



CURATING  
TOMORROW

# Localizing the SDGs Through Museums and Libraries

Making a better difference



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The project "Museums, libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: tailoring common approaches to local settings" is implemented with the financial support of the UNESCO Participation Programme.

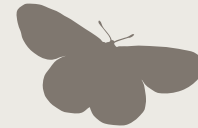


Curating Tomorrow supports the Sustainable Development Goals

**Curating Tomorrow** is a consultancy for museums and the heritage sector, helping them draw on their unique resources to enhance their contributions to sustainable development agendas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, climate action, nature conservation, Disaster Risk Reduction and human rights. Curating Tomorrow also applies the museum-based skill of curating to thinking about and addressing real-world challenges, not necessarily involving museums or museum collections.

Curating Tomorrow draws on high-quality information and research; combines creativity and imagination with focus, selection and attention to the real world; and has a strong focus on supporting positive change. Depending on the context, this could involve curating collections, research, ideas, partnerships, exhibitions, events, consultations, policies, staff training, speaking at conferences, leading workshops and/or running strategies together to address key challenges and questions. It will always involve enhancing your social and environmental impact through focused action directed to positive goals.

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Peace, dignity and equality  
on a healthy planet.

Commemorating the 75th  
anniversary of the Universal  
Declaration of Human Rights.





**How can museums and libraries  
strengthen their contributions  
to society, by working with the  
Sustainable Development Goals?**

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## CONTEXT

This guide has been produced as an output of the project 'Museums, libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: tailoring common approaches to local settings' (2022-2023), led by the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO, working in partnership with museums and libraries in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia and Moldova.

In 2021, libraries and museums of the three Baltic states collaborated to share good practices, resulting in the conference 'Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals through Baltic museums and libraries', which was organized with the support of the UNESCO Participation Programme 2020-2021.

The project 'Museums, libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals: tailoring common approaches to local settings' aimed to take this cross-sector and international collaboration to the next level. The project builds on the conclusions of the 2021 conference, with three goals:

- 1. Empower local museum and library professionals through training and highlighting existing good practice.**
- 2. Build new partnerships for addressing the SDGs in museums and libraries in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia and Moldova**
- 3. Develop a scalable methodology for localizing the SDGs through the work of museums and libraries**

This guide has been written to support the third goal. Case studies from the project partners also help to support the first and second goals.

### **Project partners**

Estonian Museum and Librarians' Associations  
Lithuanian Librarians' Association  
Latvian Museum and Librarians' Associations  
Alliance of Georgian Museums  
ICOM Moldova  
Librarians' Association of Moldova  
National Library of Latvia  
Latvian National Commission for UNESCO



# INTRODUCTION

This guide aims to help museums and libraries make a better difference for society, for the environment and the economy, by strengthening their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 17 SDGs are a global framework that can be related to local contexts and circumstances to set priorities for action, and to monitor and communicate action. They are the main tool for achieving the goals of Agenda 2030, a plan for people, planet and prosperity. The principles of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs have to be tailored to local contexts, ways of working, existing plans, challenges and opportunities. This process is called localization. Localizing the SDGs helps achieve the global challenges through local, national, organizational, cross-sector, community and individual action.

This guide has been written to make it easy for you to understand, plan and deliver action that helps achieve sustainable development. It accompanies other guides that explore sustainable development ideas and approaches in more detail.

You can help with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and you can help other people and organizations take part too.

This guide has four main sections:

**SECTION 1:**  
**Background on Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and how they relate to museums and libraries**

**SECTION 2:**  
**Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and how museums and libraries can help localize them**

**SECTION 3:**  
**A roadmap to localize the Sustainable Development Goals through museums and libraries**

**SECTION 4:**  
**Some tools to help evaluate sustainable development challenges and opportunities**

It is recommended that you read Sections 1-3. As you plan to localize the SDGs (Section 3), you may find one or more of the tools in Section 4 useful (you are not intended to use all of them).



