local governments. Structural inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean erodes local social capital and trust, creating distance between people. Moreover, this inequality can increase if democracy and the rule of law are violated in local contexts.

The aforementioned dynamics described by the HDI affect the ability of communities to participate in collective action and decision-making. For this reason, it is important to contextualize global development frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda at the local level. For example, when addressing SDG 16, 'Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies', the Local 2030 platform encourages local governments to be effective and accountable to citizens by fighting corruption and increasing access to public information.

Local governments have been scenarios to test new public policies and implementations, under participatory schemes, in areas such as budgeting and planning. These experiences in local governments are becoming increasingly common in a world and a region that are increasingly urbanized. It is important to remember that, according to UN Habitat, 80% of Latin Americans live in urban areas. Faced with this reality, localized governance and interpretations of the 2030 Agenda become necessary in the medium and long terms.

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1   United Nations Development Programme, 'Latin America and the Caribbean: Effective Governance, beyond Recovery', UNDP, New York, January 2021, www.undp.org/latin-america/publications/latin-america-and-caribbean-effective-governance-beyond-recovery, accessed in 2023.

However, these actions require quality information that is frequently systematized. Although there is no exact data on the progress of the 2030 Agenda at local levels, there are examples which should continue to be promoted, such as Voluntary Local Reviews. Nevertheless, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in its sixth report on the regional progress of and challenges to the 2030 Agenda, warns that only 25% of SDG targets benefit from information that enables stakeholders to foresee their attainment.

Faced with this lack of information and considering the challenges of a region with structural inequality that manifests itself at the local level, the United Nations Development Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNDP LAC), with the support of the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID), sets forth this report that identifies innovations in local governance and SDG localization.

This document places significant emphasis on the processes to localize Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights progress in decentralization and local governance in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). It also draws attention to learnings, reflections and ideas for the future development of these issues in the region. Additionally, this report brings together emblematic experiences in which UNDP has collaborated as a strategic partner with different countries in the region. It thus aims to bring about and identify good practices that can be implemented by local and subnational governments, always within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and under the premise that no one is left behind.

This report and its contents are closely related to the process of co-creating a strategy for the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Effective Local Governance (ELG), in collaboration with the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID). The strategy was developed with the participation of focal points and office representatives. Given that effective local governance is essential to promote sustainable development, we adopt the perspective set out in this proposal as a framework for action.

1.

1. THE CONTEXT: A REGION IN TRANSITION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 seeks to address the complexity, uncertainty and urgency of today's development challenges through systemic and transformative responses at scale, that are adaptable and agile (Figure 1). In a world that requires capacities to manage multiple interconnected and simultaneous crises while promoting structural changes, this becomes a crucial challenge, an imperative to achieve sustainable development.

Figure 1. *UNDP Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025*

Source: UNDP, 2022.

UNDP's broad geographical coverage and mandate, as well as its privileged access to governments and international partners in recent years, position it to lead and integrate the United Nations development system, international financial institutions and bilateral partners in this direction. In this regard, it is important to examine how UNDP offices in Latin America have been promoting new approaches to multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance for sustainable development, which can provide systemic and transformative responses to the challenges of an era of change and transition towards more innovative, resilient and inclusive work models, through institutional strengthening and the development of new capacities to confront and manage complexity.

In recent years, and amplified by the need to respond to the global pandemic, we have witnessed numerous efforts to promote new approaches to effective governance and innovations that have **transformed the lives of impoverished and vulnerable people**, thus broadening the range of interventions and the management of challenges of sustainable development. From cash transfers to vaccinations to mobile banking, **innovation has played and continues to play a critical role in international development.** Despite the impact of many successful innovations on development cooperation, there are few examples of international organizations innovating and scaling interventions consistently and systematically over extended periods. That is why, when reviewing the mapping of initiatives promoted in Latin America and the Caribbean, new frameworks for effective local governance with multi-level and multi-stakeholder approaches have been implemented, as well as processes for localizing and integrating SDGs into the work of national and subnational governments.

Promoting innovations and new approaches to collaboration have opened up a range of possibilities that can reorient and strengthen the role and work that UNDP has been advancing, in line with a new strategic roadmap. By adding evidence for a possible path and mapping the responses that are being configured and tested, even if the map is not the territory, it helps us to understand, empathize and be surprised by the real possibilities of taking a governance scheme that includes agility, adaptability and change seriously, that integrates stakeholders and levels, and that facilitates spaces for innovation, participation and collaboration, inspiring and transcending the boundaries of the conventional. Here's a map of what we've found on this voyage.

1.1. CARTOGRAPHIES OF HOPE: MAPPING INNOVATIONS IN EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE FOR SDG LOCALIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

At the end of this document, the following questions will have multiple answers and experiences that reinforce the importance of decentralization and effective governance in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

What is the role of decentralization and effective governance in the localization and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin America and the Caribbean?

How have innovative initiatives been implemented in different countries to promote sustainable development and comply with the 2030 Agenda, especially in the case of subnational governments, considering the effects of the global health crisis?

This mapping of initiatives in the field of Effective Local Governance and innovation, aimed at the localization and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has been a meticulous effort not only to review countless initiatives throughout the region, but also to contrast the cases, the available evidence and the document management process with the participation of professional teams from UNDP country offices throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. This work has made it possible to generate a database with a wide range of projects and a constantly evolving cartography of the efforts deployed to promote sustainable development and comply with the 2030 Agenda, especially from subnational governments in the region, despite the consequences of the global health crisis and its collateral effects in political, economic and social spheres.

What shall we find in this document?

The first part of this document presents the fundamental concepts on which this work is based, as well as the framework which has served as the foundation to develop its proposal for identifying and reviewing Effective Local Governance cases and experiences in the region, grounded on previous research (UNDP, 2021).

Subsequently, this document outlines an analytical model which helps to frame these efforts in the scope of SDG localization and integration, providing an overview to understand their scope and implications in Latin American countries.

Based on the above, this report breaks down the elements of the debate on decentralization and its close relationship in recent years with the model for effective governance, especially regarding the response to the global health crisis and its multiple effects on different aspects of development. This provides the present study with a broad approach in which the diverse experiences identified can be organized through a taxonomy that facilitates their detailed analysis.

This study then proposes a structure to present the findings of its analysis, based on certain thematic axes or strategic areas of intervention, from which effective and innovative local governance initiatives can be observed in the different countries of the region:
   a.   Progress in decentralization processes;
   b.   Efforts to promote SDG localization and integration;
   c.   New approaches, methodologies and tools to promote sustainable development (such as the MAPS method, the experience of UNDP Accelerator Labs, territorial collaboration and co-creation platforms, and in-depth experimentation and demonstration)
   d.   Platforms established to support territorial management for sustainable development. Reflections on the challenges to decentralized cooperation at the subnational level and the role of development agencies in achieving SDGs by 2030.

Due to the complexity of such an exercise, this document does not pretend to be an exhaustive sample of the vast number of programmes, projects and actions in multiple areas of sustainable development promoted by UNDP country offices in the region; nevertheless, it has been able to distil an interesting synthesis of these, which offers a map of actions that reflects the dynamics, resilience and adaptability of this agenda of initiatives and helps to understand the present and future of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs in Latin America. Moreover, given the systemic nature of many of these initiatives, it became clear that most of them serve purposes that cannot be addressed in a fragmented or isolated manner. For example, a large part of decentralization initiatives find inspiration and foundations in new approaches and methodologies for working in the territory or in the process of localizing and integrating SDGs in subnational governments (such as the Territorial Democratic Governance Index in Colombia, the PADIT in Cuba or the Municipal Functional Capacities Index in Mexico). This study also addresses new frameworks of action based on the logic of social and open innovation, design thinking, collaboration and collective intelligence associated with the challenges of achieving the SDGs, frameworks which in some cases are expressed in new management modalities in regional and local governments such as:

- The Ágora online portal in Panama
- The SIGOBito tool in Paraguay
- Exploring innovative approaches to participation, active listening, and co-creation (such as Deep Demo in Uruguay)
- Innovative projects linked to the joint work of UNDP country offices and UNDP Accelerator Labs (such as the case of Citizen Science in Argentina, the Metropolitan Observatory in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, or the social innovation projects incubator in Paraguay).
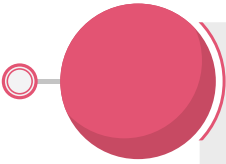
1.2. BASIC CONCEPTUAL MATRIX: MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL INNOVATIONS
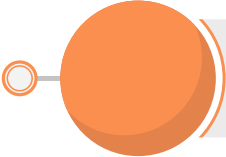
The concept of multi-level governance (MLG) describes a way of practicing politics and designing and implementing public policies which is relevant to SDG localization, a process which aims to transform the SDGs into concrete actions through their implementation at the local level. Adapting global strategies to local realities and priorities requires an integrated territorial approach, which is fundamental for the comprehensive success of the SDGs. This denotes the key role of regional and local governments as drivers of effective SDG localization and policy coherence across levels and sectors. Therefore, a territorial approach based on multi-level governance is required to achieve more coordinated, inclusive and coherent policy action (UN-Habitat, 2022:7).

Most of these elements are based on coherent and complementary principles associated with the sustainable development paradigm, including:
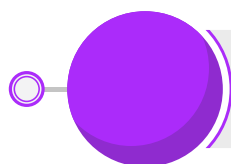
The central and general principles of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs (UN, 2015).

The principles of effective governance for sustainable development, developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and approved by the UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC, 2018), to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all levels.

The key principles informing multi-level governance approaches (UN, 2018).

These are also reflected in the New Urban Agenda (UN, 2017), which establishes cross-cutting principles relevant to MLG, such as coordination and cooperation between levels, coherence of sectoral objectives and policies, citizen participation and the role of functional territorial entities. These elements form a solid foundation for multi-level governance to be a central feature of effective governance in the implementation of the SDGs, harnessing the potential of locally-driven localization processes (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Effective Multi-Level Governance and the Sustainable Development Goals*

PRINCIPLES OF THE 2030 AGENDA

Multi-stakeholder alliance

Interconnection and indivisibility   Leaving no one behind

Inclusion   Universality

GOBERNANZA EFECTIVA PARA EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE

Responsibility

Efficiency   Inclusion

PRINCIPLES OF MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

Policy coherence and integration

All of government

All of society
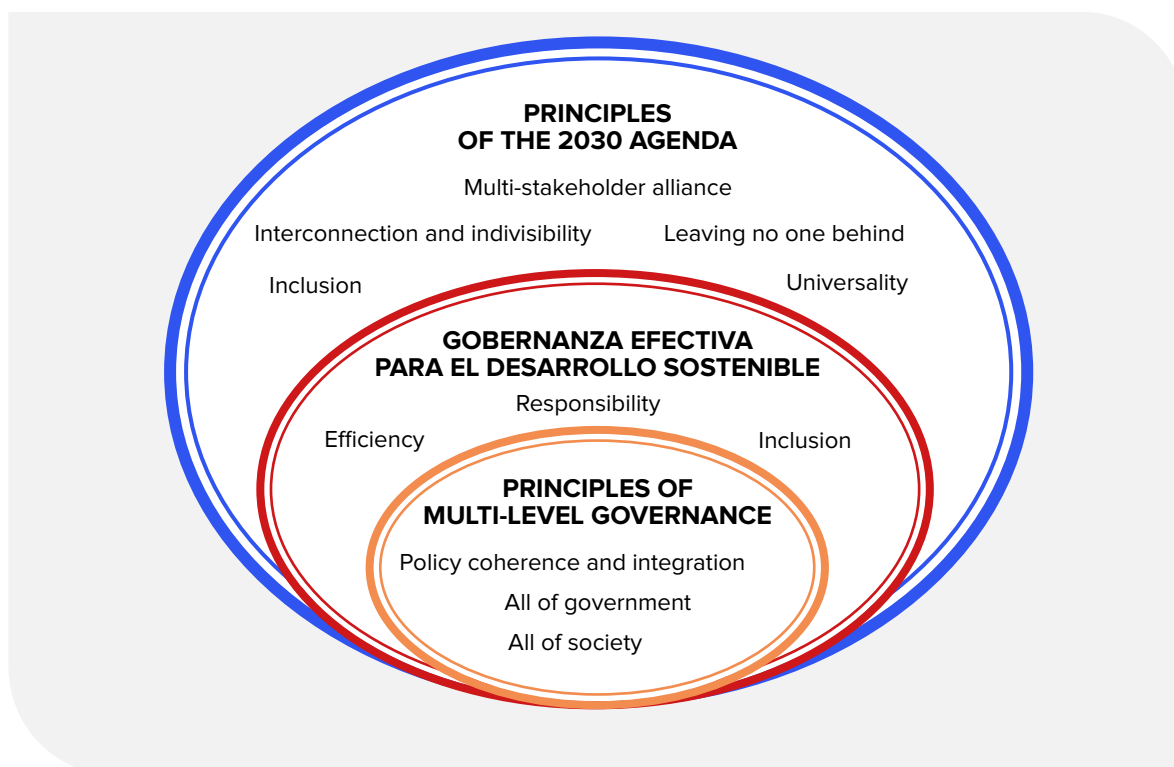
Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, 2022:19.

In line with this, the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) platform defines multi-level governance as a decision-making system that relies on coordination mechanisms to allocate competencies and responsibilities, both vertically and horizontally, respecting the principle of subsidiarity and guaranteeing local autonomy. Key features of multi-level governance include shared decision-making at different territorial levels, the interconnectedness of political arenas rather than nested actors, and an increasing interdependence both vertically between actors and horizontally between governmental and non-governmental entities (UCLG, 2021:5).

1.3. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK ON MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE FOR SDG LOCALIZATION

Local, subnational and national governments need to advance conceptualization, analysis, evidence and guidance processes to develop effective multi-level governance systems for the implementation of the SDGs. So far, there has been extensive debate on this topic and various conceptual frameworks have been proposed for multi-level governance in relation to the SDGs. While most of these frameworks have focused primarily on the national level, they also address key aspects of coordination with other levels (UN-Habitat, 2022:24-26). A review in the context of the SDG localization process and policy coherence and integration for sustainable development highlights three main dimensions: vertical integration, horizontal integration and participation of the stakeholders (Table 1). These dimensions reflect the main driving factors and orientations of the 2030 Agenda, which call on governments to achieve effective implementation of the SDGs: mainstreaming them at all levels of government; overcoming sectoral boundaries and addressing the interconnected nature of the SDGs; and facilitating inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes.

Table 1. *Multi-level governance systems for SDG localization: Dimensions and driving factors*

Dimension	Driving Factors
Vertical Integration	Structured mechanisms and arrangements for the alignment and coordination of sustainable development strategies and policies at all levels of government • Appropriate national frameworks (e.g., legal, political, fiscal), due to common strategic vision and objectives, as well as high-level commitment. • Recognition of the key role of subnational governments and identified territory-based priorities. • Effective legal and regulatory instruments with multi-level coordination structures. • Appropriate resources, capacities and mandates to operationalize coordination in the planning, implementation, follow-up, monitoring and review of the SDGs. • Collaboration among subnational governments to enhance local-national dialogue and for joint advocacy with national institutions and international organizations.
Horizontal Integration	Structured mechanisms to allow interrelationships between policy sectors and domains • Inter-agency and intra-agency collaboration mechanisms to address SDGs in a holistic way and guide policy integration to capitalize on interconnections and synergies between policy areas. • Reengineering of institutional architecture and inter-institutional coordination to foster innovation towards a systemic approach, avoiding isolated efforts by single institutions and resistance in other parts of the system. • Collaboration between subnational governments to enable peer-to-peer sharing, capacity building, joint policies and services, etc.

Stakeholder participation	Structured mechanisms to enable full participation and cooperation among societal stakeholders in decision-making for SDG implementation at all levels
	• Social awareness, commitment, ownership and consensus on integrated visions and strategies.
	• Formalized participatory processes and mechanisms to shape the setting of priorities and the implementation of sustainable development plans.
	• Synergies and complementarities through the active contribution of resources and knowledge, and the co-creation of solutions by different actors.
	• Exchange of information with the general public, fostering transparency and
	• accountability.

Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, 2022:25.

In summary, these three key dimensions—vertical integration, horizontal integration and stakeholder engagement—encompass the essential interrelated features of multi-level governance (MLG) systems for SDG localization. Each dimension is concretized through specific tools that contribute to achieving greater policy coherence and integration, which in turn responds effectively to the corresponding sustainable development challenge (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Dynamic representation of multi-level governance systems for SDG localization*
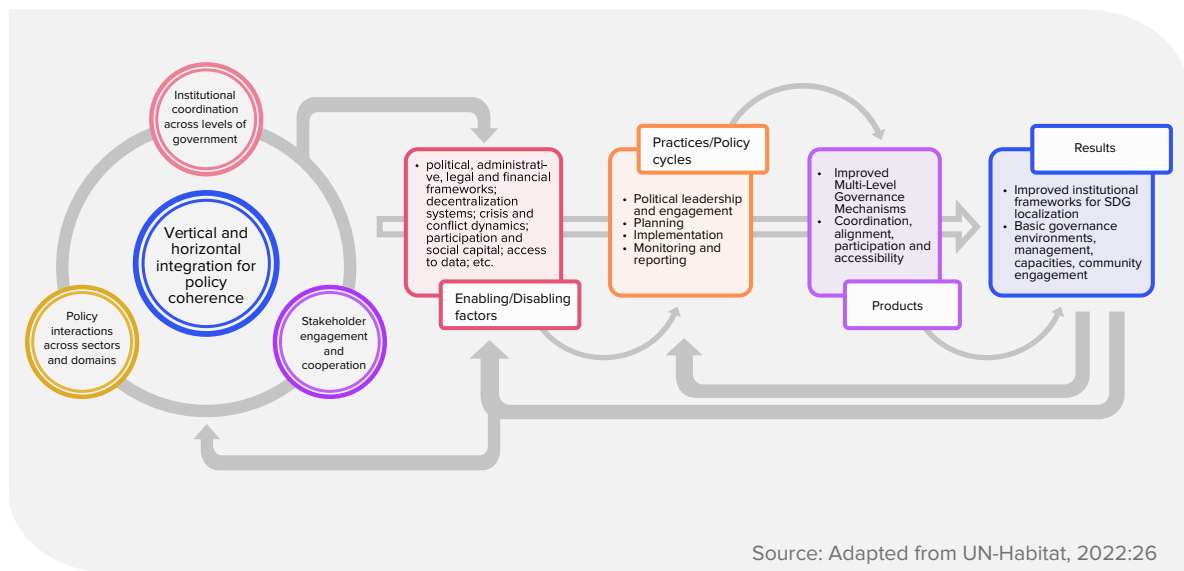
Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat, 2022:26

This conceptual framework provides the starting point for an analysis on the relationship between multi-level governance and SDG localization, aiming to evaluate trends and practices and derive action-oriented recommendations, especially in terms of innovations implemented to comprehensively address the challenges to sustainable development in the region.

