



Systematization

The Region of Valencia and the local implementation of the SDGs:

*A region committed to Cooperation and the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

May 2016



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Summary of the systematization

After the new Regional Government of Valencia (Generalitat) was established in July 2015, it adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework and point of reference. The SDGs would guide all of the Generalitat's policies and not exclusively the development cooperation ones.

To that end, it has encouraged a series of innovative measures, including 1) the creation of official bodies to promote consistency of policy between different Government Departments (Consellerías); 2) actions to inform and raise awareness among citizens, and prepare policy makers for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and 3) drawing up of these principles in the cooperation strategy, through a participatory means of devising a new Act, and reformulating its Master Plan. Throughout the process, emphasis has been placed on not simply including entities directly involved in development cooperation, such as the region's NGOs, but rather a wide variety of Valencian social and economic partners.

This document analyses key steps in the process, as well as difficulties encountered, solutions applied and lessons learned. It reflects on some of the pending challenges for the future. The document has been produced by the Directorate General for Cooperation and Solidarity (from the Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation of the Generalitat Valenciana) and the ART Initiative (UNDP Brussels). Both institutions fully recognize and promote the fundamental role of local and regional governments and other local actors in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Besides aiming at promoting the rich experience of Valencia in the early stages of the localization of the Agenda 2030, and making it available to other territories, this systematization will feed the **Toolbox for Localizing the SDG**, being currently facilitated by UNDP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 and Habitat III (GTF).



Comunitat Valenciana: the Region of Valencia (Spain)

Socioeconomic and geographical data

Spain is organized into 17 autonomous regions, including one chartered region and two autonomous cities. Each autonomous region is made up of one or several provinces, totalling 50 within all of the national territory. Each province, in turn, is divided into a variable number of municipalities or districts, of which there are 8118 in Spain. The municipalities are the basic local units of territorial organization in Spain.

The Autonomous **Region of Valencia**, Spain, was established as an autonomous region in 1982 with the passing of its Statute of Autonomy. As of 2006, when the Statute was reformed, the Region of Valencia has been defined as a historical nationality, as stipulated in the second article of the Spanish Constitution. The Region is located in the Central-Eastern part of Spain, and it is made up of the provinces of Alicante/Alacant, Castellón/Castelló and Valencia/València (the latter spellings being their Valencian language renderings). With a geographical area representing 4.6% of Spanish territory, it has a density of 220 people/km², well above Spain's average density of 93 people/km².





The population of Valencia, according to the Official Population Figures of 1st of January 2015, is 4,977,171 residents, representing 10.68% of the total Spanish population.



Its GDP is €101,604 million, placing its economy fourth in Spain per GDP volume. The GDP per capita in the Region of Valencia in 2015 was €20,586, in contrast to the Spanish GDP per capita of €23,300. Valencia is a region with an important industrial presence—an economic fabric mainly composed of small and medium-sized enterprises—and it is one of the country's main tourist destinations.

The Valencian Society and International Cooperation: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

According to data from the study ‘Spanish Public Opinion on International Cooperation for Development’ by the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (Centre for Sociological Research) of the Government of Spain, between 2005 and 2015 only a minority of Spaniards stated that they were familiar with, or had heard of, the so-called United Nations Millennium Development Goals to reduce global poverty. In general terms, this can be extrapolated to apply to the Valencian public. The size of the minority familiar with the Millennium Goals has fluctuated from a maximum of 31% in 2010 to a minimum of 24% in 2015.

Timeline of the process

In May 2015, regional elections in Valencia took place, resulting in the formation of a new government in July. In September, parallel to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the UN General Assembly, Valencia began the process of conceptualizing and redefining Valencian development policy, in light of this global agenda. The systematization reflected in this document describes the process undertaken between October 2015 and April 2016. At this time, the foundation was laid down for defining the strategy for the localization of the SDGs. The relevance of this process was transferred to the policies and actions of the Regional Government of Valencia. It should be stressed, however, that the initiative aims to be ongoing until 2030. Its goal is for its sustainability and success to go beyond the limits of the current legislature (2015-2019) and continue under succeeding governments, independent of their political leanings.



Regional elections take place in Valencia.

May 2015

July 2015

A new government is formed via the Acuerdo Botánico (Botanical Pact), in which three political parties (the Socialist Party of the Valencian Country, Commitment Commission and the left-wing Podemos) agree upon the main governmental courses of action.