## WHY THIS GUIDE IS NEEDED

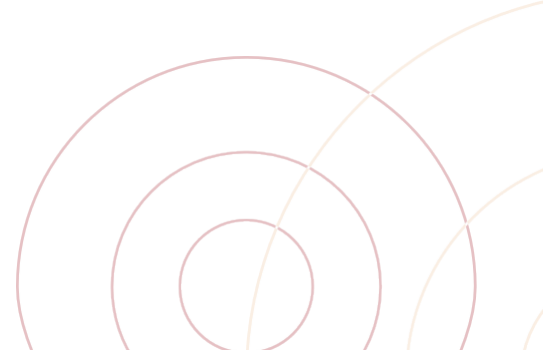
Agenda 2030 and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the member countries of the United Nations in 2015, as the main programme to put the world on a path to a sustainable future, to run until 2030.

While the SDGs are set out as an invitation to all sectors and all people to take part in sustainable development activity, they are not making sufficient progress. They are not on track to being achieved in many countries, and the COVID-19 pandemic and social and environmental challenges threaten to derail them and put us further behind.

Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals are also new approaches for the museum and library sectors. Many people and organizations are unfamiliar with them or struggle to relate them to their daily work. That means that they are unable to leverage their potential to take part in sustainable development.

Others want to support sustainable development and the SDGs, but are lacking in confidence, or are applying them in a shallow way that doesn't make a significant contribution to sustainable development.

There is also the risk that the Agenda and SDGs are applied to museums and libraries in top-down ways that make people the subjects of the decisions of governments and authorities - or of museums and libraries - rather than as active agents in shaping their communities' future. As we shall see, that approach doesn't make the most of cultural institutions as catalysts for true, inclusive sustainable development.





*Cultural institutions can be  
catalysts for true, inclusive  
sustainable development*



SECTION 1

# AGENDA 2030 AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

**SECTION CONTENTS**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AGENDA 2030

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HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES RELATE TO THE SDGs

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AGENDA 2030

Sustainable development is focused action to achieve a better balance of social, environmental and economic activities, to create strong communities, free from fear and violence, where people flourish, and where nature is protected and restored. It is based on three principles:

**Meeting human needs**

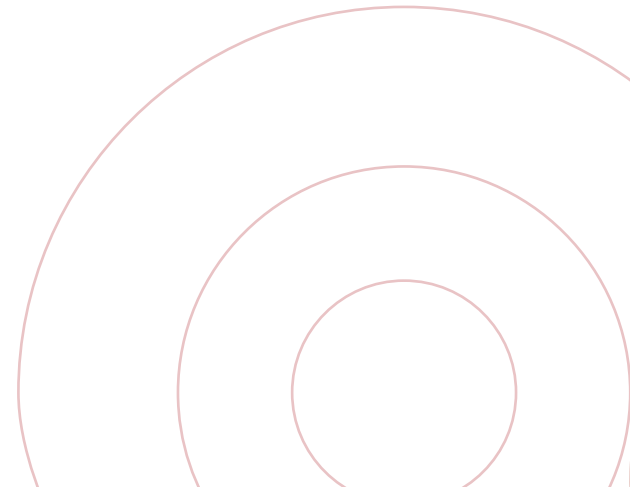
**Respecting environmental limits**

**Providing justice for everyone**

Sustainable development is focused on action that helps more people enjoy their human rights, protects and restores the natural environment, and shares prosperity more evenly.

It is an ongoing process to create a better world.

The main programme to support and achieve sustainable development is called Agenda 2030, which was agreed and adopted by the member countries of the United Nations in 2015. The programme will run until 2030.



## The 5 Ps

Agenda 2030 has five main aims, which take the three traditional aspects of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) and turn them into intentional challenges. Peace and partnership have also been added as crucial for action for sustainable development.

**These five aims, which are also actions, are:**

**People:** to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

**Planet:** to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.

**Peace:** to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

**Prosperity:** to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social, and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature. **Peace:** to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence.

**Partnership:** to mobilise the means required to implement the 2030 Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.



## A goal-based approach: the SDGs

The five aims of the Agenda are mostly achieved through 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which address a range of social, environmental and economic challenges.