For this purpose, the proposed framework connects:

| The key dimensions of multi-level governance processes, as a result of policy integration and coherence paradigms | → | The principles and conditions that become specific practices; and | → | The outputs and results obtained, in terms of capacities and enhanced functionalities for localizing the SDGs. |
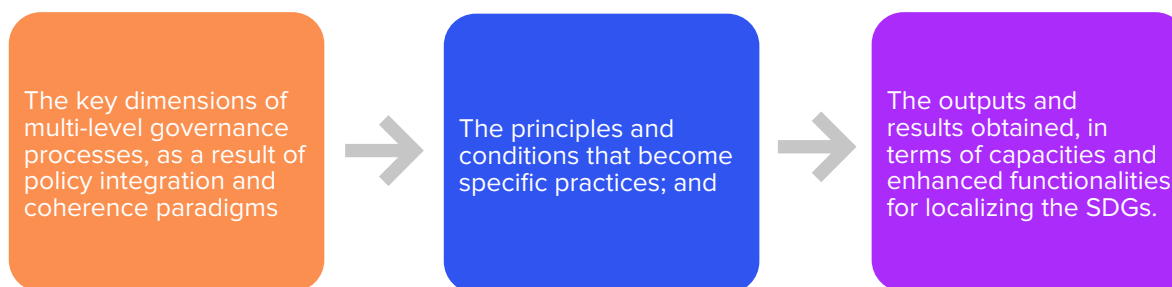
A place-based territorial approach considers territories as dynamic entities made up of interconnected functions and relationships. This involves the implementation of integrated and coordinated actions, designed to address the particularities of a specific city, region or locality, taking advantage of its endogenous development potentials and using a variety of instruments and actions, such as investment in human capital, infrastructure, business support, research and innovation, among others. Place-based policies seek to move beyond sector-wide approaches, adopt context-sensitive interventions, and foster policy formulation and implementation from a bottom-up perspective. Therefore, this notion is closely linked to the SDG localization paradigm.

The key challenge lies in reconciling the many local processes, which are often spontaneous, dynamic and innovative, with the broader institutional arrangements at different levels of government, in order to achieve properly integrated multi-level and multi-actor governance systems. In this regard, the dissemination of integrated review and monitoring systems plays a crucial role. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) are highlighted as relevant practices. Their potential to link local/subnational review processes with greater policy coherence and integration mechanisms paves the way for the improvement of effective multi-level governance systems for localizing the SDGs.

1.4. THEREFORE, WITHIN THIS DOCUMENT'S FRAMEWORK: WHAT DO WE UNDERSTAND BY INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE?

Within the framework of this report, we understand innovations in local governance as the set of actions and initiatives that promote novel solutions and new ideas to address complex problems and meet needs at the subnational level. These innovations seek to generate public, civic and social value, foster collaborative and horizontal work dynamics, use innovative approaches, methodologies and tools (such as digital technologies and data) and put people and development actors at the centre of attention. The goal is to build strong ecosystems that underpin effective, open, resilient and inclusive institutions.

Local governance refers to interactions between actors at the subnational level, ranging from local governments to the private sector, civil society and community-based organizations. It is the set of institutions, systems and processes at the subnational level, through which local authorities interact and provide services to local citizens, groups and communities. In turn, these actors articulate their interests and needs, resolve their differences, and exercise their rights, duties, and obligations.

Although there are various debates and approaches regarding the concepts of governability and governance, in this document we adopt the interpretation proposed by UNDP and International IDEA (2022), which conceives governability as a broader dimension of governance and emphasizes the importance of understanding it as a political and social process in which power relations are built, decisions are made and actions are implemented to achieve sustainable development and meet the needs of the population. Namely:[2]

> "**Governance** refers to a series of (inter)actions between state and non-state actors to formulate and implement social, economic, and institutional policies and reforms related to the access and/or exercise of power, with the objective of improving the governability of democratic political systems. **Governability** is a quality: societies are more or less governable depending on the presence, capacity and quality of several factors, among others: optimal and equitable conditions for human, social and economic development; well-financed States with the capacity to exercise effective control over their territories, and a consolidated rule of law that guarantees the principle of legality and the administration of justice, among others. Finally, **to govern** is the action carried out by those who exercise political power, regardless of the processes used to gain access to power." (IDEA and UNDP, 2022:11).

In this document, both definitions of governability and governance will be used under the term 'governance', emphasizing that the effective local governability approach is critical to promoting, strengthening and developing democratic governability frameworks under which our institutions and political-administrative systems operate in the region. Special stress will be placed on the territorial scope and the localization processes of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at regional and local levels. The objective is to contribute to improving governability and ensuring compliance with the SDGs in the region.

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2   In this sense, IDEA and UNDP state that "There are as many types of governance as there are thematic, territorial or temporal emphases. Thus, for example, the effective governance agenda focuses on human development, socioeconomic development and institutional strengthening in order to improve governability standards in both access to and the exercise of power in a broad sense. The democratic governance agenda focuses on substantive and procedural issues to improve standards of democratic governability in both access to and exercise of democratic power. Both democratic governance and effective governance can focus on the formulation and implementation of policies for accessing and exercising political power. Likewise, in some issues there is an overlap between both agendas, so that it is not only possible to advance them jointly, but also in some contexts this is a necessary task. Governability depends on both governance and the action of governing. While governance can impact the action of governing, the latter also has a direct and independent influence on governability, without necessarily being mediated by governance." (IDEA and UNDP, 2022).

1.5. DECENTRALIZATION AS THE KEY PENDING LINK

With notable differences in the emphases, scope and diversity of initiatives, the issue of decentralization in the region, based on the experience of UNDP country offices, is an element that requires a deeper and more integrated level of analysis and concern, since it is one of the most relevant outstanding debts to promote fair and equitable development that leaves no one behind in the territorial realm.

Most of the initiatives or responses promoted by UNDP offices in the region are directly related to contributing to improve the management capacities and institutional strengthening of subnational entities, especially municipalities and local governments in the region.

Costa Rica is working to strengthen capacities linked to the transfer of competencies and resources from the Executive Branch to municipalities.

Chile is undertaking efforts to strengthen the planning and development of public policies at the regional level.

Venezuela is promoting a programme to train local government officials in municipal public management, as well as the design and implementation of local development plans aligned with the 2030 agenda, to address public problems in coordination with local actors.

Countries such as the **Dominican Republic** have promoted support strategies in key areas of territorial development, in terms of productive promotion and social cohesion.

Paraguay has held localization experiences on business sustainability in Alto Paraná.

Bolivia is collaborating with the municipal associative system and territorial entities to strengthen their capacities for the exercise of their authority and to identify innovations to shorten and improve the impacts of public policies on issues such as solid waste, among others.

In **Brazil**, work is focused on regions with the lowest human development indices (preferably those in the Northeast and North) to improve the delivery of services and the quality of people's lives.

Peru is currently supporting the decentralization of the 'National Plan for Human Rights and Business', accompanying the Ministry of Justice and working with the private sector, workers' organizations, communities, etc. In addition, UNDP Peru is carrying out a technical support process for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM) in 'Territorial Management' projects with the Decentralization Secretariat, the State's governing body for decentralization, and in the 'Social Management and Dialogue' project with the State's conflict prevention unit[3].

1.5.1. DECENTRALIZATION AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: URUGUAY CASE STUDY

While Uruguay is recognized for its good standing in several metrics that evaluate democracy, institutional quality and the rule of law, among others, and enjoys relatively favourable socio-economic indicators in the regional context, it does show an uneven performance at the territorial level. It faces a 'geography of inequalities' within and between territories that results in a great paradox: while substantive progress in political, institutional, and administrative decentralization is recognized, there are challenges in budgetary matters, capacities, and institutional rigidities and inertia. For all these reasons, the territorial dimension is key to advancing on the path towards sustainable development.

In this context, our research identified structuring factors of territorial dynamics that must be addressed, including information asymmetries, inequality in access to opportunities and discontinuity of public services. Regarding these, their critical knots are due to gaps in: the capacity of subnational governments; coordination between levels of government; horizontal cooperation; and the promotion of innovation as a vector for transformation.

Faced with this scenario, we propose a systemic approach that allows for the analysis of the interrelations between the structuring elements of territorial dynamics and the layers of the system (social, economic, environmental), and the closing of gaps (in capacities, effective coordination, cooperation and innovation) in order to orient the UNDP strategy in the territory with a logic of decentralization (Figure 4). The territory is conceived as a platform for public policies to address challenges more effectively, promote effective governance and advance towards sustainable and inclusive development.

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3   Other interesting initiatives are reported, such as support to electoral bodies in the process of regional and municipal elections (2022); the education and training of indigenous candidates and authorities and community leaders, and the initiative of the Anti-Corruption Innovation Laboratory regarding the logistical procedures of local governments.

The guiding principles that shape the decentralization process and territorial strategy are:
- Systemic sustainability, promoting a balance between social, economic and environmental aspects.
- Social cohesion, promoting transformations that articulate territorial heterogeneity with a sense of community.
- Integration of conflict as an intrinsic dynamic of the territory.
- Urban-rural connection not only in the economic and service dimensions, but also as a shared identity (daily life).
- Innovation in the architecture of public policies, promoting lifelong learning and real-time qualitative data generation.

Figure 4. *Assumptions and work strategy on decentralization and territorial development in Uruguay*
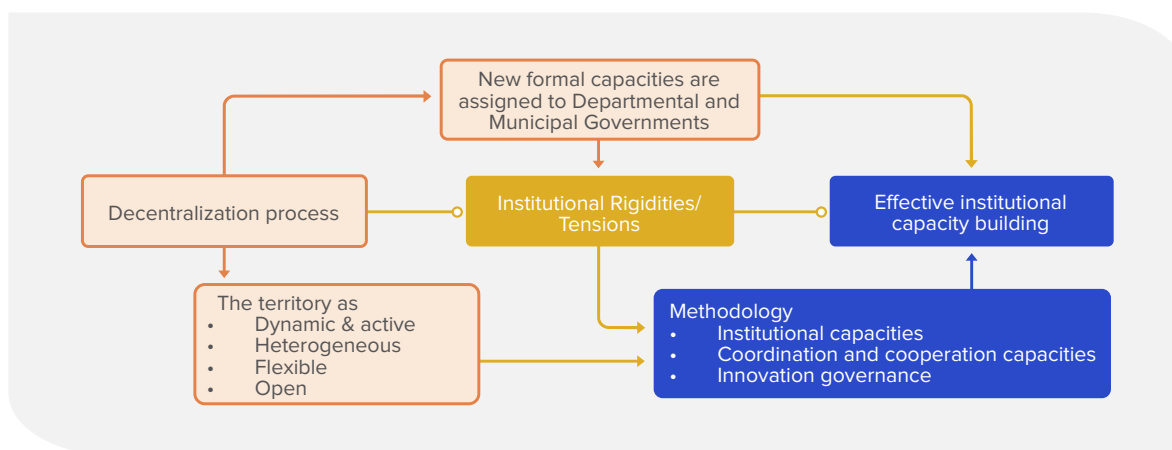
Source: UNDP, Uruguay, 2022.

In this approach, work in the area of institutional capacities stands out: boosting the creation of a Network of Development Bureaus for Departmental Municipalities (the ART Program); analysing expanded Social Protection Baskets and identifying implementation gaps in five departments, as well as supporting the development of the municipal Care Plan (both associated with the MPTF[4]); capacity-building of coastal cities on the Uruguay River for their adaptation to climate change (Uruguay-Argentina Regional Project); among others. At the same time, and in relation to coordination capacities and effective cooperation, support for the formation of networks of local actors for territorial development is promoted and support is provided to the Network of Development Directorates and Plenary of Municipalities. This is complemented by promoting value chains in protected areas; cross-border integration; positioning in international debates on local governance; and supporting departmental government strategies in localizing the SDGs and preparing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

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4   Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), a United Nations fund for projects that strengthen the socio-economic response to the COVID-19 emergency. In Spanish, for example, please visit: <uruguay.un.org/es/208803-estos-fueron-los-resultados-del-proyecto-del-for-talecimiento-de-la-respuesta-socioeconómica> (in Spanish).

1.5.2. MUNICIPAL FUNCTIONAL CAPACITIES INDEX METHODOLOGY: MEXICO CASE STUDY

Developed in the context of applying the Human Development Index (HDI) at the municipal level in Mexico, the Municipal Functional Capacities Index (ICFM for its Spanish initials) is a standout composite indicator that measures the degree of development of five functional capacities that are key in Mexican municipal public administrations and local governments. Each of the five functional capacities that make up the ICFM defines the following subscripts:

1. Capacities to engage relevant actors
2. Diagnostic Capabilities
3. Capacities to formulate policies and strategies
4. Budgeting, managing, and implementing capabilities
5. Assessment capacities (Table 2).

Table 2. *Municipal Functional Capacities Index (ICFM), Mexico*

Capacities to engage relevant actors	Measures whether municipalities have the capacity to identify and mobilize relevant actors, manage processes, and create collaboration mechanisms. This capacity is related to the coordination and mobilization of private and social sector actors. Composed of 10 indicators.
Diagnostic Capabilities	Ability to obtain, gather and disaggregate data and information; analyse and synthesize data and information; and translate this information into a vision and/or mandate. Composed of 20 indicators.
Capacities to formulate policies and strategies	Measures whether municipalities have the capacity to consider and analyse different solution options for each public problem, set objectives, develop sectoral and cross-cutting policies, as well as managing mechanisms to establish priorities. Composed of six indicators.
Budgeting, managing, and implementing capabilities	Describes and measures whether municipalities have the capacity to formulate, plan, manage and implement projects and programmes, including the preparation of a budget; assesses their capacities to manage human resources; and shows if they have indicators to monitor and follow-up progress. Composed of 10 indicators.
Assessment capacities	Measures whether municipalities have the capacity to quantify results, obtain feedback to adjust policies, codify lessons learned, promote learning, and ensure accountability to all actors involved. Composed of 10 indicators.

Source: adapted from UNDP, Mexico, 2020.

By generating an aggregate indicator that holistically addresses the work of local governments, this index offers an exciting and innovative metric that, from a theory of change linked to the MAPS approach and its application to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, allows us to assess the progress made by subnational public administrations, both in their capacities to comply with the different phases of the public policy cycle, and in the localization and integration of the SDGs. According to its data, 56% of the goals of municipalities in Mexico are related to the SDGs, considering 32 state entities and more than 2,460 municipalities.

1.5.3. DECENTRALIZATION AND TERRITORIAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: COLOMBIA CASE STUDY

The promotion of the Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT for its Spanish initials)[5], an initiative of Colombia's UNDP country office, is an interesting case which has managed to offer the Colombian government spaces to identify indicators, data and information based on the 2030 agenda, in order to support decentralization, SDG localization and information and data processes at the local, rural and territorial levels (Table 3). Furthermore, this index has supported census and information processes in coordination with the Colombia's Vice Presidency.

Table 3. *Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT), Colombia*

UNDP Colombia's Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT) is a strategy that deploys a powerful tool capable of measuring the performance of all municipalities and districts in Colombia in factors such as their capacities for public management; the quality of their democratic participation; their state of security, access to justice and social conflicts; and their efficiency in the provision of services and rights for the well-being of their communities. Evaluating these factors makes it possible to identify both the conditions of territorial governance and their results on the welfare of communities.

Among other things, the Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT) allows the following (Table 4):

1. To accurately define territorial prioritizations in order to focus sustainable development interventions.

2. To perform interventions based on evidence.

3. To guide the thematic work of the Democratic Governance Area (AGD for its Spanish initials).

4. To measure the results of UNDP interventions, taking a structural and comprehensive baseline as its starting point (contribution measurement).

5. To produce analyses on Democratic Governance in Colombia.

6. To develop municipal profiles/diagnostics and facilitate data access for SDG territorial agendas.

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5   www.undp.org/en/colombia/projects/democratic-territorial-governance-index.

Table 4. *Long-distance gaps: The performance of territorial governance is high in capital cities, but weak in dispersed rural territories and Future Zones*

Did you know that in Colombia, performance in territorial governance worsens as the territory is more rural and dispersed? On average, and according to UNDP Colombia's Territorial Democratic Governance Index, cities and large municipalities place their performance indicator at 60 points over 100, while dispersed rural municipalities score 53.6 points over 100; in territories with high vulnerability, such as Future Zones, this indicator drops to 28.9 points over 100.

This data, as of 2018, are the result of UNDP Colombia's Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT), a powerful tool capable of measuring the performance of all municipalities and districts in the country based on factors such as: their capacities in public management; the quality of their democratic participation; the state of their security, access to justice and social conflicts; and their efficiency in providing public services for the welfare of their communities. Evaluating these factors makes it possible to identify their conditions for territorial governance and their results for the well-being of communities.