The Valencian Generalitat begins the process of conceptualizing and redefining its development policy in light of the 2030 Agenda, which was adopted in the same month.

Sept 2015

25 September 2015: The Regional Council pact is authorized. It establishes the importance of consistency of policy between the different government departments, in order to contribute to attaining the SDGs in the long term. To this end, the pact entrusts the Directorate-Generals of Cooperation and Solidarity, from the Government Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation, with creating and leading a working group. This working group aligns, disseminates and evaluates the Regional Council's policies for achieving the SDGs.



A Strategic Conference, 'The Challenges of Valencian Development Cooperation Post-2015,' is organised.¹ It aims, in light of the SDGs, to rethink the vision of the government's development plan, the logic behind cooperation, as well as its strengths and opportunities. Representatives of NGOs, universities, think tanks and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) participate in this event, as well as regional government figures. As a result, the regulatory elements (Act and Master Plan) are brought under view to begin their reformulation. They transition towards a sustainable human development policy with a medium and long-term vision. The policy has a commitment from all of the Valencian cooperation representatives around the SDGs. It highlights a variety of actions aimed at promoting greater consistency in public policy, and adopts an appropriate institutional framework for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Nov 2015

Universities organise Initial Stages of Involvement by reflecting around the "5 Ps" strategy in the new Agenda, which stand for Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership.²

A midterm evaluation of the previous Cooperation Master Plan begins, which is finalized in March 2015.

¹ All the information regarding the Strategic Conference (programme, documentation etc.) can be found in Valencian and Spanish at <http://www.cooperaciovalenciana.com/va>

² More information about the 5 Ps of the 2030 Agenda can be found on page 6.



Nov 2015
to
Jan 2016

Preparatory works for creating the Alliance of Cities (Alianza de Ciudades) starts. It seeks to generate involvement and consistency of actions at the local and regional levels, and raise awareness about the SDGs among the Valencian public.

Jan 2016

NGDOs get involved in preparing SDG guides relevant to the Alliance of Cities.

15 January 2016: The Regional Council pact is approved. It permits the creation of the Alliance of Cities for Sustainable Development.

Mayors are sent the document about the Alliance of Cities, with proposals for action and commitments. These proposals need to be promoted, debated, and approved by the social and economic actors of their respective territories.

Preparation begins for the forum 'Els objectius de desenvolupament sostenible, oportunitat per al sector privat'³, which will take place in April 2016, to involve the private sector in achieving the SDGs.

Feb 2016

Meeting in UNDP Brussels, where the Valencian Region presents its commitment to the localization of the SDGs. It learns about the elaboration process of a 'Toolkit for Implementing the SDGs at the Local Level', which is being prepared by the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 and Habitat III, UN-Habitat and UNDP.

Commitment from 12 of the 16 municipalities in the Region of Valencia involved in the Alliance of Cities is formalized, as is that of the Valencian Federation of Municipalities.