The goal-based approach is taken from the previous Millennium Development Goals, which had shown that working with goals helped different sectors and sustainable development actors to collaborate.

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are a new way to achieve the many international agreements that are not being met, including both human rights agreements and environmental agreements. The main agreements are all rolled into Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, so the SDGs are a very efficient way to address multiple challenges together.

The 17 SDGs are achieved through action for 169 targets, or ‘sub-goals’. They are the most practical level to work with the SDGs, as explored later.





## Principles of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs have some principles it is important to bear in mind:

**A rights-based approach:** human rights are a guide to what actions are needed, and also how to deliver them.

**The Right to Development** means that everyone should expect the steady improvement of living conditions, and that people should be involved in decision-making at all levels (the Right to Development could also be usefully applied to museums and libraries).

**Leave No-one Behind:** the principle of Leave No-one Behind means that the needs of those most in need are taken into consideration and prioritized for action. This will typically include people and social groups who are marginalized/under-served in society.

**Gender equality:** empowering women and girls to take part in society is a fundamental aspect of Agenda 2030.

The goals are **universal** in that they apply everywhere, and they are **indivisible**, meaning that we can't just try to achieve one or a few goals, we have to do our best to achieve all of them.

As a summary, it is important to recognise that the SDGs are not just a top-down approach. They are to help bring together the lives, experiences, ideas, stories, aspirations and challenges of people and communities with decision-making.



# HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES RELATE TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## Culture and heritage in the SDGs

Culture and heritage can seem hard to find in the SDGs and their targets, but that doesn't mean they are not there. SDG targets that relate to culture, heritage, education and participation can be found in most of the SDGs.

The SDGs and targets are all also determined by local circumstances, differences, governance differences, and social aspects. In other words, culture. So, rather than seeing the SDGs as an agenda with little mention of culture, try to see them as a huge opportunity for the cultural sector to support the cultural and heritage aspects of sustainable development, and to improve the work of the cultural sector by adopting rights-based approaches.

## Museums, libraries and human rights

Sustainable development is a rights-based agenda, and museums and libraries have clear connections to a number of human rights, such as:

Freedom of expression and the right to information (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 19)

The right to participate in public affairs (UDHR, article 21)

The right to education (UDHR, article 26)

The right of everyone freely to participate in cultural life, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits (UDHR, article 27)

The Right to Development (1986)

Right to environmental information, to take part in environmental decision-making, and to environmental justice (Rio Declaration 1992)

Active, free and meaningful participation in sustainable development isn't only desirable, it is a human right.

The cultural sector - museums, libraries and other institutions - can provide public access to information and support education that contributes to a variety of sustainable development topics. They can also provide a platform for people and their ideas, explored and shared through creative experiences, access to information and participation in decision-making.

These activities can help support the grass-roots and bottom-up aspect of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and to make the Right to Development and rights mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality in communities everywhere.

They help support people's cultural rights, which include the right to education, freedom of expression and the right to information, the right to participate in cultural life, as well as the Right to Development; cultural rights are connected to other rights, such as the right to participate in public affairs.

Museums and libraries also relate to many other rights, for example workers' rights. As they use large amounts of natural resources, they also affect intergenerational equity, by contributing to climate change.

*Active, free and meaningful participation in sustainable development isn't only desirable, it is a human right*



## A framework of Seven Key Activities, and how to monitor it with SDG targets

In 'Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals', a framework of Seven Key Activities is introduced to set out the main ways in which museums can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

### The Seven Key Activities are:






- 1 Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and more generally
- 2 Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs
- 3 Enable cultural participation for all
- 4 Support sustainable tourism
- 5 Enable research in support of the SDGs
- 6 Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs
- 7 Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs

This framework can be readily applied to libraries.