The IGDT has the capacity to record data based on the population, location and sub-region of Colombia's territories, or even centred on special prioritizations such as PDET zones or Future Zones. The first IGDT measurement in 2021 revealed that the general score of all territorial entities in the country stood at 51.9 points out of a maximum of 100, on average.

Based on urban/rural categories, large cities and municipalities as well as large centralized agglomerations (e.g., major capitals) score an average of 59.5 points over 100. Intermediate municipalities and cities drop slightly to score 56.5 points over 100. And the next decline is visible when the measured territories are either rural or dispersed rural municipalities, which score 53.7 and 53.6 over 100, respectively.

Source: UNDP, Colombia, 2021.

2.

2. EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SDG LOCALIZATION

SDG localization is the comprehensive process of adapting, implementing and evaluating the Sustainable Development Goals at the local/territorial scale. In other words, it is necessary to translate global commitments into national and local goals adapted to very diverse national and regional realities. Localization considers subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the establishment of goals and targets, to the determination of means of implementation and strategies for monitoring progress. For this reason, it is essential to have subnational governments with adequate capacities to be able to promote effective local governance through the SDG localization process.

The process of localizing the SDGs makes it possible to materialize the purpose and roadmap of the 2030 Agenda which, on the one hand, promotes dialogue and agreements between territorial, national and global actors, and on the other, allows development planning with a comprehensive, inclusive, intersectoral, measurable, participatory and sustainable approach. In this sense, subnational governments are in an ideal position to implement the SDGs. In general, they include the role, functions and attributions to generate policies, projects and strategies for local development that encourage citizen participation and guide investment towards sustainable development.

At their minimum, even if they differ according to the country or institutional context in which the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are being promoted, SDG localization processes consider the identification of priority areas and application spheres of the SDGs in the territory (awareness-raising), to then articulate them with the set of policies, plans and programmes being carried out by the subnational government (advocacy), followed by the subsequent stages of implementation of initiatives and process monitoring and evaluation[6] (Figure 5).

Figure 5. *How is progress being made in localizing the SDGs?*

HOW IS PROGRESS BEING MADE IN LOCALIZING THE SDGS?

In order to support cities and local governments, progress must be made through a strategy to localize the SDGs at the subnational level, considering the particularities of each territory.

1 **AWARENESS-RAISING**: Getting to know the SDGs at subnational level

2 **ADVOCACY**: Including a subnational perspective in national SDG strategies.

3 **IMPLEMENTATION** The SDGs go local!

4 **MONITORING** Evaluating and learning from our experiences.

Source: UNDP, Chile, 2021.

6   For more details, please see Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: Implementation and monitoring at subnational level, Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UNDP and UN Habitat I, 2016. Available at <uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_localizing_the_sdgs_0.pdf>.

The concept of localizing the sustainable development agenda, understood as a process of adaptation of the global agenda to the characteristics and circumstances of each territory, is consubstantial with the need for the participation of the different actors that make up a community. However, the way in which these actors interrelate is very much determined by the institutions and political culture of each place. That is why the articulation of the way in which policies are defined will be conditioned by the economic and social structures of each location. In order for the agenda to be an appropriated by the agents operating in each territory, a dialogue between its multiple stakeholders will be necessary, leading to agreements that prioritize objectives and produce an action plan.

In any case, the process involves at least *promoting awareness, ownership and participation in order to localize the SDGs in the territory*. For example, in 2021, Chile proposed a programme for SDG localization in order to promote sustainable development from the territorial space.[7] The localization model consists of a roadmap to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the subnational level, to thus facilitate a recovery and development process that is sustainable, equitable, participatory and leaves no one behind.

As in other regional cases, Chile adjusted a methodology inspired by other countries to its local reality, focusing on SDG localization as the comprehensive process of adapting, implementing and evaluating SDGs at the local/territorial scale. This issue entails considering Chile's subnational contexts as *the* central axis to achieve the 2030 Agenda, from establishing goals and targets, to setting means of implementation and strategies to monitor progress. Within this framework, and with the purpose of advancing in the generation and acceleration of transformative solutions to local development challenges, a programmatic proposal is made available to facilitate cooperation between the different actors present in the territories (public and private sectors plus civil society), with the aim of progressing around five work modules (Figure 6).

Figure 6. *SDG localization: promoting sustainable development from the territory*

Source: UNDP, Chile, 2021.

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7   For further details please see: <www.undp.org/es/chile/news/pnud-chile-propone-su-programa-para-la-localización-de-los-ods-e-impulso-del-desarrollo-sostenible-desde-los-territorios> (in Spanish).

These modules include concrete actions to: identify development priorities and gaps; implement participatory processes; design innovative solutions to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; connect with local development stakeholders and public-private partnerships to mobilize resources; design monitoring and evaluation systems linked to progress on the SDGs; implement standards; and transfer capacities to strengthen the governance, management and transparency of local institutions and agencies.

2.1. TOWARDS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER AND MULTI-LEVEL APPROACH: THE TERRITORIALIZATION OF THE SDGS

SDG territorialization requires an inclusive approach that can leverage local resources and knowledge to adapt the ambitious 2030 development agenda to local realities from a global perspective. In other words, SDG localization involves the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational level by way of extensive stakeholder participation. Governments need the participation of all actors involved to ensure that the 2030 Agenda is truly transformative; it is therefore necessary to ground the agenda at the subnational level if we expect it to be truly owned and supported by all parties. If our goal is for the 2030 Agenda to be more than just a top-down vision, we need to involve each territory's citizens in every step of its implementation.

In SDG localization processes, local and regional governments play a decisive role, as they are the authorities closest to the citizenry and the institutions offering most of the necessary public services to the population. At the same time, it is also important to recognize the financial and technical constraints experienced at subnational levels, making it extremely important for local and regional governments (LRGs) to establish strategic partnerships, alliances and associations that support and promote their role in SDG implementation. Territories have always been hubs of innovation and are key elements in attracting financial and human resources to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational level. In this context, it is essential that all actors are aware of and sensitized to the challenges, outcomes, and good practices identified to achieve the SDGs. These Goals can only be attained through a multi-stakeholder approach with multi-level mechanisms that include the vision and voice of local, regional and national governments, as well as civil society, academia and the private sector.[8]

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8   Textual contribution by Juan Carlos López Cecilia, Local Governance & SDG Localizing Specialist – UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean (2022).

3.

3. INNOVATIONS IN EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, WITH A FOCUS ON SDG LOCALIZATION

A first look at the regional work reported by UNDP country offices shows interesting initiatives linked to emerging issues in the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of sustainable development, with various innovation components which are related to a scheme proposed by a previous study (UNDP, 2021). Many of these initiatives are the result of projects and/or actions that emerged from the repertoire of responses to the global health crisis and its complex effects on various policy areas, such as the recovery and resilience capacities of local economic systems, especially in the labour and productive spheres; the strengthening of capacities to leverage management processes in the territorial space; and the fields of gender and equality; among many others.

A large part of the initiatives reported in terms of SDG localization reveal, on the one hand, a relationship with the construction and implementation of dashboards or information and statistical data platforms that allow us to improve decision-making, refine the design and formulation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, on the whole, upgrade evidence-based policy design. On the other hand, other SDG localization initiatives exhibit the application of new methodologies, schemes and/or processes that strengthen management capacities to generate a multi-stakeholder and multi-level collaborative workspace in the territory, preferably focused on subnational—regional and local—levels. By way of illustration, Bolivia, Brazil and Panama stand out as examples of the first group of initiatives, while Costa Rica, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela are distinctive of the second group (Table 5).

Table 5. *Case studies and experiences of SDG localization in Latin America and the Caribbean*

Country	Reported initiatives, cases and experiences of interest
Bolivia	**Strengthening of statistical systems oriented towards the SDGs** to make development gaps visible; combining these gaps with a methodology developed for the formulation of multidimensional public policies allows for the design of multiple-impact public policy. The idea is to simultaneously accelerate impacts and strengthen the evidence-based public management approach resulting from new governance mechanisms.
Brazil	**'Human Development Atlas of Brazil'**, an online platform with more than 200 indicators linked to different dimensions of the HDI and the SDGs. This platform presents data for all 5,000 municipalities and 27 states in Brazil and can generate reports with a brief analysis of the human development situation of each municipality. Link to the Atlas: <www.atlasbrasil.org.br/>. **Leading for Development programme**, a training course for state and municipal managers on leadership and SDG localization, plus an online course on date use for localizing the SDGs, in partnership with the National School of Public Administration (ENAP for its Portuguese acronym)[9].

9 For further details, please consult the following site (in Portuguese): <www.enap.gov.br/pt/acontece/noticias/programa-lideran-do-para-o-desenvolvimento-esta-com-inscricoes-abertas-para-duas-novas-turmas>. These other sites (also in Portuguese) document the successful training of 900 municipal managers in Brazil: <enap.gov.br/es/?view=article&id=3563:programa-capacita-900-ges-tores-municipais&catid=12> and <www.enap.gov.br/pt/acontece/noticias/parceria-com-a-onu-garante-divulgacao-da-agenda-2030>.

Costa Rica	**Strengthening local governance capacities** by means of: (a) Support in the development of public policy instruments in the spirit of participatory construction, on issues such as citizen security and the prevention of violence, waste management and risk management. (b) Design and implementation of information systems for local management: municipal social management system through a digital platform for registering beneficiaries as well as for offering modules for the management and monitoring of programmes, with explicit integration of the SDGs as management and evaluation criteria.
Guyana	Support in the development of a **Regional Development Action Plan** (PADR for its Spanish initials) in one of Guyana's ten Regional Administrations in 2018/2019.
Mexico	**Implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the Subnational Level project**, which seeks to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs at the local level and strengthen the technical capacities and commitment of local actors to the sustainable development of the population in the states and municipalities of Mexico. The project employs the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach and integrates strategies for awareness/training, institutionalization, policy alignment and acceleration, as well as monitoring and evaluation[10]. **2030 Agenda: Planning and Management for Sustainable Development in Mexico course**, a 60-hour hybrid training programme consisting of four modules on the principles of the 2030 Agenda, planning, budgeting and open government[11]. Link to the course's website (in Spanish): <<u>agenda2030pnud.mx</u>>. **'Localization of the 2030 Agenda in Mexico'**, a publication on the state of the 2030 Agenda localization at the subnational level. This document systematizes the process of installation and operationalization of the Monitoring and Implementation Bodies (OSI for their Spanish acronym) of the 2030 Agenda at the state level, in order to generate greater knowledge regarding the design and potential of these bodies, as well as the possible challenges they may face. Link to the publication (in Spanish): <<u>www.mx.undp.org/content/mexico/es/home/library/democratic_governance/localizacion-de-la-agenda-2030-en-mexico.html</u>>. **'The Focus of the 2030 Agenda on Public Plans and Programmes in Mexico'**, a practical printed guide for government agencies at the national and subnational levels for the implementation of public plans and programmes with a focus on the 2030 Agenda. Link to the document (in Spanish): <<u>www.mx.undp.org/content/mexico/es/home/library/democratic_governance/el-enfoque-de-la-agenda-2030-en-planes-y-programas-publicos-en-m.html</u>>. **'Localizing the 2030 Agenda in Mexico's Local Congresses'**, a report that analyses the ways in which different local congresses in Mexico are incorporating interest in the 17 SDGs within their structures. It also identifies the comparative advantages and disadvantages of mainstreaming a sustainable development approach into legislative work. Link to the document (in Spanish): <<u>www.mx.undp.org/content/mexico/es/home/library/poverty/localizacion-de-la-agenda-2030-por-los-congresos-locales-en-mexi.html</u>>.
Panamá	**Regulatory Impact Analysis** (RIA[12]) processes, establishing an alignment between the country's policies, programmes and strategies with the SDGs, resulting in a 98% SDG alignment of the instruments promoted by the 'Projects for the Strengthening of Policy Stewardship' with Panama's Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Economy and Finance. Moreover, by accompanying the **'Plan Colmena'** ('Beehive Plan') poverty reduction strategy, this plan's 12 areas of intervention have been aligned with the 17 SDGs, taking into account territorial, gender and inclusion approaches.

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10   The project has partnered with a federal agency; together they have carried out actions with eight state governments and six municipal governments in which: more than 700 officials have been trained; 19 exercises (varied and diverse) have been carried out to evaluate programmes and policies; a project has been executed to accelerate the fulfilment of the SDGs at the regional level; and collaboration have been carried out to strengthen development planning exercises and their monitoring systems at the local level.

11   A similar course was designed for civil society organizations (CSOs) to help them incorporate the human rights-based approach and the 2030 Agenda into the development of their projects. Likewise, from the Management Initiatives project, initiatives are carried out to localize and mainstream the focus of the 2030 Agenda in the Legislative Branch field.

12   A tool that seeks to ensure that public policy decisions and regulations adopted by authorities are based on a rigorous cost-benefit analysis.

Paraguay	**Set of trainings on business sustainability for the business sector of the Department of Alto Paraná**, offering a first general approach to the SDGs; subsequently emphasizing sustainable development goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production); and ultimately aligning the SDGs with the ISO 14001 environmental management standards, aiming to conclude 2022 with between 5 and 10 baselines and medium-term action plans towards the fulfilment of the SDGs.
Perú	**Support for MAPA, an organization that promotes children's learning through creativity**, which has generated activities linked to the SDGs through the installation of a cardboard city for children, initially installed in Lima, the country's capital, which will now reach the departments of Ñeembucú and Boquerón del Chaco, thus favouring girls and boys from an indigenous community. **Red Pública**, a platform that identifies and advocates for citizen proposals aligned with the SDGs at the territorial level, as well as the construction of public agendas in 14 regions of the country. Parallel to that, Red Pública promotes the development of social innovation projects aligned with the SDGs in the regions of Lima, Arequipa and Cajamarca. **Measurement, Action and Financing of the SDGs project**, as well as another programme on the results of SDG localization, implemented by the Municipality of Lima using a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) strategy and the introduction of the SDGs in Lima's Concerted Development Plan. Add to this Lima's attainment of UNDP's Gender Equality Seal in Public Institutions and this city's support for UNDP's Regional Strategy for Human Mobility and Sustainable Development, with an emphasis on socioeconomic integration.
Dominican Republic	**Territorialization of the 2030 Agenda in times of COVID**, a project which has been implemented mainly in the municipalities of Barahona, Polo and Vicente Noble through their local Economic and Social Development Councils, in which multi-actor and multi-level territorial platforms have been promoted for SDG localization, connecting diverse yet decisive actors in the advancement of the 2030 Agenda in the territory[13]. This has involved planning exercises that have used the SDGs and their targets to guide the development of diagnoses and the definition of proposals for action, putting people's needs at the centre and as a result obtaining more comprehensive, inclusive and precise plans regarding the development challenges in each municipality and the strategies to address them.
Uruguay	**Voluntary Local Review (VLR) on SDG localization in the Municipality of Canelones**; a similar process is being developed in the Municipality of Paysandú.
Venezuela	**Strategy for SDG promotion and localization in municipalities** (2018), based on multi-actor dialogues, identification of local public problems aligned with the SDGs, and articulation for solutions. Even though effective responses to the identified problems became a bottleneck due to a lack of resources and capacities at the local level, municipalities and their actors made some progress regarding agreements on specific decisions and management-level actions. **Monthly report of indicators on failures in the provision of basic services and the SDGs,** developed via Twitter at the national, state and municipal levels.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on a questionnaire responded by regional focal points and a review of UNDP country offices' websites.

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13   In the Dominican context, these platforms are mainly built on the foundation of the Economic and Social Development Councils, since the latter enjoy the participation of local governments, sectoral government entities, organized associations and collectives, and civil society organizations, among others, driving and promoting the principles of the 2030 Agenda. This work has made it possible to support spaces for dialogue for the formulation of Municipal Development Plans in municipalities in the south of the country, such as Polo and Vicente Noble. For example, in these targeted municipalities comprehensive proposals include: solid waste management; generating capacities for risk management in the face of climatic events; generating job opportunities and employment connectivity for young people, especially women; among others.

4.

4. THE ROAD TOWARDS SDG INTEGRATION IN THE REGION

One of the most relevant elements in the process of achieving sustainable development relates to ensuring that the initiatives deployed are not only appropriate, consistent and coherent with the achievement of the SDGs, but that, from a form and substance point of view, there is neither fragmentation nor insularity among the measures promoted by countries in their commitment to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, that these measures, policies, programmes and/or projects are configured from a sphere of design, implementation and (potential) evaluation that considers their mutual integration. A comprehensive, holistic and transversal view is a fundamental basic element and can be, at the same time, a guarantee that lets us avoid and mitigate any possible overlapping, duplication or unnecessary wear and tear, both in the design but especially in the implementation of these initiatives.

For this reason, UNDP supports countries through the worldwide implementation of integrated solutions to respond to complex development challenges and accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs. To this end, a systematic effort is underway to apply four workflows devoted to help countries develop integrated solutions. These workflows do not focus on individual SDGs, but rather on the gaps between them—the missing pieces that can make the entire 2030 Agenda possible (Figure 8). These four components are: (a) Integrated policy and programming; (b) Innovation and learning; (c) Data and analysis; and (d) Financing.

Figure 7. *SDG Integration workflows and components*

Source: Adapted from SDG Integration, 2022.

A case study that helps us understand the systemic and transversal nature of an effective governance approach and the SDG localization process is Brazil. Applying the SDG integration workflow, UNDP Brazil breaks down and synthesises its agenda through all four workflow components and their respective actions. Brazil furthermore adds the issue of advocacy as a thematic axis that extends and promotes the 2030 Agenda and sets the focus on broadening citizen appropriation and ownership of sustainable development topics (Table 6).