March 2016

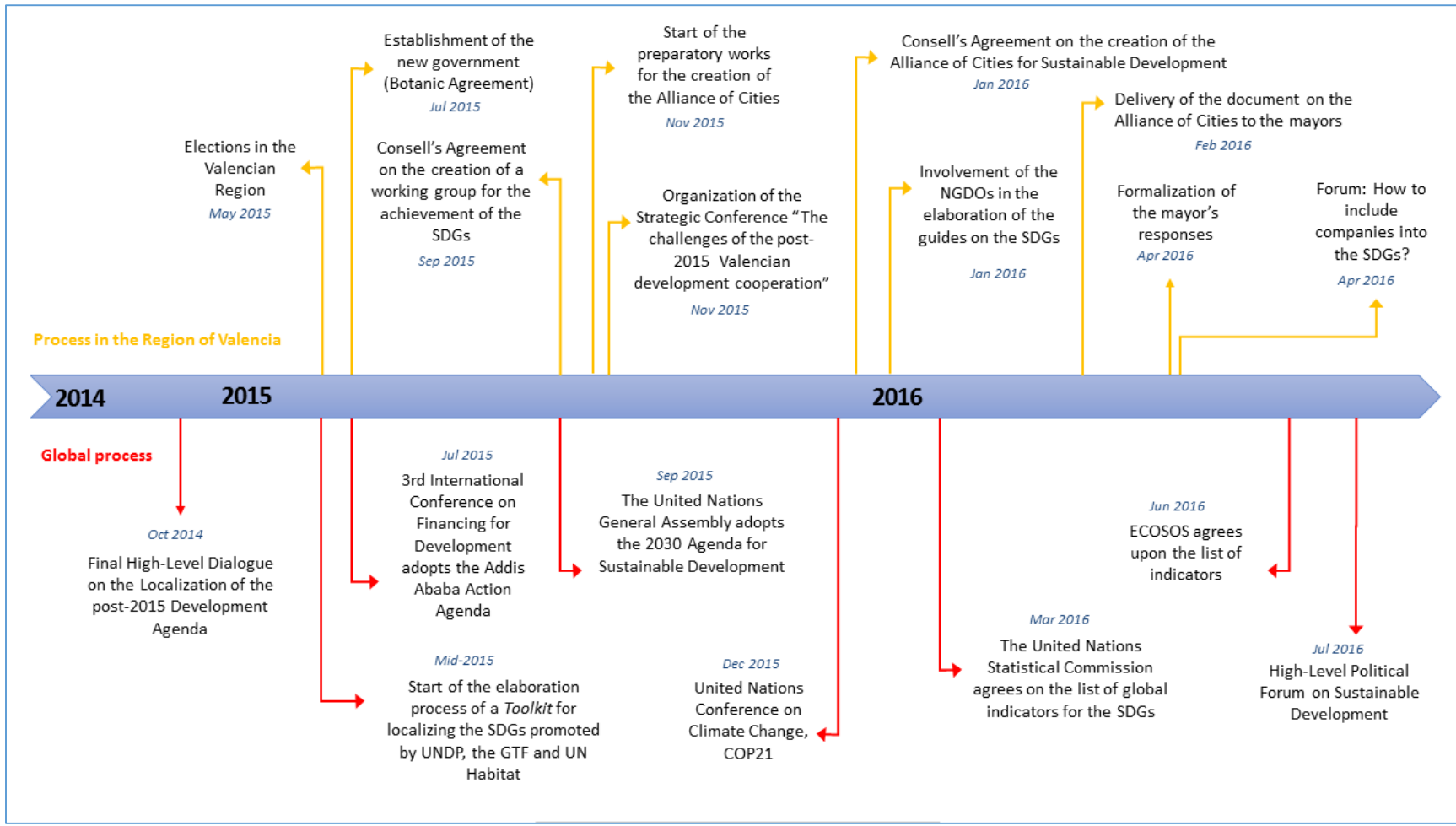
The forum 'How can the Sustainable Development Goals be integrated into companies?' is held, with the participation of the private sector, ILO, Global Compact and the regional government.

April 2016

Public information and consultation procedures are initiated for the formulation of the new Cooperation and Sustainable Development Act, by setting up a virtual discussion forum open to citizens.

³ Information relating to the forum 'How can the Sustainable Development Goals be integrated into companies?' can be found in Valencian and Spanish at <http://www.transparencia.gva.es/ca/sectorprivado>





Brief description of the context at the start of the initiative

In 2015, when the initiative which is the focus of this systematization began, a series of economic, social and political features acted as drivers for initiating the process. Among them:

- The consequences of the economic crisis persist in Spain and in the Region of Valencia.
- As a result of this crisis, citizens are affected by a generalized reduction in the quality of public services, an increase in unemployment and a decrease in their purchasing power. This means that the main concern of public opinion is the internal situation in the country and region, which has resulted from the crisis.

This context has an impact on development cooperation policies:

- Many regions and cities have drastically reduced, or even entirely cut, their development cooperation budgets;
- Similar issues are being faced nationally, by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and also in large part by the international community.
- It is especially difficult to justify international cooperation action to citizens, who do not always understand the logic behind and need for cooperation, and who moreover have very little knowledge of the past MDGs and practically no ownership over them.



Purpose and vision

The new government, formed in July 2015, considers a firm commitment necessary to bring the Region of Valencia in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It considers the agenda "a new opportunity, perhaps the last, to transform the world."⁴ For this new government, the agenda must allow advances to be made in the consistency of policy, and in working towards a "whole-of-government-approach" to Valencian cooperation, in accordance with the new paradigm and the new development cooperation contexts. It further identifies with the three dimensions of development—social, economic and environmental—both in its approach to internal development at the regional level and in its international cooperation actions. It has the political will to highlight the international development cooperation actions and strategies, which it has been pushing in the region. It also has the resolve to make these more credible and sustainable.