The framework can also be aligned to the SDG targets, to help set goals, make plans and evaluate action. A highlight set of SDG targets would include the following targets, to set goals and monitor activity for these seven activities (this is not an exhaustive list, but is given here as a summary list that covers the positive and negative impacts of cultural institutions):









AGENDA 2030 AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Key activity	SDG target for monitoring	Comments
1. Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and more generally	 <p>TARGET 11-4 PROTECT THE WORLD'S CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE</p>	<p>11.4 covers the safeguarding and protection of cultural and natural heritage, but can also be considered as covering both the development and use of cultural and natural heritage. Protecting and safeguarding natural heritage also relates to SDGs 13 (take urgent climate action), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land), and potentially others (e.g. SDGs 2 and 6).</p>
2. Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs	 <p>TARGET 4-7 EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP</p>	<p>4.7 covers both Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education. Other targets related to education include 12.8 (information for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature) and 13.3 (climate education and awareness), but 4.7 overlaps with these two targets.</p>
3. Enable cultural participation for all	 <p>TARGET 10-2 PROMOTE UNIVERSAL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INCLUSION</p>  <p>TARGET 11-7 PROVIDE ACCESS TO SAFE AND INCLUSIVE GREEN AND PUBLIC SPACES</p>	<p>10.2 covers social inclusion in the broad sense, and can be used to monitor social inclusion in museums, libraries and society; it is related to and can support SDG 5.1 (end discrimination against women and girls). Another relevant SDG target is SDG 11.B (policies that take inclusion into consideration), although SDG 10.2 is arguably more direct in aiming to reduce inequality, while 11.B is focussed on policies.</p> <p>11.7 is about safe and welcoming green and public spaces, which includes museums and libraries. It is similar to SDG 9.1, which is about sustainable, inclusive infrastructure.</p>
4. Support sustainable tourism	 <p>TARGET 8-9 PROMOTE BENEFICIAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</p>	<p>Sustainable tourism has its own specific SDG target (8.9), which is about creating good quality jobs drawing on local culture, and tourism that respects the environment. Closely related to this is SDG 12.B, which aims to develop measures of sustainable tourism.</p>



Key activity	SDG target for monitoring	Comments
5. Enable research in support of the SDGs	 <p>TARGET 9-5 ENHANCE RESEARCH AND UPGRADE INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES</p>	9.5 aims to increase scientific research, which can be interpreted broadly to cover all kinds of research drawing on collections and collections-based institutions. This target can support other SDGs, depending on the topics of research.
6. Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs		
Employment	 <p>TARGET 8-5 FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK WITH EQUAL PAY</p>	8.5 aims to ensure people have good-quality jobs, with decent work and fair pay. SDG 8.8 also aims to protect labour rights.
Training	 <p>TARGET 4-4 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH RELEVANT SKILLS FOR FINANCIAL SUCCESS</p>	4.4 aims to ensure people have skills for productive employment.
Use of resources	 <p>TARGET 12-6 ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING</p>	12.6 is a catch-all target that covers all aspects of adopting sustainable practices, in terms of promoting human rights (also 16.10) and protecting the natural environment (which also relate to SDGs 6, 7, 9, 13-15). It also encourages sustainability reporting, which promotes action and accountability.

AGENDA 2030 AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Key activity	SDG target for monitoring	Comments
Commercial activities and procurement	 <p>TARGET 12-7</p> <p>PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES</p>	<p>12.7 is specifically about sustainable procurement and can also refer to other commercial activities.</p>
Ethical and responsible leadership and management	 <p>TARGET 16-6</p> <p>DEVELOP EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT INSTITUTIONS</p>  <p>TARGET 16-8</p> <p>PROMOTE AND ENFORCE NON-DISCRIMINATORY LAWS AND POLICIES</p>	<p>16.6 is also a catch-all target that promotes effective, accountable and transparent institutions, which can be interpreted as meaning that organizations are well-run, with the public interest in mind.</p> <p>16.B can be interpreted as meaning that an organization commits to fulfilling obligations that are both legal and that are relevant to its work, for example international Conventions and Declarations, to go beyond minimum legal requirements.</p>
Disaster Risk Reduction	 <p>TARGET 11-5</p> <p>REDUCE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS</p>	<p>11.5 aims to reduce the impact of disasters, through effective planning and resourcing. It is closely related to SDG 11.B, which focusses on planning and policies for Disaster Risk Reduction, inclusion and use of resources; and to 13.1 and 13.3, which aim to reduce the impacts of climate change.</p>
7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs	 <p>TARGET 17-16</p> <p>ENHANCE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>  <p>TARGET 17-17</p> <p>ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS</p>	<p>17.16 and 17.17 are very similar. 17.16 can be used to monitor international activity, such as partnerships and collaborations.</p> <p>17.17 can be interpreted as complimentary to 17.16, and to cover partnerships within your own country, or more locally. It is closely related to other SDG targets on policy development and implementation, such as 11.B, 16.B and 17.14.</p>