Table 6. *UNDP Brazil office work agenda, 2023*

Integrated policy and programming	- MAPS mission, 2018 (State of Piauí), a methodology repeated in 2019 in the State of Amazonas. - Support for the National SDG Commission (until its extinction by presidential decree in 2019). - Subnational SDG planning: Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) in three states (Paiuí, Maranhão, Mato Grosso); four projects under implementation (one municipal, three in states: Mato Grosso, Amazonas, Piauí) and two in design phase (municipalities of Salvador and Osasco). - Portfolio alignment to the SDGs and multisectoral approach, Executive Branch: small and family farming (productivity, management, gender, youth, environment, COVID response). - Indigenous peoples (productive inclusion; food security; sustainable production; basic human rights; free, prior and informed consent or FPIC). - Solid waste management and sanitation (leave no one behind or LNOB approach, subnational management capacities, economic sustainability, knowledge and solutions, private sector participation and monitoring). - Resilient women, resilient cities (health and well-being, security and gender-based violence, social policy network, employment, remuneration and productive inclusion). - Management of coastal areas (manguezais or mangrove forests: production capacities, sustainable planning and management, preservation of biodiversity). - Portfolio alignment to the SDGs and multisectoral approach, Subnational Executive Branch: municipality of Salvador: Social Policies—LNOB, Data & Analysis, Financing/PPPs, RIA+Planning+Accelerators; municipality of Osasco: integrated LNOB policy 'packages', SDG planning, integrated management capabilities, SDG talent management, participatory monitoring; State of Piauí: SDGs Territorial Development Planning and Policies, Resilient Women; Water Security, Sustainable Agriculture; Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Nordeste (Sudene/NE, Superintendency for the Development of the Northeast)—Regional Planning, Cities as Agents of Innovation and Development, Sustainable Finance/SDGs, Sustainable Value Chains. - Portfolio alignment with the SDGs and multisectoral approach, Judiciary Branch: - The Comitê Interinstitucional or Inter-Institutional Committee for the integration of the SDGs in judiciary planning in Brazil: a proposal for the integration of the goals of the Judiciary with the goals and indicators of the SDGs. - SDG Innovation and Intelligence Laboratory (LIODS) within the scope of the Conselho Nacional de Justiça (CNJ, Brazil's National Council of Justice), conducting studies and analyses to identify actions of the Brazilian Judiciary that contribute to the SDGs and monitoring the progress of the Brazilian Judiciary towards the established goals. - Goal 9 was instituted in the area of strategic planning of the Judiciary, which deals with the integration of the 2030 Agenda in the Judiciary and actions to prevent or dejudicialize litigation processes linked to the SDGs.

Innovation and learning	• Training courses (online and face-to-face) in Territorialization and Acceleration of the SDGs (with Petrobras, Brazil's national petroleum corporation): 27,000 visits and participations, 5,000 certificates, updated version to be launched in April 2023 in the Amazonas region; in partnership with energy company Neoenergia. • 2030 Agenda course at the Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP, National School of Public Administration, in partnership with the United Nations System Staff College, UNSSC), launched in 2022. • Course on the 2030 Agenda for Cooperatives (with the Organização das Cooperativas Brasileiras (OCB, the Organization of Brazilian Cooperatives) in 2021. • Course on SDGs for NGOs and CSOs & Multipliers (with ENAP and Petrobras). • Courses in partnership with Rede ODS Brasil (parliaments, coastal management, SDG community activists). • Multiple courses in collaboration with universities and CSO networks. • Innovation Challenge (12 cases selected, funded and under follow-up). • Participation in awards for SDG solutions and innovative technologies (SDG Award, FBB Awards, others). • Various hackathons (Campus Party, Hackcovid19, Hackfest).
Data and analysis	• Human Development Atlas of Brazil, <www.atlasbrasil.org.br>. • International Futures • COVID-19 Panels • Subnational diagnostics (219) • SAO Piauí <piaui.org.br> • West Paraná <oestepr2030.org.br> • With the following institutions of Internal and External Control: • TCU - FISC Nordeste: federal financing and SDG gaps. • TCE-SP: Observatory of the Future (SDG monitoring platform for the state and municipalities of São Paulo). • Support for the Voluntary National SDG Report in 2017. • Mobilization of subnational governments/institutions for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews.
Financing	• SDG impact investment pilot programme. • SDG Financing: mapping traditional and innovative solutions (with the Secretaria de Governo do Brasil, Paraná, SEGOV/PR - 2021/2022). • Financing for the Bioeconomy (Biodiversity Finance Initiative, BIOFIN). • APP in the provision of public services and infrastructure (Mato Grosso do Sul, DF, Salvador). • Private Sector Engagement: SDG Compass, Iniciativa Incluir (Include Initiative), Mining and SDGs, Cooperatives and SDGs.
Advocacy	• Advocacy Campaign with broadcaster Rede Globo and actor Mateus Solano (2017, 2018). • Photographic exhibition on Avenida Paulista in São Paulo with the União Geral de Trabalhadores, the General Union of Workers, May 2017 (2.5km/day). • "Best Photo of SDG 6" contest (2018). • Planet SDG at the Brasilia Planetarium during the 8th World Water Forum. • Virada Sustentável (Sustainable Turning Point) in São Paulo (2019-2022), <www.viradasustentavel.org.br>. • Virada ODS (SDG Turning Point) with the City of São Paulo (2022), <viradaodssp.sp.gov.br>.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on inputs provided by the UNDP Brazil team, 2023.

Various initiatives in SDG integration have been developed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Within the framework of the previously mentioned workflow matrix, nine relevant case studies were reported on how to boost and promote sustainable development integration in various parts of this region (Table 7).

Table 7. *SDG Integration snapshots in Latin America and the Caribbean (2022)*

Institution	Country	SDG Integration Component
Improving mobility to cope with rapid urbanization. In 2018, 70% of Bolivians lived in urban areas, with projections showing growth to 75% by 2025 and to 80% by 2050. Rapid urbanization is straining mobility systems and worsening air pollution, quality of life, and access to public services, services which mostly affect vulnerable populations. To build a resilient, inclusive and sustainable city, UNDP is supporting Bolivia in redesigning urban life in its capital, La Paz.	Bolivia	Integrated policy and programming
Expanding social protection during COVID-19. Expanding access to social protection is critical to addressing the many faces of poverty, inequality and exclusion, and building a more resilient and inclusive growth model. In Colombia, the Más Familias en Acción (More Families in Action) integrated social protection system, which covers health, social security and education, has helped 3.4 million people out of income poverty and 1.9 million people out of extreme poverty between 2010 and 2018. Due to multidimensional poverty around the world, millions were uninsured when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and face growing risks of falling into the poverty trap.	Colombia	Integrated policy and programming

Data and analysis

Responses |
| **Mapping essential life support areas.** Costa Rica's rich ecosystems provide a range of vital services, from food supply to air filtration. The country's mangrove forests protect coastlines from storm surges, prevent erosion, sequester carbon and filter water. But pressures on and degradation of these vital ecosystems pose an existential threat to the health, wealth, and security of Costa Ricans. Credible, high-quality data that can map these issues could drive better decision-making and reporting, and help the country impel progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). | Costa Rica | Data and analysis |
| **Groundbreaking data helps fight child malnutrition.** In Honduras, 62% of the population lives below the national poverty line, and women and children are among the most vulnerable groups. Widespread poverty is at the root of chronic malnutrition and food insecurity: approximately one in four children is stunted or chronically malnourished. With increased exposure to extreme weather events and longer droughts, which affect agriculture and food production, an integrated response is needed to address the many issues that contribute to child malnutrition. | Honduras | Integrated policy and programming

Data and analysis |
| **Shift the economic base from extractive activities to knowledge.** In July 2019, Uruguay and Finnish multinational UPM signed a USD 3.3 billion deal to build a greenfield eucalyptus cellulose pulp plant near the city of Paso de los Toros. This is the largest foreign direct investment in the country's history, which is estimated to generate thousands of new jobs and increase GDP. However, with such a large investment comes the possibility of negative externalities and missed opportunities. UNDP is helping Uruguay build on this investment's momentum to design a more sustainable future, focusing on economic diversification, local knowledge and solid environmental policies. | Uruguay | Integrated policy and programming

Data and analysis |

New partnerships and financial instruments help tackle COVID-19's repercussions. The Government of Paraguay took swift action to limit the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Focusing on saving lives, strict lockdown measures helped flatten the infection curve. However, these measures led to a slowdown in the economy, which hit the informal sector particularly hard. A large proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are at risk of bankruptcy and workers in the informal sector who have no savings or other sources of income could fall into poverty or suffer food insecurity.	Paraguay	Financing COVID-19 Response
Addressing COVID-19 with nature and people at the centre. In Peru, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gaps in access to information and basic services, including public health, for more than 2,000 indigenous communities living in the heart of the Amazon. There, fewer than one in three communities have direct access to hospitals and fewer than one in 100 have adequate containment capacities. With a collapsed public health system, a lack of effective communication channels, and the ever-increasing threat of climate change, joint and rapid action is needed more than ever.	Peru	Integrated policy and programming
The index to climate hazards helps build resilient communities. In 2017, the Global Climate Index ranked the Dominican Republic as the eleventh most vulnerable country to climate change; previously, between 1997 and 2016, it had ranked the island nation as one of the ten countries most affected by climate events. The synergies between poverty reduction and climate change adaptation are particularly relevant in this context, since around 30% of the Dominican population lives below the national poverty line, and is thus in even greater vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather.	The Dominican Republic	Integrated policy and programming Data and analysis
Building sustainable societies through risk-based planning. Small, developing island States such as Jamaica, the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands are highly vulnerable to natural disasters, with serious environmental, social and economic consequences. Estimates show an average annual loss of 2% of GDP in Jamaica due to disasters; meanwhile, damage caused by Hurricane Dorian in 2019 amounted to USD 3.4 billion in the Bahamas alone. Through prevention, mitigation, adaptation and preparation, at-risk countries and communities will save money, resources, and most importantly, lives.	The Caribbean: Jamaica, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands	Integrated policy and programming

Source: Adapted from SDG Integration, 2022.

5.

5. UNDP ACCELERATOR LABS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

UNDP has a network of 91 Accelerator Labs around the world[14], serving 115 countries. The Labs main purpose is to contribute to building new capacities to achieve progress in the future of development, by attending to inequality, decarbonization, the fourth industrial revolution and new forms of governance. Issues such as migration, water, accelerated urbanization, transportation, health, and crises of violence are some of the challenges that are addressed from these spaces, with non-traditional, experimental, technological, and participatory approaches which serve as a platform to design and co-create solutions from a collaborative dynamic, with a multi-actor and multi-level focus that allows responses to increasingly complex public policy challenges (Figure 9).

Figure 8. *UNDP Accelerator Labs*

Source: UNDP, 2022.

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14   For more details, please visit <www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs>.Today, UNDP's Accelerator Labs are the world's largest and fastest learning network on the complex challenges of sustainable development. Built jointly as a venture with Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Qatar's Development Fund, the network is comprised of 91 Lab teams covering 115 countries and leverages local innovations to create practical knowledge and reimagine sustainable development for the 21st century. Each Lab is made up of three team members: the head of solution mapping, the head of experimentation, and the head of exploration.

The Accelerator Labs were established in 2019 to change the way UNDP develops new learning and response capacities to achieve the SDGs, due to the speed, dynamics and complexity of the challenges currently faced around the world. The Labs operate as an agile incubator of ideas and solutions, collaborating with diverse actors and forging new partnerships to make better progress on complex global challenges. In Latin America and the Caribbean there are seven Labs (Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia, Mexico, Dominican Republic and Barbados), and another eight have begun operations in recent years (Bolivia, Uruguay, Peru, Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Guyana/Trinidad and Tobago).[15]

The Labs not only function as a hybrid workspace, which allows for the incorporation of an experimental approach to UNDP's work, but also as a way to rethink the dynamics of citizen participation beyond traditional or vertical consultative approaches that only "extract" data from citizens, moving towards the deployment of platforms that allow working with collective intelligence and thus catalyse capacities available in society to solve complexities. As reflected in a May 2022 report, Accelerator Labs have been working to generate constructive and respectful spaces, listen to voices and document citizens' perspectives in order to advance dialogue on policies, identify key issues, and co-create solutions to development challenges (UNDP, 2022).

Lab initiatives (Table 8) cover a wide range of development policy areas (from waste management to family health, energy and extractive industries) and seek to engage a comprehensive range of citizens (from youth to indigenous groups and women) by using various tools (from mobile apps and digital platforms to multi-stakeholder workshops and co-creation processes involving ideation, prototyping and testing of solutions).

Table 8. *Mapping of relevant initiatives of the UNDP Accelerator Labs in Latin America and the Caribbean (2019-2022)*

Country	Brief specific description of the progress of these various initiatives in each country
Argentina	Its Lab has worked on citizen participation, focusing on addressing misinformation and promoting environmental policies. In the former, it centred on testing a participatory digital tool allowing people to flag harmful content on the Internet. On the environmental front, its Lab explored new sources of participatory air quality data created with open hardware, mapped citizen science projects that could contribute to innovative national and local policies, and assessed household waste and aquatic ecosystems through participatory experiments.
Bolivia	Its Lab works on catalytic mechanisms that facilitate citizen participation, aimed at effective decision-making based on the co-creation of solutions, using technology and information and reducing technological gaps to allow its citizens to be the centre of their own development and thus move towards an inclusive city concept with effective governance mechanisms. Its Lab is also working on the generation of data and the use of information for development planning in the municipalities (as in the case of Santa Cruz).
Colombia	Its Accelerator Lab has worked on several initiatives related to citizen participation, including: developing a system to enable better communication both to as well as from communities; evolving tools to compare and contrast what citizens say on the streets with what they share on social media; proposing challenges to gather collective intelligence from the population related to various topics (including public health in the context of COVID-19 and employment informality); and generating tools to empower citizens and avoid navigating misinformation.

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15   Accelerator Lab network map: <www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs/our-locations>.

Ecuador	As part of its Lab's strategy to promote open innovation as a mechanism to accelerate the SDGs, four innovation challenges have been implemented through its Thinkia Innovation Lab initiative. These innovation challenges have allowed more than 200 people to learn about youth labour informality, plastic pollution and the fishing industry's bycatch in ocean environments, chronic child malnutrition and climate change. Ecuadorians have acquired new skills by engaging with innovative methodologies such as design thinking, systems thinking and behavioural science. This experience allowed UNDP to provide technical assistance to implement a Citizen's Lab at the national level within the Ecuador Open Government framework. Now Thinkia Lab is transitioning to become a Citizen's Lab. Additionally, Ecuador's Accelerator Lab has been developing the Minga of Community Innovation project (based on the Quechua minga concept of voluntary collaborative work, hereby expressed as a grass-roots innovation challenge) with four markets in Quito, involving vendors, students, municipal officials and traditional healers. These market communities are adapting popular education tools to design thinking and have created solutions and prototypes and are developing a pre-product for solve the common challenges confronting market suppliers. Flowers in the Air, another Accelerator Lab project, involves families who have lost a daughter, a sister, a niece, a family member to femicide. Flowers in the Air has helped them map the routes of memory, (in)justice and community response.
Guatemala	The Lab co-designed a transition plan to implement the latest national solid waste management regulations (launched in August 2021). This transition plan involved a participatory process that generated a set of actions which will be necessary to ensure compliance with the aforementioned regulations, from the perspective of citizens and local governments. The Lab is also involving volunteer organizations in development activities.
Haiti	Haiti's Accelerator Lab has worked in waste management. Through its journey to address this challenge, the Lab has come to understand that the country may not be able to achieve waste management goals without citizen involvement.
Honduras	Its Lab involved Honduran youth in various stages throughout the development of the country's Human Development Report. It has also led several related initiatives, such as collecting data on youth perceptions, promoting youth participation in a national development council, investing in youth empowerment, and facilitating youth participation in the co-creation of policy proposals.
Mexico	The Mexican Accelerator Lab has led citizen engagement initiatives related to several lines of work, including: establishing public consultations as the best space for constructive dialogue and debates on development and mining projects; promoting neighbourhood-level social ties to contribute to the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis; identifying collaboration opportunities between citizen initiatives and Mexico City's Secretariat for Comprehensive Risk Management regarding different stages and types of risks; and conducting a series of regional dialogues with women to inform a feminist stance on international relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Panama	Its Lab has made used of citizen science to monitor and analyse marine debris on the beaches of three Panamanian districts. This initiative also served to educate and empower citizens, influence national public policy to further reduce marine debris, and contribute to the information base for monitoring the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 14. UNDP Panama has worked to promote a more inclusive and participatory, bottom-up, citizen-centred approach to decision-making processes. In line with this mission, its Accelerator Lab developed Ágora, a participatory online portal (proposed by Panama's Bicentennial Pact: Closing Gaps) that promotes representative citizen involvement, seeks public policy solutions, and gives Panamanians a voice in the redefinition of their country's social contract.
Paraguay	Paraguay's Lab has experimented with a programme to strengthen the capacity of family health units to involve the community in their planning processes. It has also designed and facilitated a series of participatory dialogues with civil society on issues related to science, technology and innovation policies. In addition, the Lab has explored the relationship of social capital to collective action and vulnerability, with a focus on community participation over the management of community commons.
Peru	The UNDP Peru Lab has worked on two initiatives related to citizen participation. The first one is RedPública (PublicNetwork), an ecosystem of citizen political participation that collects proposals from the population for the construction of an inclusive Citizen Agenda, with a special focus on youth, women and indigenous peoples. The second one is Futuro Ahora (Future Now), a tool for young changemakers to develop and share project proposals related to the SDGs and connect with fellow citizens and one another.

Dominican Republic	In order to build trust between citizens and institutions, the Dominican Lab team established Espacios (Spaces), a platform that connects neighbourhood councils with their constituents and with municipal-level institutions to document and measure progress in prioritised areas of action.
Uruguay	Many of its Lab's initiatives have involved citizen participation, including: a crowdfunding campaign in which more than 150 people from 15 countries donated trees to restore Uruguay's native forests; a tactical urbanism pilot in which neighbours, activists, and children co-designed and implemented a public intervention to achieve inclusive and sustainable mobility; and a Climate Promise event in which more than 200 adolescents shared their visions on climate change. In addition, Uruguay's Lab embarked on a process of deep listening (Deep Demo) which seeks new formats to connect and establish dialogue with the nation's citizens.