To ensure the 2030 Agenda is truly transformative and not a mere declaration of intent, the government understands that the SDGs must guide all public policy of the Generalitat at all levels, and not just those concerning development cooperation. To attain this consistency, the government considers it necessary to examine the tools needed for appropriate identification, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans, programmes and audits. It aims, then, to promote the use and management of knowledge, as well as a culture of evaluation, in order to go beyond one-off actions or projects.

Achievement of the SDGs has been adopted as an action under the Government Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation. Even then, it is still presented as a framework and guide for all of the Valencian public administrations, social and economic partners and all

⁴ Valencian Generalitat Strategy on the SDGs in Spanish: <http://www.transparencia.gva.es/EstrategiaODSGVA>



Valencian citizens.

Aware of the complexities of the goals, this perspective has been articulated and shared both locally (Valencian Federation of Municipalities), nationally (Government of Spain), as well as globally, through partnerships with United Nations' agencies and programmes.

At the same time, it is thought that the cooperation model that has been applied for the last 20 years—whether traditional or decentralized—has now run its course. To this end, it was deemed necessary to re-conceptualize and reconstruct the Valencian Cooperation Model, within a transformative global cooperation framework (post-Busan agreements, the move from the MDGs to the SDGs, etc.).

In this context, the 'Acuerdo de Morella' (Morella agreement: a document drawn up by the government proposing 2016 regulatory action), already establishes the need to "draw up a new Cooperation Act which updates the Generalitat's policies on development cooperation, based on the material discussed in the strategic conference that took place in November 2015, with the group of Valencian representatives involved in the sector."⁵

Brief Description of the Initiative



The transformative and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda means it recognizes the strategic role of subnational governments and of regional social and economic actors. It is structured around 5 core principles, referred to as the 5 Ps: Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. It is made up of 17 Goals and 169 targets. It evenly tackles and incorporates the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

Action from the Generalitat is tackling the challenge of localizing this agenda through:

1. Three strategic vectors: Information, Awareness and Commitment;
2. Three levels of action: Local, National and Global.

1. Strategic vectors

a. Providing Information

Actions are aimed at generating reflection among the public and political officials on why compliance with the agenda is in the interest of all of the Region's social and economic actors, as well as those of the Valencian Government. To this end, the following activities are now being promoted:

- **Training and technical support for policy makers in the Generalitat administrations or local councils.**

This support aims to provide policy makers with further knowledge on the basic principles of what compliance with the 2030 Agenda means.

- **Inclusion of the social and economic organizations in the region**

⁵ Morella commitments: *Seminari de Govern* (Valencian Government Seminar)



Action and participation from Valencian NGOs and civil society have been promoted, along with the assistance of councils and universities, to prepare "Informative Guides" on each of the SDGs. These are intended for analysis, raising awareness and training policy-makers, with the aim to provide specific conceptual resources and basic methodological tools.

- **Online training on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for public employees, within the framework of the Official Annual Training Plan of the Valencian Institute of Public Administration**

This training is particularly for local administration or Generalitat officials. It aims to shed light on a comprehensive approach of applying the new 2030 Agenda in public programmes and policy.

- **Universitat de Tardor (Autumn School)**

The school aims to encourage discussion and reflection on the 2030 Agenda through research papers and lectures. It lays an emphasis on the global commitment necessary to make advances in sustainable development and the global eradication of poverty.

- **Education and research on the SDGs from the Public Valencian Universities (Universidades P ublicas Valencianas).**

This effort promotes 5 lines of investigation related to the above-mentioned 5 Ps, along with a research team for each, in the Public Valencian Universities. The creation of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the challenges of the SDGs is also anticipated, for educating university academic staff.



b. Raising Awareness

These actions seek to devise a strategy around Development Education in educational institutions, from a global citizenship perspective:

- **Developing educational resources for a permanent academic staff training course.**

A course on development and solidarity education is made available to the staff through the platform: <http://mestreacasa.gva.es/web/>

- **Catalogue of Valencian NGO teaching resources.**

Teaching plans and materials are prepared by the NGOs and regional associations, according to the age of the recipient groups: early education, primary education, secondary education (ESO and Bachillerato) and vocational training.

- **Educational resources relating to the SDGs.**

"Knowledge bites" are created, taking the form of bite-sized pieces of information on the SDGs and why the implementation of these is of public interest. This information will be displayed on the website of the Government Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation .

- **Devising an Education Strategy and a Valencian Network for Global Citizenship.**

Within formal education, Development Education is promoted as a keystone of early education, primary and secondary education, and vocational training in educational institutions. The aim is to encourage an awareness of global citizenship among students, which will help them to be conscious of the causes that lead to inequality and poverty.

- **Cultural Programme in the Region of Valencia for spreading awareness of the SDGs**

Local art expositions in the region: illustrations on the 17 Goals, as a means of encouraging



relevant discussion.

c. Encouraging Commitment

In order for the 2030 Agenda to be effective, it is necessary to create partnerships between the public administration, the private sector and civil society. These partnerships are based on reflection and analysis of how the application of the SDGs will have a direct impact on the quality of life of the public, and why the goals are therefore directly useful.

- In order to reflect these principles in public policy and work on them consistently, the creation of two official bodies is anticipated, the details and functions of which are described later (pg. 14):

- i. High Level Advisory Council for the 2030 Agenda of the Generalitat of Valencia**
 - ii. Interdepartmental Commission for the 2030 Agenda.**

- **A Partnership for Sustainable Development in the Region of Valencia to achieve the 2030 Agenda.**

Sustainable development will only be achievable through commitment on the part of all stakeholders. Therefore, localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is considered essential. This begins with the fundamental role played by cities in forming public policies, which are related to fair, inclusive and sustainable development, focused on people and communities. In this regard, at its Plenary Session held on the 15th of January 2016, the Regional Council approved the creation of a **Cities Partnership (Alliance of Cities) for Sustainable Development**. The Alliance of Cities envisages a joint information and public awareness campaign across the 17 municipalities, together with the Valencian Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FVMP).



- **Alliance of the Valencian public universities within the scope of the SDGs.**
There are interventions that focus on working alongside local companies and civil society organizations, the private sector, social partners and educational institutions. Based on mutual exchange, reciprocity and knowledge transfer, the purpose of these interventions is to promote and mobilize the skills needed to achieve the SDGs, in each of Valencia's municipalities where they are being introduced.
- **Development of Public-Private Sector Partnerships.**
These engage the private sector and trade unions in implementing the SDGs as well.
- **Evaluation and accountability in meeting the SDGs**

2. Levels of Action

The 3 forces - information, awareness, commitment - have been broken down into 3 operational levels of activity:

a. Municipal/Regional Level:

The activities at this level are set out above. They will be described in further detail in the section dealing with the role of the different stakeholders involved.



b. **National Level:**

- The Region of Valencia seeks coherence with the SDGs for its strategy, its public policies and its cooperation policies. These are shared, discussed and agreed in line with the national strategy. In turn, they are linked to the experience of other autonomous communities and municipalities throughout Spain.
- With regard to cooperation, the Valencia Region Master Plan for Cooperation is currently being drawn up. It is intended to link strategically to the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF) of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).
- It has been highlighted that the Valencian Institute of Statistics and the National Institute of Statistics need to coordinate their activities. They can synchronise their work on indicators that measure and monitor advances made in implementing the Agenda.

c. **Global level:**

Collaboration, coordination and synergies are also sought with international partners, in order to deal with the complex nature of linking the three activity levels. This effort includes:

- Mainly, the development of joint schemes of action with United Nations' initiatives and agencies, such as the Spanish Network for Sustainable Development (REDS) (with whom an agreement has been set up), Global Pact, ILO, UN Habitat and UNDP. This joint method of operation has proved extremely useful for ensuring general coherence between the SDGs and their localization at the Valencia Region level.
- It is worth pointing out that the mechanisms that favour the multi-stakeholder and multi-level partnerships, as described in this document and encouraged by the Regional Government of Valencia (such as the High Level Advisory Council, the Interdepartmental Commission and the Alliance of Cities), are closely aligned with the guidelines of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), as far as implementing the 2030 Agenda is concerned. They are reflected in UNDG's MAPS strategy (*Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support*) which aims to promote Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Support for Public Policies in order to achieve the SDGs.
- There is an aim to design a multi-year programme framework via a new, decentralised paradigm for cooperation. The intention is to link international, decentralised, south-south cooperation actions. It is to try to move from a project-based model to a more integrated network and process-based model.



Role of regional government, municipalities and social and economic partners of the territory

To make implementation of the 2030 Agenda a shared priority for stakeholders from the Region of Valencia, active involvement from the following institutions has been encouraged:

1. **Government Stakeholders:**

- a. The Regional Council (Consell), as one of the basic government institutions, comprising the President of the Regional Government of Valencia and the Council Members (Consellers). It holds regulatory, executive power and oversees the administration of the Regional Government of Valencia.