SECTION 2

# LOCALIZING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



**SECTION CONTENTS**

WHAT IS SDG LOCALIZATION?

BENEFITS OF LOCALIZING THE SDGs

WHY MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES SHOULD HELP LOCALIZE THE SDGs

HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES CAN HELP LOCALIZE THE SDGs

HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES CAN BENEFIT FROM LOCALIZING THE SDGs



## WHAT IS SDG LOCALIZATION?

While the overall aims and vision of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are global, there are many different realities, meaning that the challenges are different in different places, and so are the actors and relationships that can achieve them. In keeping with the Right to Development, Agenda 2030 gives us the blueprint, but what is built and who builds it will vary from place to place. This is where localizing the SDGs comes in.

Localizing the SDGs means tailoring the SDGs and targets to local contexts and challenges.

*"Think global, act local"*

Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals is often considered from the perspective of local governments and authorities, who have responsibility for planning and delivering public services.

However, localizing can be applied to any sector or type of organization, including museums and libraries.

That can mean embedding sustainable development principles, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs into the work of museums and libraries, as institutions and as sectors.

Localizing the SDGs through museums and libraries should not aim to merely replicate the localization approaches and frameworks developed by local authorities, but to relate to the work of these types of institutions. This approach helps to complement the work of local authorities and, crucially, to address aspects of Agenda 2030 that museums and libraries are well-placed to support (while local authorities are less able to support).

Localizing the SDGs through museums and libraries should also not aim to use the institutions simply as tools of governments or authorities. Museums and libraries should consider people's rights to participate in the Agenda, and empower them to access opportunities to shape decisions that will ultimately affect their lives. They can provide platforms for people and communities to shape and share their own ideas for peaceful communities.

*"Localizing' is the process of taking into account subnational contexts in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress."*

UCLG

*"We will further localize the SDGs and advance integrated planning and implementation at the local level"*

United Nations SDG Summit, 2023

*"Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) refers to the process of defining, implementing, and monitoring strategies at the local level to achieve global, national, and subnational sustainable development goals and targets."*

Stockholm Environment Institute



We can think of localizing the SDGs through museums and libraries as consisting of a series of activities:

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR CONTEXT BETTER**

By evaluating the social, environmental and economic situation in terms of the SDGs, for example in terms of what progress for the 17 SDGs looks like locally, or which ones are the highest priorities to address.

**EVALUATING MUSEUMS' AND LIBRARIES' CURRENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

By examining their contributions to the local social, environmental and economic situation, through the lens of the SDGs.

**INCORPORATING THE SDGs INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES**

By understanding how the activities of museums and libraries are related to the SDGs and targets, and using them to set goals, develop plans and evaluate activity.

**MOBILIZING THE POTENTIAL OF MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES AS ACTORS IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

By focusing the contributions and museums and libraries to pressing social, environmental and economic challenges, in a holistic way, to drive up ambition, action and accountability.

**EMPOWERING EVERYONE TO TAKE PART IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

By including sustainable development in existing educational and participation activities, and creating new activities that have a broader relevance and reach across society, as well as fulfilling people's Right to Development and other rights.

**THINKING GLOBAL AND ACTING LOCAL**

Localizing the SDGs doesn't just mean considering our local place, because people, places and sectors have impacts that can be far away. Localizing the SDGs means contributing to a better world - not just a better place - so we have to consider the impacts of local actions on places far away. Localizing the SDGs also involves empowering people to contribute to global challenges through their personal choices and actions.