Source: adapted from UNDP, 2022.

5.1. ACCELERATOR LABS IN THE REGION: SELECTED CASES

"Solutions are found where the problems are"[16]

In **Bolivia**, its Lab is promoting a project with urban area districts to incorporate technologies, aim to close digital divides and influence the strengthening of social cohesion. It recently launched the Metropolitan Observatory of Santa Cruz, an innovative, evidence-based metropolitan planning tool that enables informed decision-making, resource optimization, and the promotion of a more efficient urban development model through an interactive web platform with up-to-date information.

In **Uruguay**, the governance area of the Municipality of Canelones is working with the local Accelerator Lab to contribute to a Deep Demo process, which will be reviewed in greater detail in this document's section on methodologies and innovation models for SDG localization.

The most relevant case is that of **Paraguay**, whose Accelerator Lab develops several projects with SDG localization components: Tavarandu[17] Project on innovation capacities in municipal participatory governance; Moiru, a citizen innovation challenge; formalization and promotion of SMEs and support for entrepreneurship; and citizen monitoring of the School Lunch Programme implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the Government of Misiones (Table 9).

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16   Please check the article What we talk about when we talk about "Solutions Mapping" by Basma Saeed, Head of Solutions Mapping, UNDP Accelerator Lab Sudan, published 23 June 2020. Available at <www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs/blog/what-we-talk-about-when-we-talk-about-%E2%80%9Csolutions-mapping%E2%80%9D>.

17   Tavarandu is a capacity-building programme for innovation and participatory governance in local administrations and communities,

Table 9. *UNDP Acceleration Lab Initiatives in Paraguay*

Tavarandu Capacity building programme for innovation and participatory governance	This programme aims to increase strategic innovation capacities and strengthen participatory governance at the municipal level in Paraguay. It consists of three components: 1) A training course in participatory and human-centred design methodologies for municipal officials in the department of Itapúa. 2) Two citizen participation labs for the design, implementation and evaluation of sustainable development solutions. 3) Civic Technology bootcamp and hackathon aimed at university students in Itapúa to develop digital tools that improve and strengthen citizen participation in the municipal management of Itapúa.
Moiru, a citizen innovation challenge	Also known as the "Community Innovation Challenge", Moiru is a project that trains students and professors at the National University of Itapúa in human-centred design methodologies to identify local challenges in order to meet Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 8, co-create innovative solutions with local communities, and prototype and test solutions using impact and evaluation methods. Moiru will strengthen capacities for local participatory R+D and innovation capacities to achieve the SDGs through local community action, and support the implementation and impact evaluation of gender equality and ancestry work pilot projects.
SME promotion and entrepreneur support	The formalization and advocacy portfolio of small and medium-sized enterprises is working with local government and local business associations to identify barriers to business and labour formalization and competitiveness in manufacturing clusters; design an integrated portfolio of interventions to address multidimensional barriers and assess the portfolio's impact on reducing barriers related to information, rights awareness, administrative costs, and low labour productivity in three different manufacturing clusters in Paraguay. UNDP Paraguay's Accelerator Lab is also working with two Entrepreneur Support Centres, comprised of local government representatives, local academic institutions, and local business associations, to map the needs and demands of SMEs and locally available public and private support services.
Citizen monitoring of the School Lunch Programme	The project for citizen monitoring of the School Lunch Programme is a pilot of a participatory process that directly involves parents who are members of the School Cooperative Associations (ACEs for their Spanish acronym) in monitoring the reception and quality of food distributed to the schools benefiting from the Ministry of Education and Culture's School Lunch Programme in the Government of Misiones, a department of Paraguay. As part of this monitoring process, the project is developing a digital transparency platform, hosted on the institutional website of the Government of Misiones, which will allow real-time citizen monitoring of all information related to the implementation of the School Lunch Programme in the department, with information disaggregated by educational establishments and data collected during the participatory monitoring process, as well as with modules that will allow participatory interaction with parents of School Cooperative Associations.

Source: Authors' elaboration based on information from the UNDP Paraguay team, 2022.

developed by the UNDP Paraguay Accelerator Lab and the organizations Alma Cívica, Cultura y Participación (CyP) and Girls Code, in partnership with the digital platform Decidim, the National University of Itapúa (UNI) and the Autonomous University of Encarnación (UNAE). For more information and details please see: <www.undp.org/es/paraguay/blog/search-tavarandu>.

5.2.   SOLUTION MAPPING: CITIZEN SCIENCE IN ARGENTINA

Citizen science, also known as collaborative science, participatory research, or demoscience, is basically a way of building knowledge, obtaining it from participants in society who come together to understand the problems that affect their own quality of life. This tool is, perhaps, one of the oldest known forms of science, referred to as ancestral knowledge, which does not have a name of its own, but belongs to the whole of society.

This approach represents an innovative tool to promote development since it allows: reinforcing activism already present in the territories; influencing the incorporation of new issues in the public agenda; promoting evidence-informed public policies; facilitating the co-creation of innovative solutions; and either generating awareness of an issue or underpinning behavioural changes (Figure 9).

Figure 9. *Attributes of Citizen Science*
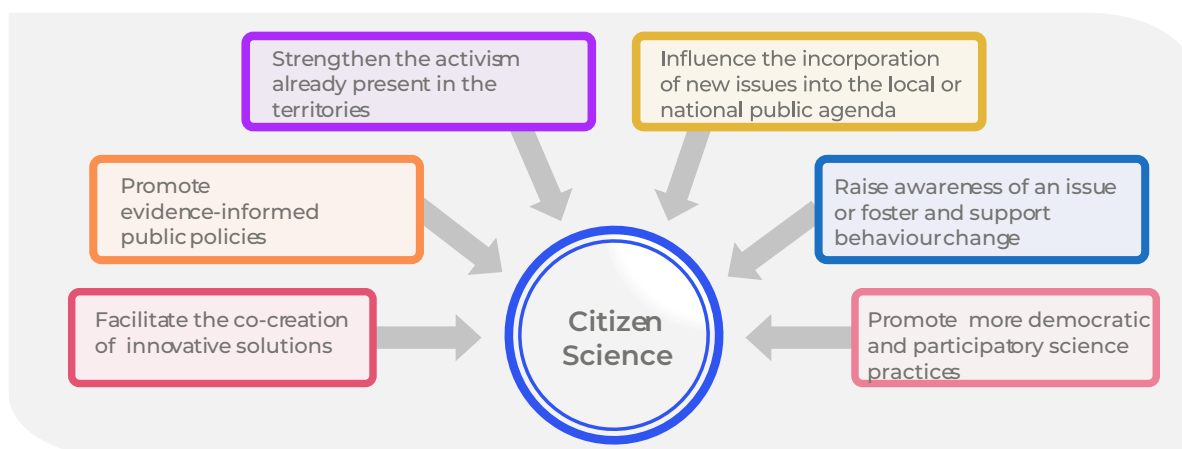
Source: Adapted from Moreno et al., 2022:10-11.

The mapping of environmental citizen science initiatives was co-created between Co_Lab, UNDP's Accelerator Lab in Argentina, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of the Nation (MINCYT for its Spanish acronym). The first edition of the solution mapping included 30 environmental initiatives.

Projects were identified based on exploratory interviews with key informants, literature review, and information available in mass media and social networks. Each project was recorded in a descriptive sheet. All information collected was validated with its sources. This mapping is growing collaboratively at the moment.

Of the projects mapped in the first edition (Figure 10), the following indicators stand out:

More than 15,000 people have taken part in these initiatives.

Even though there are no specific promotional instruments for this type of project initiatives yet, their main source of funding presently comes from the public sector, via three government science and technology agencies and eight national universities.

The most recurrent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) associated with these initiatives were 3. Good Health and Well-being (21%), 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities (19%), 15. Life on Land (13%) and 4. Quality Education (11%).

Mapped projects demonstrate that citizen science can have a multiplicity of expressions and is not reduced to certain themes, strategies, approaches, products or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Moreno et al., 2022).

Figure 10. *Mapping Solutions: Citizen Science Argentina*

Some indicators from the first mapping process…

30 mapped projects:

Implementation
3 completed projects
27 ongoing projects
12 lasting 3 to 5 years
10 lasting 6 or more years
5 begun during lockdown

Reach
18 projects arose locally to face territorial problems
12 projects are local chapters of global initiatives

Type of project
16 projects contribute taxes
5 projects are collaborative
9 projects are co-creative

Equipment*
14 projects require digital technology
3 projects use specific technical equipment
13 projects require both

+15.000 participants

Projects' diverse research activities are linked to the following tasks:

Definition of the problem · Data recollection · Data analysis · Observation of phenomena · Solution design · Solution implementetion · Sharing of results

+ Seven projects include citizen participation in all tasks mentioned above throughout the entire research process

Source: Moreno et al., 2022.

From this experience and its findings, a series of intuitions emerge and become present:

- Recognizing the interrelationship between environment and quality of life favours sustained community participation.
- Involving a community from the beginning of a project with its communal formulation of the problem can be a key factor in sustaining community commitment and participation; involving the occupations, professions and trades present—and predating citizen science— in the territory can be a way to promote project sustainability.
- The professional scientific community's participation in citizen science could be increased if research evaluation systems incorporate incentive schemes that recognize its members.
- The public sector's involvement in implementing citizen science projects can be a way to promote this sector's use of the evidence provided by these project in the design and dynamics of public policies.
- Citizen science can be an instrument for minorities and diversities to promote their advocacy.
- Identifying environmental issues through citizen science can have an effect on environmental awareness, behavioural changes, conservation, etc.
- Developing citizen science initiatives may be related to the different assets and/or resources (social, economic, cultural, human, etc.) that communities have in their territories, and citizen science can be a way to promote intergenerational education.

5.3. LEARNING THROUGH COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE IN SANTO DOMINGO: SPATIAL GOVERNANCE AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN GREATER SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC[18]

The process of accelerated urbanization in the Dominican Republic has transformed socio-economic dynamics and facilitated poverty reduction; however, in this transition, proper solid waste management (SWM) has delayed progress, given the precariousness of SWM systems. SWM is underfunded, environmentally unfriendly, and its basic services, such as garbage collection and disposal, are inconsistent and unsustainable, posing serious risks to the health of the population, despite recently created legal frameworks.

18   For more details on this case, please visit Spatial governance, culture and waste management: Learning through collective intelligence in Santo Domingo, a blog written by Jerson del Rosario, Head of Solution Mapping at UNDP Dominican Republic's Accelerator Lab, on 20 January 2021: <www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs/blog/spatial-governance-culture-and-waste-management-learning-through-collective-intelligence-santo-domingo>.

Thus, using collective intelligence and citizen science as frameworks of reference, UNDP Dominican Republic's Accelerator Lab team took part in an experiment which revealed that, despite the very collective nature of waste generation, currently the burden of its management falls solely on municipal governments. Thus, on the latter's adequate governance—or lack thereof—rests the potential for social inequality: whether SWM's configuration favours middle-class suburban space versus impoverished barrios on the urban periphery. The application of a collective intelligence approach revealed a more nuanced set of problems in which the different actors involved (local government, private sector, households, individuals) face diffuse and conflicting roles, while decision-making territorial differences are largely one-sided, in a context of cultural practices that reinforce dispersion and exclusion when it comes to SWM.

Finally, this experience made it possible to address the spatial governance for SWM in greater detail, considering the poorest territories and the inequality of spatial capital in the city, which plays a pivotal role in the provision of services. This has facilitated a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, broadening participants' perspectives on major social issues. On the other hand, it became clear that the formulation of inclusive policies can foster social capital. An adequate SWM model requires a change in the system at all levels: (sustainable) consumption patterns and habits in individuals; funding mechanisms in local governments; education and the means to recycle in general; etc.

All these findings contribute to the approach supporting relevant government and local actors in the development of the 'Ozama River Rescue' initiative, a multi-sectoral platform that aims to articulate prevention, education and sustainable solutions to the problem of SWM in Greater Santo Domingo.

5.4. COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE: A KEY INGREDIENT IN UNDP'S ACCELERATOR LABS

The collective intelligence approach is based on the principle that greater problem-solving capacity is created when people work together through the mobilization of a wider range of information, ideas, and perceptions. Furthermore, advances in technology and data science have the potential to harness it on a larger scale than ever before[19]. Collective intelligence is a central approach used by the UNDP Accelerator Lab Network (Table 10). Its uses range, for example, from using real-time data sources and ethnography to gain new insights into the first-hand experiences of women and men living on the frontlines of climate change; or using big data to improve waste management; to combining multiple datasets to address gender-based violence in Mexico (Berditchevskaia et al., 2021:4).

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19   Quoted by Achim Steiner, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in Berditchevskaia et al., 2021:4.

Table 10. *What is collective intelligence?*

In its simplest form, 'collective intelligence' can be understood as the enhanced capacity that is created when people work together, often with the help of technology, to mobilize a wider range of information, ideas, and knowledge. Collective intelligence emerges when these contributions combine to become more than the sum of their parts.

Societies have been built on collective intelligence: sharing knowledge, culture, and tools to better manage crops, fight disease, anticipate weather patterns, and much more. However, since the beginning of the digital age, collective intelligence has really evolved. There are now thousands of digital tools that help us share ideas in entirely new ways and connect people across great distances. In the 19th century, it took nearly 70 years to assemble the 400,000 words that made up the first complete edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. A modern equivalent, the English Wikipedia, receives more than 1.9 edits per second and sees about 200,000 new pages created per month.

Source: Berditchevskaia et al., 2021:5.

The design principles of collective intelligence (Berditchevskaia et al., 2021:7) that are used in the experiences promoted by the UNDP Accelerator Labs network are related to:

1. Increase the diversity of people involved and opinions heard.
2. Allow people to contribute views and ideas independently and freely.
3. Integrate different types of data to unlock new ideas.
4. Be citizen-centric: data empowerment, not data mining.

In a recent systematization document, a series of case studies of interest are presented in which the collective intelligence approach is the driving force (Table 11), and direct reference is made to experiences implemented in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico.

Table 11. *Collective intelligence as a catalyst for innovation processes in Latin America*

Real-time monitoring of environmental conditions	Distributed problem solving	New forms of governance and accountability
Argentina: Air quality Using DIY (DIY) bricolage hardwareand citizen screening to measure changes in air quality.	Colombia: Response to COVID-19. Stimulate an innovation ecosystem to manufacture PPE for the COVID-19 response.	Mexico: Combining multiple datasets to understand gender-based violence (GBV) in public spaces.
	Ecuador: COVID-19 response and the informal economy. Peer-to-peer learning for economic empowerment during COVID-19.	Mexico: Performance appraisal system. Text mining with natural language processing (NLP) to identify barriers to policy implementation.

Source: Berditchevskaia et al., 2021.

In particular, of the experiences linked to the axis of effective governance, Mexico's case stands out, since it aimed to design new tools to improve the implementation and performance of public policies and the visualization of data as innovative instruments to address gender-based violence (Table 12).

Table 12. *UNDP Accelerator Lab in Mexico: New forms of governance and accountability*

Evaluating what works is a vital part of governance and is at the heart of Sustainable Development Goal 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. However, innovators, who may be preoccupied with designing new services or solutions, often neglect to track the implementation and impact of established government policies or programmes.
In Mexico, the UNDP Accelerator Lab has pioneered new approaches to address this gap, using novel collective intelligence methods (such as text extraction from new data sources) to help government better assess what is working.

The two Mexican initiatives mentioned above provide a glimpse of a potential niche for UNDP's Accelerator Labs to use collective intelligence to advance Sustainable Development Goal 16, working in partnership with national governments.

Source: Berditchevskaia et al., 2021:43.

To conclude, UNDP offers a platform for the interactive visualization of data on its Accelerator Labs cases and experiences around the world, especially those linked to connecting processes such as innovation and distributed collaboration (co-creation), and prototyping and testing of solutions related to the localization and integration of the SDGs: <www.undp.org/acceleratorlabs/peoplepowered/dataviz>. In it, several cases studies and innovations linked to SDG localization in the region may be visualized (Figure 11). Please see Addenda for further details.

Figure 11. *Data visualization on UNDP Accelerator Labs*
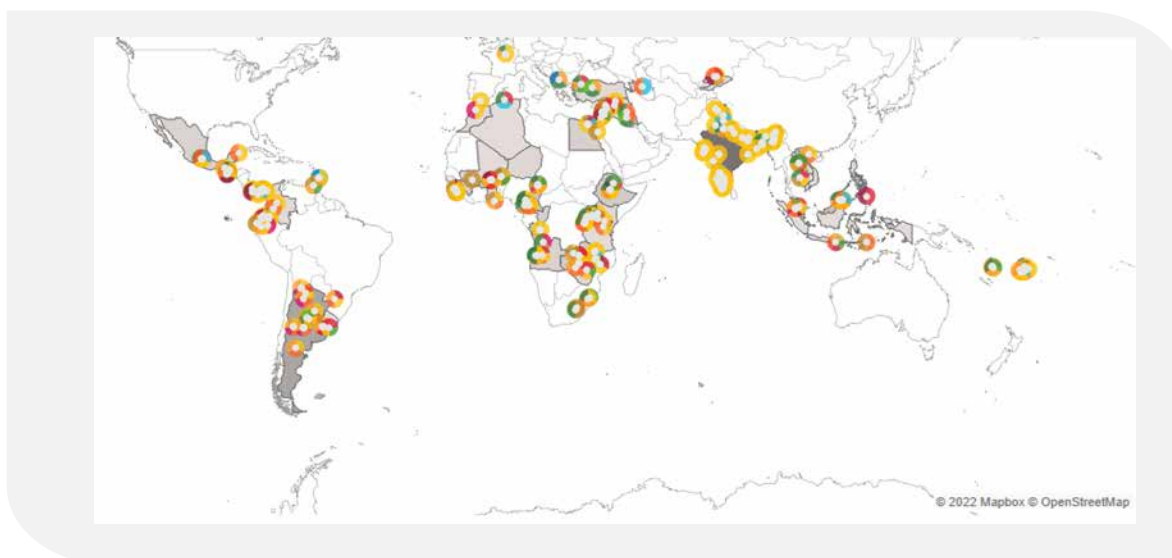
Source: UNDP Accelerator Labs (2022).