- b. The Regional Parliament (Les Corts), as an institution that represents the people of Valencia through its members of parliament.
- c. The Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation and in particular, the General Directorate for Cooperation and Solidarity, as an executive body that plans and implements the Council's policies. It exercises its authority in the areas of civil cooperation and solidarity, education for development and social awareness, co-development, research and investigation for development, social volunteers and participation in this field.
- d. The different regional government departments with whom it is intended to promote coordination.
- e. Municipalities and FVMP through their participation in the Cities Partnership (Alliance of Cities) for Sustainable Development. The purpose of this partnership is to involve the towns and cities of the Valencia region in sharing information, spreading awareness of and committing to the SDGs. It promotes the adoption of comprehensive and participatory approaches, and brings the SDGs closer to all citizens across the Valencia region.



2. Stakeholders across the entire Region of Valencia

a. **NGDOs and civil society**

The participation of NGDOs and associations from civil society has been fundamental to the process of promoting coherence with the SDGs, as well as for reformulating strategy and cooperation projects. The objective was for the territory's NGDOs to progressively regain an active role in the development of advocacy and in the promotion of participation of other actors in these processes. In particular, the NGDOs collaborate in the generation of the Alliance of Cities, through the development of guides on each of the SDGs. Their involvement in the various stages of this initiative is described in detail throughout different sections of this document. Additionally, the Generalitat is currently designing specific tools in order to reach more sectors of the civil society, including associations of mothers and fathers of students, neighbourhood associations, etc.

b. **Private sector**

As the hub of the productivity sector in the Valencia region, the private sector is key to the creation of public-private partnerships, and also to corporate social responsibility. The intention is to encourage dialogue between NGDOs/civil society and the private sector (including the Business Association of Valencia). Topics of common interest can be discussed, such as the management of energy and water, good practices that are being implemented across the Valencia region, including the exemplary and widely accepted cooperative model used in several sectors (education, services, health). This model is regulated and particularly grounded at the local level. It should be mentioned that as a starting point, partnerships are only formed with companies that have signed the Global Pact, and who therefore reflect their adherence to ethical management based on the 10 principles outlined in this agreement.⁶ In this regard, a forum titled '*Els objectius*

⁶ <http://www.pactomundial.org/2015/03/adhierete-al-pacto-mundial/>



de desenvolupament sostenible, oportunitat per al sector privat (The Sustainable Development Goals, opportunity for the private sector), took place on 19 April between Valencia's private sector, the Global Pact, the ILO and NGOs. It was opened by the President of the Valencia Business Confederation, the Department for Sustainable Energy, and the Production, Trade and Employment Sectors. It was closed by the Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation. It was a resounding success in terms of attendance and participation on the part of the Valencian business sector.

Simultaneously, the Generalitat of Valencia promotes that the SDGs also present employment opportunities, along with the potential to strengthen the productivity sector. In fact, a change in paradigm requires a different business model that, among other things, can implement and accompany social, technical and technological innovations. This business model will provide a means to identify and follow up indicators, promote advances in the field of training for the SDGs, and make progress in producing data related to the implementation of the SDGs. It will devise methods for organising and reorganising services and public-private partnerships.

c. Trade Unions:

In addition to the private sector, the objective is to involve trade unions, starting with organising a forum on Goal 8, and providing tools and information to the most widely represented unions. This is done to align strategies in order to achieve the SDGs. Particularly, in relation to Goal 8, which states: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, decent work and employment for all.

d. Universities:

As mentioned above, various lines of action exist for implementing the SDGs, in which the university is a key participant. It is actively involved in looking at and preparing the population, building knowledge about the subject areas linked to the new Agenda. The target has been to create a pole of investigation, by engaging the participation of universities and making them jointly responsible for progression towards the SDGs. This has been achieved by involving universities in several activities, namely: developing 5 lines and teams of investigation, in which 5 universities are participating, to work on each of the 5 Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership); producing informative guides; and developing training activities envisaged for the university's summer school.