# BENEFITS OF LOCALIZING THE SDGs

## **Localizing the SDGs has many benefits.**

- Empowers more people to take part in shaping the future of their community and in public affairs, and supports their human rights.
- More effective governance of complex issues, through inclusive decision-making.
- Promotes trust and understanding between people, communities, organizations and decision-makers.
- Strengthens the legitimacy of decisions, where more people have contributed towards them.
- Helps organizations and institutions to co-operate for the progressive improvement of the community.

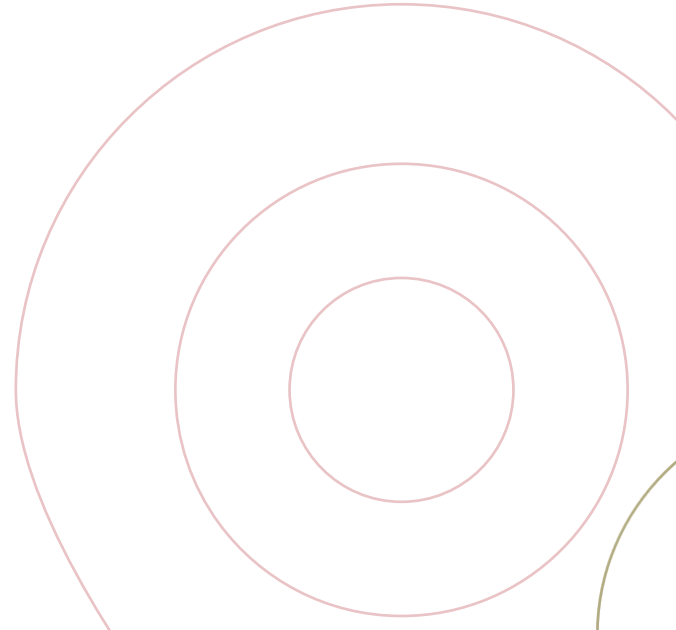


# WHY MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES SHOULD HELP LOCALIZE THE SDGs

While localizing the SDGs is often thought of in terms of local and regional governments, any organization can contribute towards localization. Localization is not supposed to simply trickle down the priorities decided by authorities, it is also intended to be bottom up, so that people and groups have more opportunities to take part in decision-making and in action. Museums and libraries are well-placed to support this bottom-up aspect of localization, and to help share information on Agenda 2030, the SDGs, and opportunities for people to take part in making them a reality.

Indeed, the bottom-up, or person- and community-driven approach to localization is essential to fulfil the Right to Development, which is specifically referred to in the introduction to Agenda 2030. People- and community-led sustainable development must be enhanced, and this is a role for museums and libraries to take on more fully. This will strengthen Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and the development and delivery of local actions, so that people and communities are not only stakeholders or are

consulted, but that they are able to contribute to sustainable development actively, freely and meaningfully. Localizing the SDGs also strengthens the contribution and purpose of museums and libraries to society.



# HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES CAN HELP LOCALIZE THE SDGs

**Museums, libraries and other knowledge-based and memory institutions can play important roles in localizing sustainable development, for example by:**

**Providing unique resources for multiple uses, such as collections, archives and information.** Making sure these are available, relevant, accessible and ready for use is fundamental to sustainable development.

**Raising awareness of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and their progress (and lack of progress).** Museums and libraries can empower people to know about sustainable development, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as progress towards them in their countries and more locally. An example activity would be to provide simple information on Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, and show the organization's support for them by including the SDG logo on its website.



**Empowering people to understand how their communities have changed over time** in ways that have both supported and got in the way of sustainable development, through access to collections, exhibitions and events. An example activity could be to give the dates of a timeline, and place objects or archives (or photographs of these) that demonstrate key changes in terms of society, the economy and the environment. Dates on the timeline could include when a town was founded, when it grew larger, when industries changed, how the environment became polluted, when regulations were brought in, and the population size. This activity can also include discussion on possible options for the future, and how those options can achieve sustainable development.