6.

6. NEW INNOVATION APPROACHES, METHODOLOGIES AND PROCESSES APPLIED TO EFFECTIVE LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND SDG LOCALIZATION

In this section we present a compilation of new approaches and work methodologies that have been used by UNDP country office teams throughout Latin America, for various projects and initiatives. These range from guiding and/or refocusing efforts in SDG localization and integration processes (as means of support to be able to advance and carry out these efforts), to promoting a profound change in the logics of design, co-creation and implementation of programmes and projects. Among the latter, cases promoting new platforms for citizen participation and civic collaboration stand out, spanning from Ágora in Panama, RedPública in Peru or Foro Ciudadano – SIGOB in Colombia, to the recent experiences in the application of the deep demo model in Uruguay and its projections promoting this new approach to resolve complexity in the management of public affairs in the region.

Many of these approaches or sets of tools offer different ways of addressing problems that entail facing an adaptive, complex and uncertain challenge, for which traditional responses from traditional models or technical solutions no longer suffice to find adequate solutions.

On the other hand, we found established platforms aptly supporting territorial management for sustainable development. Emblematic cases are the growing expansion and improvement of the SIGOBito platform in Paraguay and the consolidation of PADIT in Cuba as a reference model in the integration of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities for sustainable development.

6.1. MAPS METHODOLOGY

Adopted in October 2015, MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) is the common approach methodology of the United Nations development system to support SDG implementation in UN member States. MAPS helps governments to ground the 2030 Agenda at the local and national levels, supports the analysis of synergies and trade-offs between SDGs, and allows the provision of coordinated policy support to the countries that demand it, offering the thematic expertise of different UN entities in an effective and coherent way.

The MAPS approach captures the core components listed below:

Mainstreaming: The integration of work that increases public awareness of the 2030 Agenda and ensures that the principles and goals of sustainable development are fully incorporated into national and subnational policymaking, planning, and budget processes.

Acceleration: Analytical work that supports policymakers with information on the drivers and bottlenecks for sustainable development at the country level, and that contributes to the design of policy interventions that can accelerate progress towards achieving national SDGs by 2030.

Policy support: Joint approaches that enable the United Nations to deploy its technical expertise and advice in member States to support SDG implementation in a coherent and integrated manner.

In addition to these three core elements, MAPS' common approach recognizes the importance and need to support partnership development, accountability, and efforts to improve data as key ingredients for the success of its political commitment to the SDGs at the country level (Figure 12).

Figure 12. *EMAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) approach to promote implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDG integration and localization*
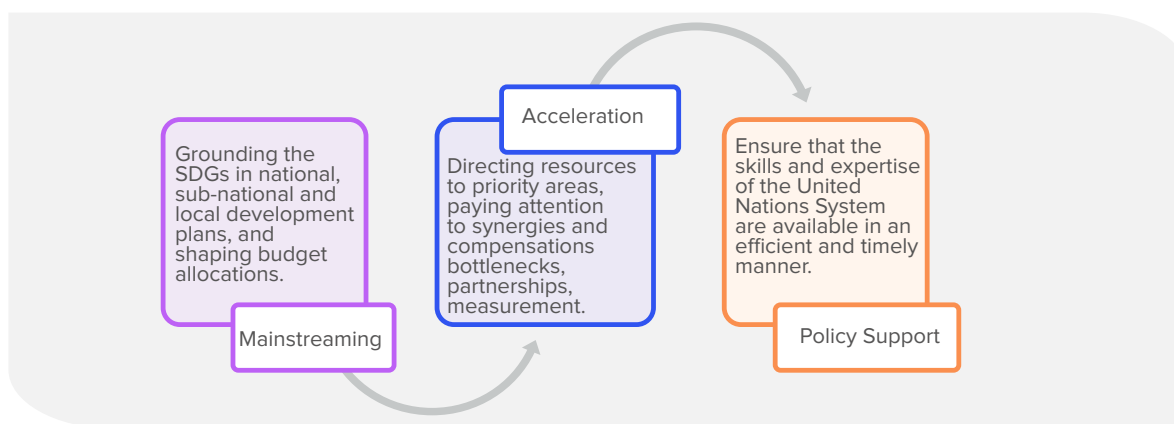
Source: adapted from UN, 2015-2019.

This approach has been useful for a variety of initiatives reported in the region. Among the most significant is the Index, linked to decentralization efforts, SDG integration, and capacity building in subnational governments. In addition, the MAPS approach has been widely used as an activation matrix and as a means to accelerate various SDG localization actions, as in the specific cases of Brazil and Colombia, among others.

6.2.   ÁGORA: MY DIGITAL COMMUNITY — A CITIZEN PARTICIPATION ONLINE PORTAL IN PANAMA'S MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY

Ágora is a citizen participation methodology and online portal based on a digital platform that allows:
A.   To accompany local governments in their administrative functions vis-à-vis their citizens; and
B.   To directly and constantly interact with citizens, learning their concerns and aspirations. Ágora provides local authorities, mayors and representatives with a constant flow of information about the proposals, opinions, hopes and choices of municipal residents, breaking down most of the barriers between authorities and citizenry by generating a climate of collaboration and trust, which benefits the community's daily life (Figure 13).

Figure 13. *Panama's online portal Ágora: My Digital Community*

Source: UNDP Panama 2022.

Regarding its basics, Ágora is a very flexible methodology, with fundamental and "non-negotiable" principles which include a digital platform developed entirely "to measure", adaptable to any municipality because it is co-designed together with it. In its operation, Ágora produces a considerable amount of geolocated statistical information that can help authorities and any development agent in their decision-making processes, as well as in targeting intervention priorities and evidence for public policy processes in the territory (Figure 14).

Figure 14. *Features of Panama's platform Ágora: My Digital Community*
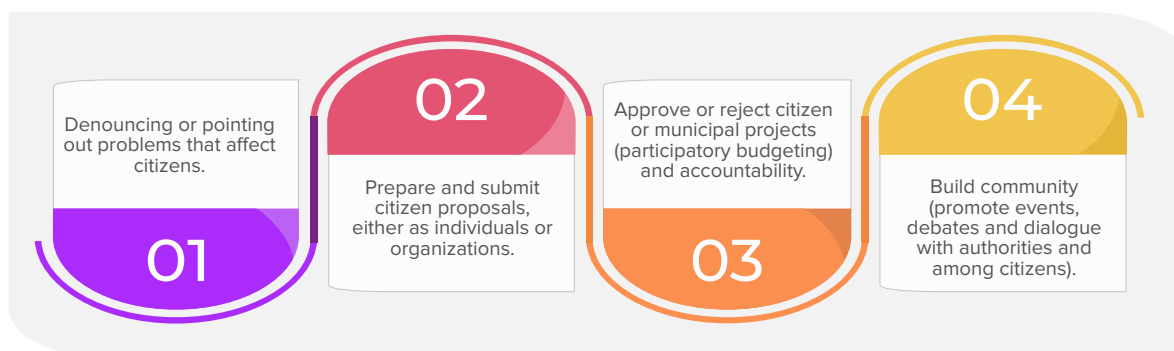
Source: UNDP, Panama, 2022.

The platform operates according to five principles: empowerment and constant participation of the population; transparency; territorial approach; use of technology; and inclusion (Figure 15).

Figure 15. *Five key principles of Panama's Ágora methodology*

CONSTANT EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE POPULATION

The Ágora methodology opens up spaces for dialogue so that individuals and civil society can participate in decision-making processes, either individually or as an organization.

TRANSPARENCY

The Ágora methodology guarantees that processes are open and transparent. Everything that happens during the different process stages is public and accessible on digital platforms, which ensures transparency and accountability.

TERRITORIAL APPROACH

This principle provides the basis for 'building from the bottom up', one of the premises of the Ágora methodology. It implies that citizen input is focused on identifying gaps in development and solutions that reflect the living situations of regional environments.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Developing online citizen participation platforms that are accessible via a computer or mobile phone is vital to facilitate and expand inclusive participation at the input, decision-making and monitoring stages.

INCLUSION

The inclusion of vulnerable groups such as minorities and people with disabilities is taken into account. It is therefore necessary to develop communication tools (such as videos in regional and indigenous languages and sign language) and to enable people to make proposals in audio and video.

Source: UNDP, Panamá, 2022.

These five principles are the structural foundation for the design of each Ágora, depending on each type of policy, geographical area, sector or institutional level:

Public policies	Social pacts, national development policies, regional development policies, sectorial policies, among others.
Local government	The best and most diverse global experiences on the issues being addressed are brought together in a single digital environment. Tools for citizen participation at the local level, with a homogeneous and friendly methodological approach.

Thus, Panama's Ágora has been a catalyst for building development in an inclusive way (Figure 16). The platform registered 186,182 citizen proposals which led to 1,361 regional agreements and 187 public policy agreements in 11 thematic areas. Consequently, citizen participation is promoted to seek public policy solutions and provide a voice, within the framework of redefining Panama's social contract (Bicentennial Pact: Closing Gaps)[20].

Figure 16. *Cycle and stages of the Bicentennial Pact: Closing Gaps, part of the Ágora platform*
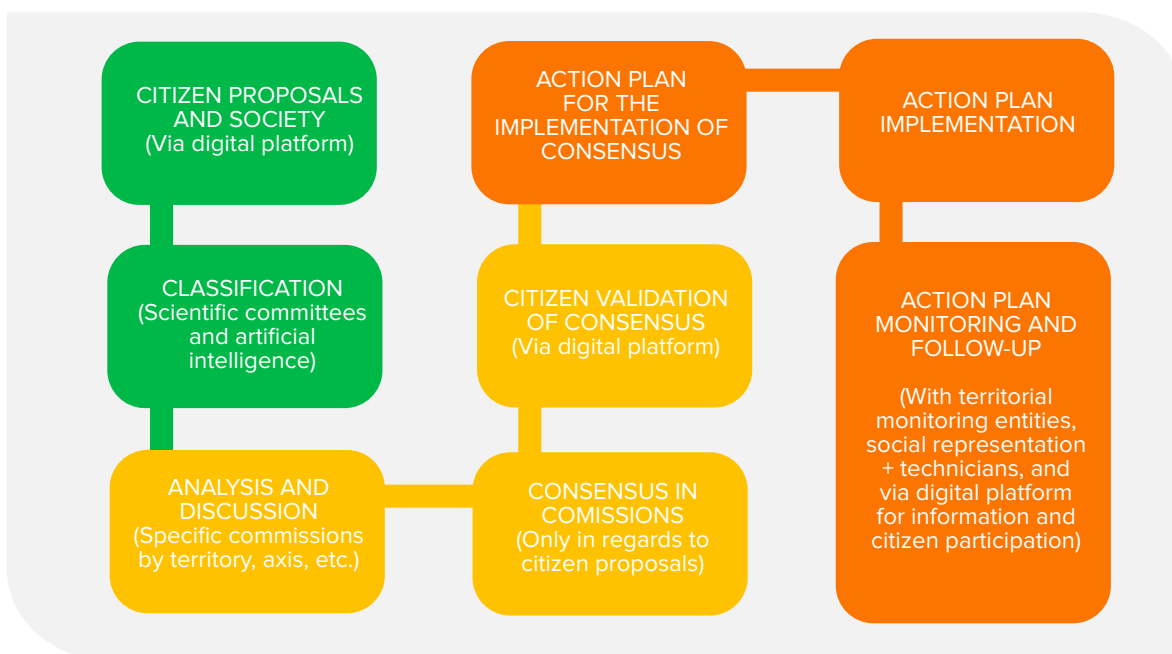
Source: UNDP, Panama, 2022.

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20   In the process, 212,573 people registered and participated in the platform, representing 5% of the country's adult population and 10% of those who voted in the 2019 general elections. 97% of the proposals and expressions of needs came from individual citizens and 76% of the contributions were made via mobile phones.

6.3. REDPÚBLICA IN PERU

UNDP Peru has developed RedPública[21], a space for citizen participation that collects proposals from the population to create a Citizens' Agenda and promote its initiatives (Figure 17). This platform operates through four channels:

1. **RedPública digital platform**. Main channel where citizens can submit proposals, as well as share, comment and support other proposals.
2. **RedPública chatbot.** In areas with low connectivity, or if proponents require support, digital advice and assistance is provided to submit proposals.
3. **Virtual Conversations.** Focus group environments to promote diverse dialogues among citizens.
4. **Telephone surveys.** Old-fashioned phone calls to collect proposals from representative samples of the population.

Figure 17. *RedPública of Peru*

Source: RedPública, Peru, 2022..

In this process, proposals that demonstrate a key public problem to be addressed at the national, regional or local level, and whose propositions are viable, will be considered in the *Citizens' Agenda*. Its subsequent progress will depend on whether it garners citizen support, is able to identify responsible institutions and secures the resources to make it viable.

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21   <edpublica.pe/sobre-redpublica>.

6.4. SIGOB CITIZENS' FORUM: A 'STRATEGY TO OPERATION' APPROACH

In the relationship between citizens, their governments and their institutions, societies face a profound legitimacy and trust crisis, which is reflected in low citizen participation, i.e. the intervention of citizens in decision-making with public impact. This situation is considered of utmost importance in the construction of public policies for local development. In this context, the UNDP SIGOB Regional Project[22] developed the Foro Ciudadano or Citizens' Forum to strengthen and support interactive spaces between governments and citizens in the development of public policies.

What is Citizens' Forum? In brief, it refers to:

- A method that aims to incorporate dialogue in management systems to provide transparency and certainty.
- A methodology of participation, communication and connection between government and civil society to interact, meet their requirements and build responsible commitments.
- A space that strengthens the relationship between government and the population by promoting a participatory and transparent process for receiving and addressing needs.
- A digital platform that helps to achieve more inclusive public policies.

Citizens' Forum is materialized in three stages (Figure 18):

A. Before: In this stage, citizens register on the platform and participate in setting up the working groups, proposing problems and possible solutions that are then assigned by the moderator to each responsible department for preparation. Each registered participant has a personal dashboard that shows her or his progress and participation in the different Preparatory Work Tables, as well as a map that displays the number of problems and proposed solutions presented by fellow participants and enables interaction with other people.

B. During: This is where dialogue between government and citizens takes place. The platform has several functionalities to provide greater organization to the work process. At this stage, the forum between authorities and citizens is held as a space for dialogue in which problems and proposed solutions are discussed and responsibilities and specific commitments are assumed based on them.

C. After: A management system transforms the commitments made during the forum into assignments and initiates follow-up and monitoring routines, in which the appointed responsible official must make periodical progress reports. To facilitate transparency and accountability, the system has a

22   To date, SIGOB has implemented its methodologies in 95 institutions in 27 countries, applied 550 systems and generated a network with more than 20,000 members in the region.

dashboard with indicators and sub-indicators that measure the levels of compliance and progress of each person responsible for the acquired commitments. Citizens, as observers, have access to information on each commitment, including progress status, responsible official and progress reports.

Figure 18. *SIGOB's Citizens' Forum process methodology and stages, UNDP, 2022*
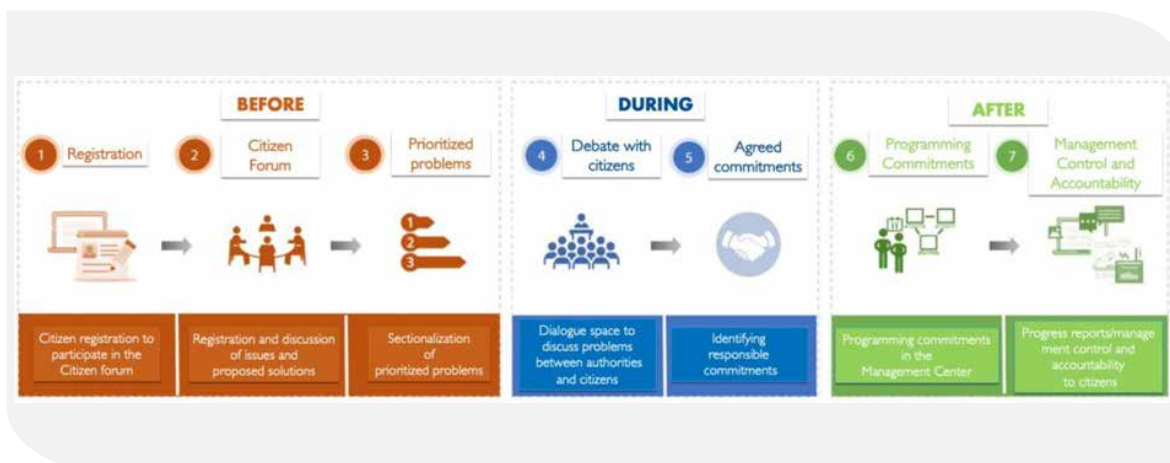
Source: UNDP, 2022.

Documented experiences have shown how these types of spaces have contributed to greater rapprochement between government institutions and authorities (at all levels) and civil society actors. To date, Citizens' Forums have been implemented through nine institutions in six countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama and the Dominican Republic). The most recent case has been the Building the Country workshops with the presidency of the Republic of Colombia, in which the entire cabinet proposed solutions to address problems, acquiring commitments in all 32 states of the country (Table 13).