Meeting with the NGOs of the region

Forum with the private sector

Successful practices and tools

1. The decision to bring public policies in line with the SDGs required amendments in the Organic Laws of the Regional Government of Valencia. As a result, the Plenary Session of the Council tasked the Department of Transparency, Social Responsibility, Participation and Cooperation with ensuring coherence between policies and the SDGs, and drafting a new Law on Cooperation, which uses the SDGs as its terms of reference.
2. As one of the first actions undertaken, the Cooperation Directorate reflected on the relationship between each of the SDGs and the present reality in the Valencia region. This reflection is set out in a strategic document called *A Region committed to Cooperation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. This document deals with the initial phases of organising different activities that are intended to reformulate the Valencia region's cooperation.
3. To promote this coherence, the creation of the following two bodies is envisaged:
 - a. **High Level Advisory Council for the 2030 Agenda of the Regional Government of Valencia.**
 This is a collegiate advisory body and an institutional participating agency for the Regional Government of Valencia, attached to the President's Office. Its purpose is to transmit proposals, suggestions and recommendations to the President of the Regional Government and other autonomous institutions. It aims to contribute to the strategic planning of the autonomous regions' agenda on SDGs, and also to define the priority action areas in all matters concerning the 2030 Agenda. The Council is expected to include representatives of civil society. This reinforces the principle that the fulfilment of the SDGs is not a government project, but of the community as a whole.
 - b. **Interdepartmental Commission for the 2030 Agenda.**
 The Interdepartmental Commission for the 2030 Agenda serves as the technical body for the Regional Government Administration. It is attached to the department that deals with



development cooperation. Its purpose is to provide information and ensure coordination, coherence and complementarity within the different areas of the Administration's development cooperation activities. It aligns and follows up on the Council's policies aimed at implementing the 2030 Agenda.

4. The creation of the Alliance of Cities has been promoted in order to further the implementation of the SDGs at the territorial level. To date, 12 out of the 17 municipalities have already responded positively to join this Cities Partnership, and have formally taken up their role in relation to their respective territories. The agreement with FEMV is also being drawn up.
5. The Informative Guides on the SDGs are tools that have been key to educating citizens across the entire region. They are jointly written and produced by the municipalities, universities and NGOs, which set out the activities specific to the 5P strategy.
6. An online training programme is conceived for the Valencian Public Administration Institute's official Annual Training Plan. It will further the commitment to involve both local political figures as well as officers of the public administration.



Overview of one of the awareness raising campaign promoted by the Regional Government



7. Similarly, a citizen awareness campaign is intended through the publication of attractively designed teaching and promotional material (roll-ups), for wide distribution via Town Halls, for display in schools, libraries, health centres and other public places.
8. The international cooperation strategy was reframed after a collaborative effort between the territory's major stakeholders involved in cooperation. A large number of institutions attended the Strategic Conference on the challenges of Valencian development cooperation held in November 2015, and its successful organisation stands out.



9. Concurrent to the activities mentioned above, the decision was taken to develop a new Law on Cooperation and Sustainable Development, as well as a new Executive Plan that reflects a systematic relationship with the SDGs. Both are currently in the process of being drafted. It is worth mentioning, as an innovative factor, that the new law is being drafted via a participatory process. The Region of Valencia has set up activities to provide information, and it has conducted a public consultation to gather opinions and suggestions from its citizens. This involved the launch of a virtual discussion forum that was open for a month. It was designed around the 5Ps, consisting of various debating forums in each of the areas, which are linked up in turn. Participants can open different lines of discussion. At the end of the consultation period in June, a final report will be published on the Directorate's web page. It will be drawn up by a working group from the Directorate General for Cooperation and Solidarity, and it will show the proposals put forward.



Strategic criteria

1. To support the formal political decisions that shape the **"coherence" process**, it was imperative to embark on an **educational course**, which made citizens aware of the priorities that resulted from the economic crisis. They needed to be familiarised with the local, national and global factors that caused it. This could only be addressed by an agenda which acts simultaneously on these three levels.
2. A second important criterion is the fact that the entire process has been accompanied throughout by **dialogue, awareness, involvement, and the creation of joint responsibility and ownership** by the different parties involved.
3. The creation of the Alliance of Cities is a further strategic impetus. It is made up of the 17 most populated municipalities in the Valencia region. **Each municipality supports the achievement of the SDGs, based on its priorities, sensitivities, know-how and expertise. The other municipalities of the region join in the efforts of the municipality of reference, according to their specific interests from the 17 goals.** In this way, all of the 17 SDGs are covered, but at the same time, each municipality is active with regard to the SDG it has greater interest in and awareness of. A university and an NGDO, or an association from the territory is included in each Community Group. These 17 Working Groups are drafting an information guide for communities. These guides will act as tools aimed at building awareness of the SDGs. They will also train the politicians of local governments to promote the 2030 Agenda.
4. The following measures have been adopted for international, decentralised cooperation:
 - a. **An international partner search** links up strategy and resulting actions at the global level with localisation processes that are under way in other countries. This stimulates, enriches and consolidates them.
 - b. An analysis has been conducted to correctly project the coherence strategy between the SDGs and public policies, as well as the contribution made by social and business stakeholders in the Valencia Region. This is in response to the demand from priority countries for cooperation between the Valencian Region and Spain.
 - c. The technical and financial contributions for **cooperation** are not isolated projects. They are part of a wider, multi-year programme. **They identify localization of the SDGs as a focus of collaboration, in their relationships with other countries' territories with which they share common interests.** Their primary objective is to reduce fragmentation, in order to increase their activities' impact.
 - d. Partnerships among European regions are emphasized, especially among Mediterranean countries. Importance has also been placed on the need to participate in **coordination platforms** across regions. In this sense, UNDP ART, in particular, is considered a valuable