Table 13. *Impact Results. Implementing the Citizens' Forum with the presidency of the Republic of Colombia: Building the Country workshops*

- 3,469 commitments scheduled for online management, acquired in 328 forums.
- Of the total of scheduled commitments, 2,510 (87%) have been completed.
- Thirty-six ministries and/or government entities connected to the President-Citizens' Forum Follow-Up System—a methodological and instrumental platform—as well as their respective focal points, trained to report progress in an efficient and timely manner.
- Results of the public policies managed through this Citizens' Forum:

1.   The Ministry of Mining and Energy provided renewable energy to 86,000 families in the Department of Santander.

2.   The Ministry of Health and Social Protection launched its mental health policy in the Department of Magdalena.

3.   The Ministry of Housing, City and Territory built 1,000 homes through the VIPA programme in Valle del Cauca Department.

4.   Construction of La Carmelita Health Centre in the subregion of Bajo Putumayo.

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from the SIGOB Citizens' Forum presentation. UNDP, 2022.

6.5.   THE PADIT PLATFORM TO SUPPORT THE STRENGTHENING OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES FOR THE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, CUBA

The Articulated Platform for Integral Territorial Development (PADIT for its Spanish acronym) implements its economic and social development strategies with the fundamental objective of having an articulating instrument, aimed at guiding planning for development in the municipalities of the Cuban provinces, as well as orienting the decision-making of local authorities in Cuba (Figure 21). From the point of view of territorial development planning and management tools, it has been one of the most relevant experiences when it comes to promoting strategies led by a multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance model in the territory, which also has a set of action frameworks, methodologies and guides that contribute to a new dynamic of development in the local space.

It is, therefore, a multi-actor, multi-level and multi-sectoral governance structure through which decentralization and integration for territorial development in Cuba are actively promoted. It is grounded on a programmatic and management platform for the articulation of actors at the territorial, national and international levels, as well as for a multidimensional approach, based on the priorities of Cuban actors mobilizing resources, transferring innovation and localizing the SDGs. In addition, it is aimed at building and strengthening the capacities of public, private and civil society actors: agents of transformation, innovation and change[23].

Currently, PADIT has two strategic priorities:
•   Capacities for Territorial Development, which include public policy and decentralization of competencies, citizen participation and territorialization (the Ministry of Economy and Planning's National Plan for Economic and Social Development, PNDES 2030/2030 Agenda), open and smart government (support for digital transformation in public management).

•   Financing for productive local economic development, with an emphasis on social inclusion and sustainability, addressing issues of support for the financing process of local economic development activities by public and private actors, as well as the incorporation of new economic actors: support

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23   The PADIT platform is aligned with Cuba's National Plan for Economic and Social Development 2030 and has clear multi-level, intersectoral and multi-actor governance structures at the national and local levels, with spaces for stakeholder empowerment and leadership: four leading institutions plus 15 associated ones in all provinces of the country (15 provinces and one special municipality) and 32 of its municipalities, in addition to universities, civil society and research centres.

for the creation, implementation and operation of Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), in close collaboration with local governments and Local Development Centres.

All of this is addressed through six areas of work: effective governance; roductive transformation and international insertion; infrastructure; human potential, science, technology and innovation; natural and environmental resources; and human development, equity and social justice (Figure 19).

Figure 19. *PADIT: Multi-stakeholder, multi-level and multi-sectoral governance model for the territorial development in Cuba*
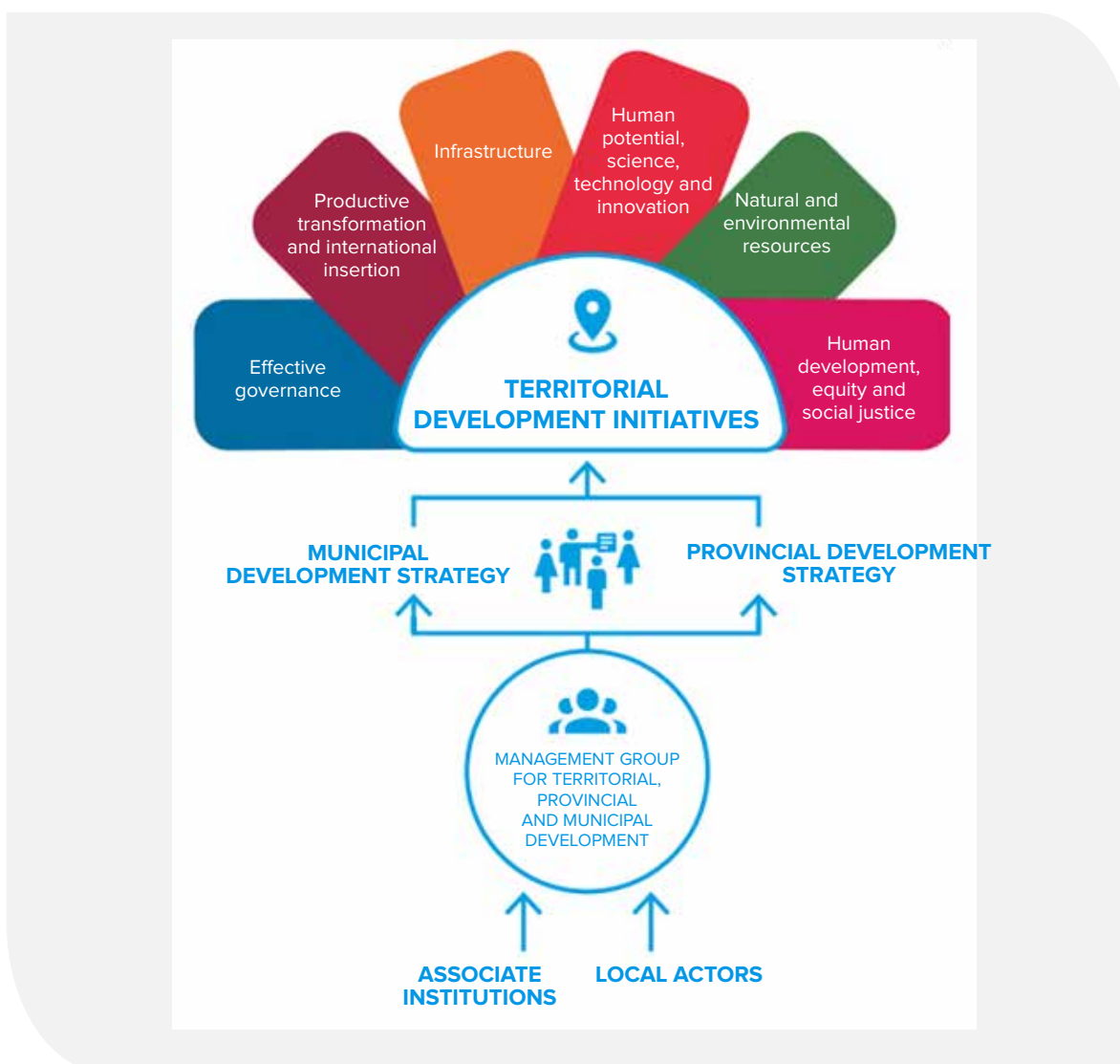
Source: UNDP, Cuba, 2021.

Furthermore, PADIT has managed to promote three indices for SDG territorialization: the Territorial Development Index (IDT for its Spanish acronym); the Inter-municipal Cooperation and Complementarity Index; and the Territorial Governance Index (IGT, also for its Spanish initials).

Thus, one of the most relevant and innovative elements of this experience has been the construction of the abovementioned Territorial Development Index (IDT). The IDT is a metric composed of indicators that in some way reflect the territorial development of the country, by taking four dimensions or Subsystems into consideration: Economic-Productive, Population and Human Settlements, Physical-Environmental and Technical Infrastructure dimensions. These dimensions or Subsystems work with a total of 18 variables or selected indicators, considered tracers of territoriality, which have been linked to the fulfilment of one or more SDGs (Figure 20).

Figure 20. *Territorial Development Index (TDI)*

Subsystem	Selected indicators	SDGs
Physical-Environmental	Environmental protection expenses	13 - 15
	Deforestation index	15
	Green areas per inhabitant	11 - 15
Economic-Productive	Municipal budget implementation (surplus or deficit)	8
	Average monthly salary	8
	Volume of investments	8 - 9
	Retail mercantile circulation	8
	Retail commodity production	8
	Idleness index	2 - 12
Technical Infrastructure	Total population benefited by agreement	6 - 11
	Total population benefited by sewage system	6 - 11
	Passengers transported by public bus services	11
Population and Human settlements	Rate of ageing	3
	Relationship of dependency	8
	Migratory balance	8
	Unemployment rate	8
	Satisfied energy demand	2
	Satisfied protein demand	2

Source: IDT tool, PADIT, 2021.

Within the framework of the work it has conducted through PADIT, UNDP Cuba recently launched its *Manual of Strategic Information and Communication for Local Governments[24]*, a tool that contributes to participatory communication towards local development strategies.

The compendium of guides and methodological texts produced through PADIT is a collaborative and innovative product that is composed, in the first place, of main or 'mother' tools, instituted in Resolution 29/2021 of the Ministry of Economy and Planning as the procedures for managing territorial development in the country. These include the Planning and Financing Work System for Comprehensive Territorial Development; the methodology for the preparation of the Municipal Development Strategy and its provincial counterpart tool; and the Comprehensive Financing Procedure for Development. These proposals are complemented by another set of cross-cutting tools for inclusive planning, comprising gender, social equity, environmental sustainability, risk and disaster management, culture and development, communication, digital government and citizen participation approaches, among others.

These resources have been created under the leadership of the Ministry of Economy and Planning, with the participation of various institutions and territorial governments, including the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment's Centre for Local and Community Development (CEDEL for its Spanish acronym); the University of Pinar del Río's Centre for Management, Local Development, Tourism and Cooperativism Studies (CE-GESTA); and the Ministry of Economy and Planning.

PADIT's main results (Figure 21) have been:

a. PADIT has closely collaborated in the design and approval of the Policy to Promote Territorial Development, both as part of the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES 2030), and as central axis and articulator of municipal and provincial governments' public agendas. The PNDES is aligned with the SDGs, in partnership with UNDP and under PADIT's territorialization.

b. PADIT has institutionalized a set of tools for territorial planning and development, both in support of government management and of the implementation of policies to promote territorial development.

c. PADIT supports the implementation of the national strategy for electronic government in all of Cuba's municipalities and the strengthening of dialogue and capabilities towards the implementation of effective digital government.

d. PADIT strengthens alliances between local governments and academia through territorial universities; and supports the creation of the first Strategic Management Centres for Territorial Development in Pinar del Río, Cienfuegos and Guantánamo.

e. PADIT implements 89 socio-economic development initiatives (60% of which promote articulations between the public and private sectors, while 51% contribute to increasing gender equality and 44% introduce innovation), fostering the creation of 6,660 jobs (of which 60% are for women and 54% for youth).

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24   Please consult the Toolkit for comprehensive territorial development, launched on 5 September 2022, at <www.undp.org/en/cuba/publications/toolkit-for-integral-territorial-development> (in Spanish; the Manual is one of the many items that can be downloaded).

Figure 21. *PADIT Territorial Initiatives' contribution to SDG localization and integration in Cuba*
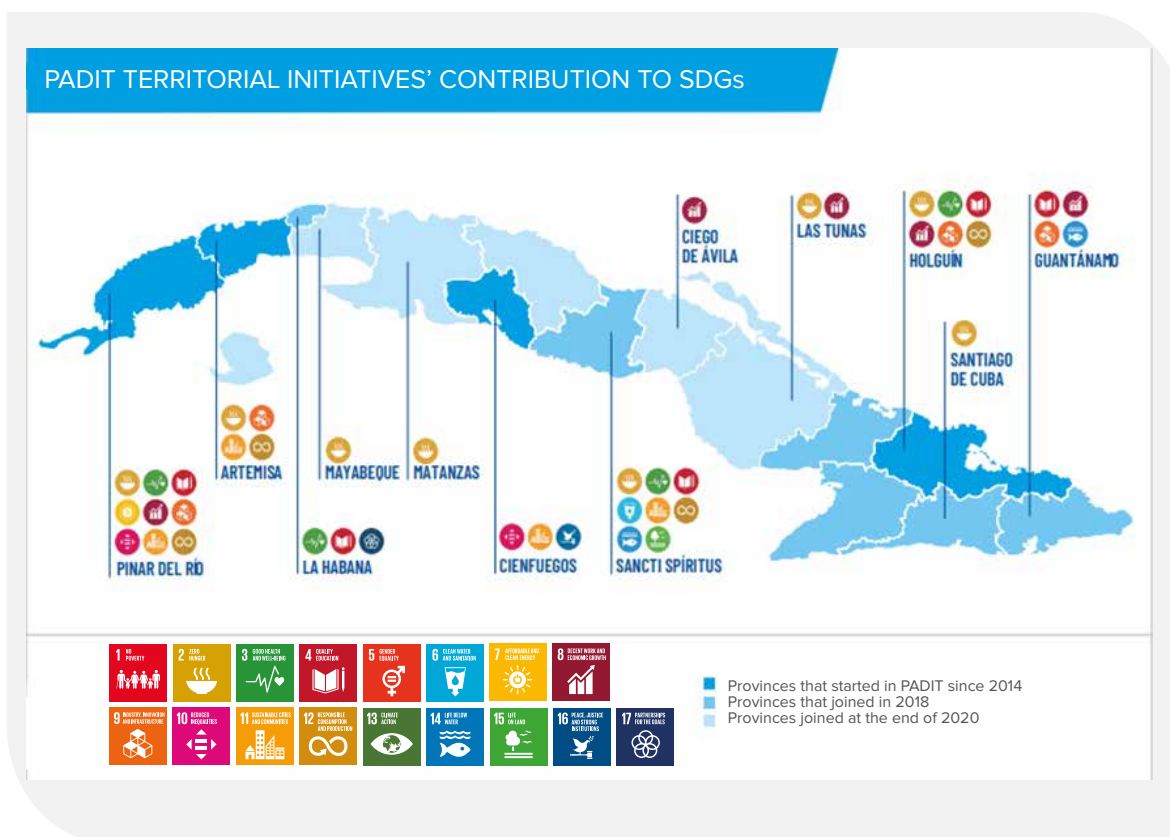
Source: UNDP, Cuba, 2021.

6.6. DEEP DEMO: ADDRESSING COMPLEXITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL INNOVATION—THE CASE OF URUGUAY

Deep Demo originates as part of the work of the so-called *social innovation platforms* for systemic transformation, through open innovation processes that rely on the integration of culture (as a system of beliefs and values of the community) and its narratives as drivers of change. This is achieved through the integration and diversification of permanent active listening channels to generate information in real time and capture collective territorial intelligence, making it possible to incorporate the culture of learning into new generation public policies.

This, Deep Demo emphasizes the value of deep listening: the value of permanent community listening processes on perceptions of the territory and how the latter responds to the development of ongoing initiatives. In summary, *Deep Demos* constitute an emerging and interesting work approach based on:

- Adopt portfolio logics that adapt to ambiguity and uncertainty, and generate learnings to address complex systemic challenges.
- Create "demonstrative" processes that show development alternatives that allow expanding possible futures and new forms of cooperation.
- Focus on Exploring before explaining.
- Show real progress in the territory regarding the system's transformation, and leverage this for a broader change in the way UNDP tackles complex challenges and the resolution of public problems in the territory.

Deep Demo involves the application of a systemic approach that includes: 1) *Mapping*; 2) *Listening*; (3) *Collective interpretation*; 4) *Co-design*; 5) *Prototype implementation*. Developing new formats and channels of community listening generates the conditions for greater confidence in experimentation, activating coalitions and "unlikely conversations" so that new initiatives and prototypes can be tested in contexts of complexity with strategic innovation as a facilitator.

Figure 22. *Deep Demo Process Cycle*
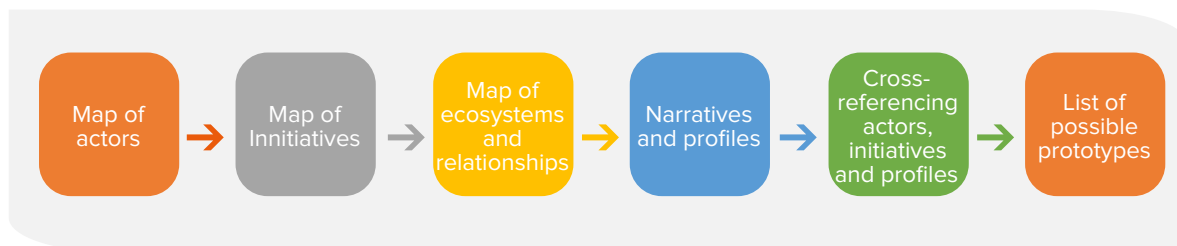
Source: UNDP, Uruguay, 2023.

How is it achieved?

In Deep Demo's process cycle, Deep Demo's actors work actively on the generation of new channels of community listening and participation based on maps of actors, initiatives, ecosystems and relationships. Following that, Deep Demo's participants carry out the systematization of narratives and the construction of profiles to build a cartography that, among other things, facilitates their visualization of "blind spots" and windows of opportunity to act on the system or problem addressed (Figure 22). Through this, Deep Demo generates a space to build prototypes of possible solutions (as a portfolio of experiments), parallel to which its actors carry out a process of adaptive and evolutive evaluation of the process.

6.7. DEEP DEMO IN URUGUAY: THE CASE OF MONTEVIDEO. GOVERNING TO TRANSFORM: THE TERRITORY AS A SPACE FOR STRATEGIC INNOVATION

This proposal is based on the findings of 'Redefining the Future Uruguay', a study implemented in December 2019 within the framework of the SDG Integration First Mover Initiative. This study provided vital information to address the impact of the installation of Finnish multinational UPM's new greenfield eucalyptus cellulose pulp plant in Uruguay at the territorial level, highlighting the different voices involved (companies, environmental activists, the previous and current national governments, and the subnational government). As a result of the study, a portfolio composed of 17 interventions was designed. In 2021 and 2022, this project was executed, prioritizing five of these interventions implemented with a portfolio approach that provided the necessary cohesion, integration, and flexibility for success in addressing complex situations (Figure 23).

Figure 23. *Deep Demo and Portfolio of Innovations in Montevideo, Uruguay*
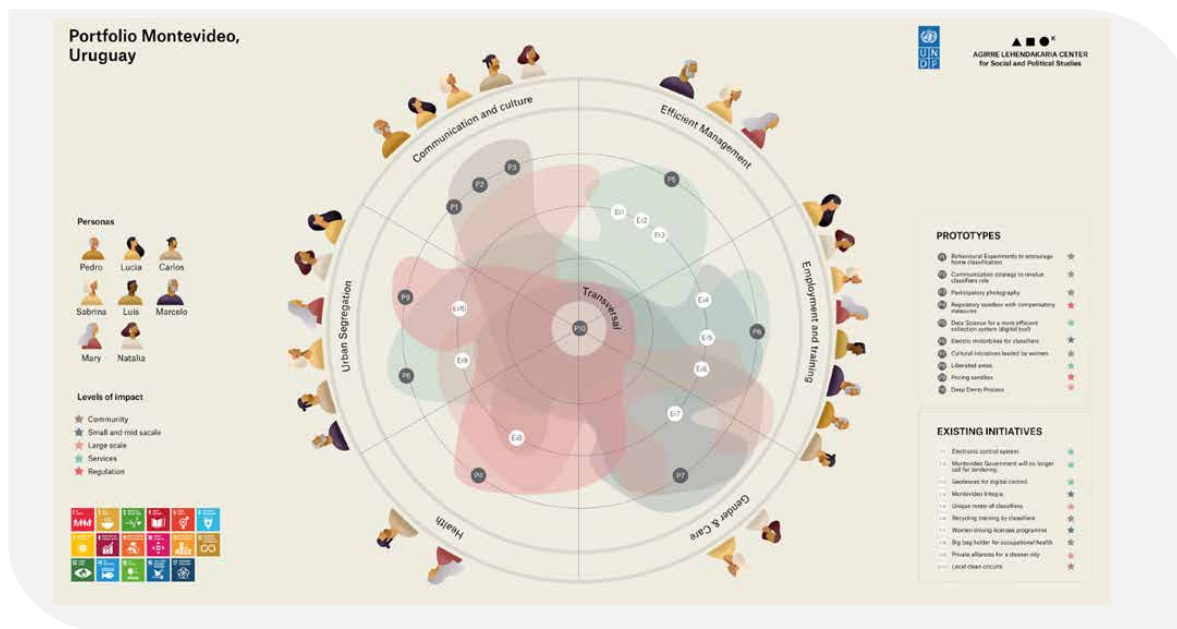
Source: UNDP, Uruguay, 2023.

The Municipality of Montevideo has been proposing a greener city which places the environment at the centre of its agenda, but despite its efforts, it had not been able to improve waste management efficiency, especially regarding waste in the vicinity of its final disposal site, the Felipe Cardoso landfill. This challenge was deeply rooted and interconnected with other phenomena, such as unsustainable production and consumption patterns, global and national market rules, regulations in conflict with reality, the social perception of work linked to waste, environmental degradation, and the impact on socio-territorial segregation and the health of surrounding communities. This complex challenge was therefore tackled from the perspective of sustainable development[25].

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25   At the same time, Uruguay's UNDP office carried out a sense-making process guided by its Strategic Innovation Unit, which fostered an internal team reflection on the importance of a portfolio approach and on new tools linked to collective intelligence and Deep Demos.

Another interesting case is that of Canelones, a department which is also recognized for its demonstrative actions, which have been scaled at the national level. Recognized as 'Uruguay's Breadbasket', Canelones has been proposed to strategically lead a knowledge-based economy that dialogues with creativity and territorial identity. In this sense, the opening question is: *Is it possible to move from an economy based on primary production to a society of knowledge and creativity, rethinking food systems and gastronomy as vectors of transformation?* (Table 14).

Table 14. *The logic of Deep Demos*

Sustainable development faces complex challenges that require the incorporation of systemic approaches, new ways of relating to citizens, and the design of portfolios of interconnected solutions.

Strategic innovation allows for the reconfiguration of: (*a) The problems to be addressed; (b) Governance formats; c) Design processes, and d) The logic of public policy implementation and evaluation.*

It is necessary to work with governments to strengthen their capacities in the logic of experimentation and to develop demonstrative actions towards new forms of management.

Enablers: The central axis of this process is strategic innovation and its link with effective governance, seeking to build subnational governments and UNDP capacities to implement demonstration experiences that provide better responses to complex challenges.

Source: UNDP, Uruguay, 2023.

From the developed experience, some interesting conclusions may be drawn:

UNDP Uruguay has developed a social innovation platform with the Municipality of Montevideo for informed decision-making on highly complex public policy challenges.

UNDP Uruguay has demonstrated the value of strategic innovation for a creative and transformative economy of food systems through deep listening with the Municipality of Canelones.

Parallel to this, UNDP's country office team has built internal capabilities for systems thinking and strategic innovation, working in an integrated manner to develop projects based on portfolio logic and not on one-size-fits-all solutions.

Uruguay's Deep Demo process has contributed to UNDP's global innovation strategy; this experience has enabled new spaces of openness for UNDP to address complex challenges and their associated risks, being able to support processes at a cross-cutting level while learning to accompany challenges yet to be explored or integrating different perspectives to known yet evolving challenges.

7.

7. LEARNINGS, REFLECTIONS AND A FEW IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

These new methodologies and approaches generate more agile models of action and intervention, adaptable to different contexts and innovative both in the form and substance of project design and implementation in areas as diverse as local governance, climate change, citizen security or gender equality. Recognizing these experiences, which have proven to be tools with a high potential for impact; packaging them as toolboxes that can be useful in various institutional and social contexts; as well as mainstreaming their use in the initiatives that UNDP develops in subnational and local governments, can strengthen a catalytic space that favours not only the generation of more and better innovations in the territory, but also the installation of capacities that do not depend, as is often the case, on sporadic projects or fleeting initiatives that fail to permeate or crystallize new practices or ways of promoting governance.

Looking at the broad panorama of initiatives and concrete actions that have been promoted in recent years in the region, with their heterogeneity and variety, it is convenient to reclaim the proposal to promote work based on the logic of the so-called innovation portfolios. A portfolio approach can target innovation activities according to a specific strategy, mission, or mandate; create variety to spread risk and foster opportunities; identify trends and gaps in overall innovation activity; and reveal linkages to support learning and collaboration opportunities.

From a strategic perspective, a portfolio of innovation activities represents a better bet than a one-off project to achieve a purpose or mission, especially when the operating environment is uncertain and the place and time an innovative response will be needed cannot be foreseen. Furthermore, it enables stakeholders to involve the capacities of other actors to face and solve complexity: nothing about us without us.

An innovation portfolio approach, within the framework of strengthening effective multi-level and multi-actor governance systems, helps institutions to:

1. Avoid 'projectification': When innovation activities must conform to clearly prescribed project formats, this limits the types of problems that are considered suitable for innovation. Portfolios reveal the collective impact and potential of a variety of projects and activities based on an overall purpose or mission.

2. Address risk aversion: Innovation portfolio management shows the big picture of a wide range of projects. Distributing resources and risks in multiple directions can normalize failure and learning, which are natural parts of innovation.

3. Seek synergies between activities: Innovation activities do not exist in isolation. They are part of a larger organizational or systemic context. Portfolio approaches allow you to discover how activities can be linked or form the basis of collaborative relationships.

4. Build value chains, support the scaling and replicability of initiatives and innovations: Innovation portfolios consider the entire innovation value chain, including the potential to scale or adopt innovations. They can also mobilize relationships with partners or other stakeholders, as well as different sources of knowledge and resources to help innovation activities move from the exploration stage to implementation, from prototype to final solution.

5. Monitor layered activities connected to major reforms: Innovation portfolios can be analysed at the team/unit, organization, and broader ecosystem levels to assess desired strategic impacts. Visualizing these relationships provides ways to coordinate, measure, and align innovation at multiple levels toward a shared purpose or overarching strategy.

6. Plan across ecosystems: Complex problems span multiple sectors and require the alignment of innovation activities across ecosystems, including, for example, innovation in basic research and local action to achieve societal goals such as the green transition. Portfolios can identify how and who should be responsible for results, evaluate performance, and facilitate cooperation.

7. Avoid blocking and capture by innovative fads: Due to the complex nature of perverse problems, innovations linked to these challenges need to be open and interconnected, avoiding predetermined rigid logic models and paths to single solutions. Singular solutions or linear processes may be attractive because of their simplicity, but they are no substitute for regular, systematic portfolio reflection and alignment with ever-changing contexts.

7.1. THE WAY FORWARD

In summary, there is a wide range of innovative initiatives in local governance that have already been consolidated, as well as more recent ones that greatly expand the set of initiatives identified in previous work (UNDP, 2021). In recent years, many of these have not only been strengthened and evolved, adding new functionalities, tasks or challenges, as is the case of SIGOB (Figure 24); progress has additionally been made in the use of new approaches and/or models to manage complexity, with a focus on SDG localization and achievement, which have proven their effectiveness and value in contexts of uncertainty. Such is the case of the UNDP Accelerator Labs (operating in 13 countries in the region) or of the tools linked to data and evidence utilization to formulate and implement public policies, as is the case of Infosegura on issues of citizen security and the rule of law.
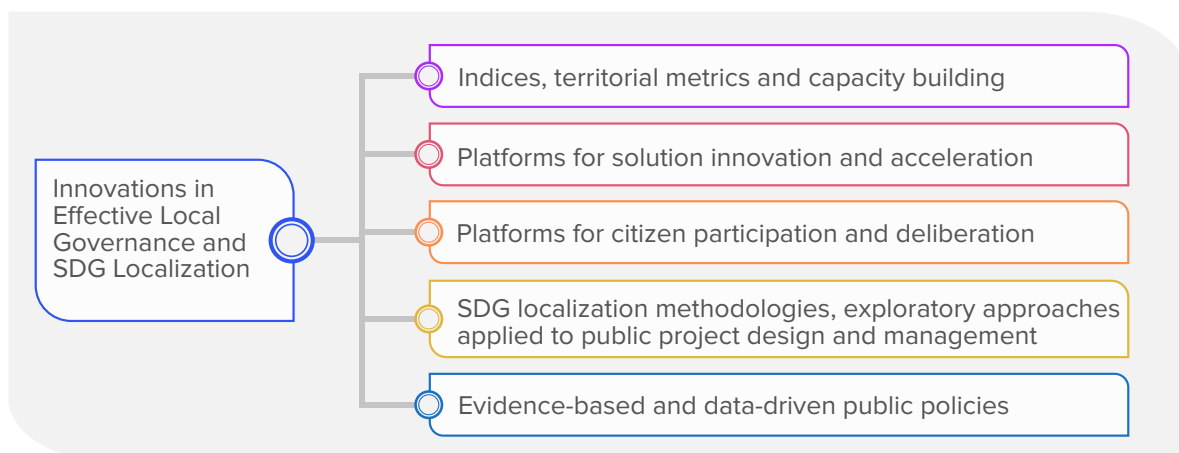
Figure 24. *UNDP SIGOB: the three pillars for strengthening institutional management*

The three pillars for strengthening institutional management

CREATE IMPROVE → SERVICES – GOODS - NORMS ← IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS

FROM STRATEGY TO OPERATION

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

Modules

• Pre Connection & Connection
• Institutional Strategic Plan - ISP
• Initiative Management System
• President, Minister, Governor or Mayor Agenda Management
• Monitoring Dashboard for Integrity and Management Indicators - IMD
• SDG Platform

INTERACT TO IMPROVE   POSITION VALUE CONCEPTS

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Modules

• President-Citizens Forums
• Convergent and effective communication

RESPONSE, EFFICACY, TRANSPARENCY

PUBLIC SERVICES

Modules

• Institutional Production Profile - IPP
• Online services - Regular structured procedures - SOL - TRE
• Document transparency - TRANSDOC
• Task Management - CUMPLE

Source: SIGOB Platform, UNDP, 2023.

However, given the dynamism of this type of process in the region, it is possible to update the original mapping of innovations in effective local governance (Figure 25), as a renovated proposal or cartography, which provides a roadmap and a support matrix to classify and explore the synergies between innovations (taxonomy of innovative initiatives).

Figure 25. *Innovations in Effective Local Governance and SDG Localization*

Innovations in Effective Local Governance and SDG Localization

Indices, territorial metrics and capacity building

Platforms for solution innovation and acceleration

Platforms for citizen participation and deliberation

SDG localization methodologies, exploratory approaches applied to public project design and management

Evidence-based and data-driven public policies

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

This is essential to continue developing the exploration, identification and systematization of cases and experiences in the coming years (Table 15), which make it possible to strengthen strategies and lines of action that take advantage of economies of scale, enhance the scalability and replicability of this type of projects in various environments and/or institutional contexts, and facilitate the generation of a genuine learning network that, perhaps, can be constituted in the future into a living community and an interactive repository of innovations in local governance, with a transversal logic within UNDP in the region, in which mapping is a habit, an iterative and proactive process of learning-by-doing, as a collective, to achieve sustainable development.

Table 15. *Breakdown of selected cases and experiences by axes of innovation in Effective Local Governance and SDG Localization*

Indices, territorial metrics and capacity building	• Municipal Functional Capacities Index (ICFM), Mexico • Territorial Democratic Governance Index (IGDT), Colombia • Articulated Platform for Integral Territorial Development (PADIT), Cuba • Territorial Development Index (IDT), PADIT, Cuba • Inter-municipal Cooperation and Complementarity Index, PADIT, Cuba • Territorial Governance Index (IGT), PADIT, Cuba (all acronyms based on their Spanish initials)
Platforms for solution innovation and acceleration	• UNDP Accelerator Labs (13 countries) • Public, citizen or open government innovation labs
Platforms for citizen participation and deliberation	• Ágora Platform: My Digital Community (Panama) • RedPública (Peru)
SDG localization methodologies, exploratory approaches applied to public project design and management	• Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach • Deep Demo case, Uruguay
Evidence-based and data-driven public policies	• Infosegura • Data Acción • SIGOB

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Finally, this study is closely linked to the co-creation process of a 'Strategy for the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Effective Local Governance (GLE)', led and promoted by the governance team of the UNDP Regional Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID). It also enjoyed the active participation of focal points and various representatives of several UNDP offices in the region.

In this sense, and with the understanding that Effective Local Governance is the backbone for the promotion of sustainable development, we endorse the view that the forementioned Strategy proposes as a framework for action (Figure 28).

Figure 26. *Virtuous circle of SDG localization and ELG*
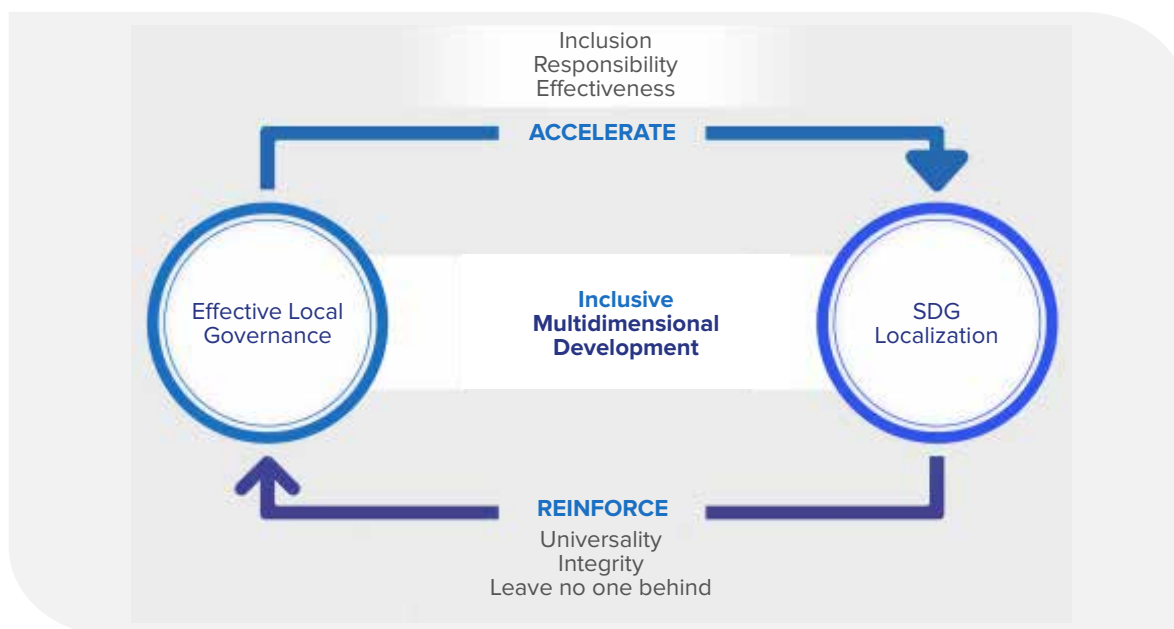
Source: UNDP, 2023 (in press).

Seen from this perspective, this Strategy's integrated framework, which incorporates four approaches (Territorial; Multidimensional; Multi-actor; and Multi-level; in coherence with Public Policies for Development) and six acceleration axes (ranging from the promotion of institutional strengthening practices and the construction of technical and strategic capacities for SDG localization—as a catalyst for multidimensional development—to the design and implementation of policies and mechanisms for decentralization, among others), will be a complement and point of reference to continue promoting a comprehensive approach in the field of innovations in Effective Local Governance (ELG) for sustainable development in the region. The continued mapping of the launch and implementation of these processes, as well as of their results and impacts, will make it possible to inhabit and nurture new spaces for democracy, collective well-being and hope in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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