vehicle for bringing partnership into countries, and it serves as a means of coordination between levels.

- e. The need has been highlighted to form active links with the territories of countries where partnerships will take place. This will aim to confront the common challenge that the implementation of the SDGs represents.

Challenges and possible solutions

Adapting public action to the SDGs comes with a set of challenges, such as: the effort to integrate sectoral policies, long-term vision and the culture of accountability. These are all challenges that any modern administration must face. In particular:

1. One of the first challenges is to refrain from turning the SDGs into the government's political party flag. Instead, it should be a strategic reference around which the aim is to involve and pool efforts, energy and resources. In this regard, the Regional Government of Valencia has sought the collaboration of all the political parties represented in parliament from the beginning of the process. The Director for Cooperation has made a voluntary request to appear in the Valencian Parliament, in order to share this vision with the opposition as well.
2. A new Law on Cooperation, currently being drafted, rises to the challenge of its responsibility. It not only pays attention to international cooperation, but also to promoting coherence between the SDGs and the Regional Government's public policies. It helps form partnerships with the different social and business stakeholders.
3. Changing our ideas about the sustainable development paradigm and development cooperation is a shared task. However, changing the tools to materialise the new multi-level and multi-stakeholder paradigm is even more difficult. We cannot use the same tools as the previous paradigm, which was based on a donor-recipient model, namely, the project, invitation, evaluation method. A joint evaluation of the existing Cooperation Master Plan is called for, including social and business stakeholders. Work towards the new Master Plan will be presented in July 2016, within the framework of the new Law on Cooperation.
4. The difficulty of dealing with 231 indicators has been highlighted. There is a need, now more than ever, to coordinate actions among the agencies that deal with collecting data. These include Eurostat, the National Statistics Institute and the Valencia Statistics Institute. Coordination allows a clear vision of the indicators, so that they can already be counted on to measure the implementation of the SDGs. The cost of creating the missing indicators and identifying the necessary financial resources needs to be known.





The Cooperation Directorate and UNDP ART Brussels team working on this systematization

Lessons learned

- The SDGs do and must cut across the different areas of government. All the departments are responsible for this objective. In order to achieve the desired outcome, it is essential to find a suitable partnership, one that is of equal importance with each government area or department.
- The awareness and teaching process, which engages citizens and politicians, must start as soon as possible. It is also recommended that the parties taking part in the electoral campaign include the topic as a common goal.
- The involvement of multiple stakeholders makes the process of implementing the SDGs longer, more complex and more costly. However, it makes it possible to gain the approval and joint responsibility of all stakeholders.
- For the design of a strategy for the SDGs, a key decision has been to formulate the strategy with the members of the community, instead of teams of experts or external institutions. Similarly, extremely close collaboration with the NGOs has been achieved, making it possible to share complex tasks and establish partnerships. NGOs are enabled to take on their original role and avoid any kind of "commercial" relationship that may involve merely the transfer of funds from the government to the NGOs.
- A further fundamental factor has been to promote the work as a joint, non-competitive operation. There is no sense in the fragmentation and distribution of funds into isolated projects for each NGO. Rather, the aim is to strengthen these institutions as part of a consortium or group of NGOs or as NGO partners. They work alongside other institutions in the region (such as universities, the private sector, etc.) and have links throughout the territory itself.
- Finally, the search for local, regional and global partnerships, as well as partnerships with other regions in Europe, has been fundamental throughout the whole process.





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