**Providing crucial spaces for public debate, dialogue, collaboration and decision-making.**

No one person or group of people should determine the options or choices of the entire community. Providing people with opportunities to know about developments

and to take part in decision-making supports a number of human rights. This supports the governance of complex challenges through inclusive decision-making. An example activity would be to highlight local planning issues and have a voting system or comments board so that people can share their views, and see other people's views. A museum or library could organize a public event where planners, authorities and different points of view are shared, and the audience member have opportunities to ask questions, share their views, and vote on their favoured option.

**Promoting relations between people and places.** Localizing the SDGs doesn't just mean concern for our immediate neighbours and ourselves, but connecting local action to global challenges and concerns. An example activity would be to take part in International Days and Decades, and raise awareness of connections between twinned towns and cities, or historic links between places, or contemporary links.



The framework of Seven Key Activities set out in ‘Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals’ outlines the main ways that museums can contribute towards sustainable development (this represents a localization of the SDGs to these types of institution). The same activities relate to libraries. These Seven Key Activities can be considered as their main opportunities to localize the SDGs in the community, and in the institutions themselves:

Key activity	How this relates to SDG localization
1. Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and more generally	Cultural institutions can help protect, develop and use local natural and cultural heritage, by making sure it is properly identified, understood and made available to everyone. They preserve heritage in the form of collections and collections information, and help preserve heritage in the wider world.
2. Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs	Education can empower people to take part in sustainable development.
3. Enable cultural participation for all	Raising awareness of sustainable development, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and creating opportunities for people to take part in sustainable development, through debate, dialogue and taking part in decision-making.
4. Support sustainable tourism	Tailoring tourism priorities to local social, economic and environmental needs and challenges, using sustainable tourism approaches.
5. Enable research in support of the SDGs	Unlocking the potential of collections to contribute to local sustainable development, through research and sharing research results.
6. Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs	Supporting local social, environmental and economic challenges through day-to-day management, for example through recruitment, training and procurement.
7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs	Connecting the local to the global, and working with other sectors in open, effective partnership.



# HOW MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES CAN BENEFIT FROM LOCALIZING SDGs

**Museums and libraries can benefit from localizing sustainable development in many ways, for example through:**

- **Greater relevance of programmes** (eg. exhibitions, events, learning and outreach programmes) to social, economic and environmental topics, challenges and opportunities, and that are of greater interest to people.
- **More effective use of their unique resources** - notably their collections - in pursuit of positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- **Being able to tap into the many resources that exist on sustainable development** (local, national and global plans, tools, networks, opportunities for partnership and more).
- **More effective setting of goals and decision-making**, based on what society needs, not just on what the institutions think it needs.
- **Playing a bigger part in local sustainable development**, as well as taking part in - and empowering people to take part in - an ambitious global agenda.

- **Contributing to stronger, more inclusive, empowered communities and societies**, in which museums and libraries can also thrive.
- **Building more effective partnerships and collaborations across society and across sectors**, that are directed towards achieving a range of sustainable development outcomes.
- **More effective monitoring, evaluating and communication of activity**, that is more relevant to external social, economic and environmental topics, challenges and opportunities.
- **Greater relevance to society, promoting public trust, and a more secure institutional future.**

**In summary, more effective decision-making, more effective policies, more effective programmes, more effective monitoring and evaluation, more effective relationships, and more effective outcomes.**





## CASE STUDY

# Latvian Museums Association online database of SDG good practices



### What was the challenge?

While there were many indications of the potential of museums to contribute to the SDGs in Latvia, there was a lack of in-depth understanding of the SDGs or how they related to museums' work. Good practice needed to be shared with the museum sector and beyond the sector.

### What did they do?

In 2020, the Latvian Museums Association, in co-operation with the Center for Educational Initiatives, Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation Association (LAPAS), and the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Center, developed an online database of projects and initiatives from Latvian museums that contribute to the 17 SDGs. The database is being supplemented by good practices from beyond the museum sector, including other cultural heritage institutions and libraries.

### What difference did the project make?

The SDG database supports co-operation, mutual education, cross-sector understanding and advocacy. The case studies featured in the database demonstrate the many roles of museums in sustainable development, and give visibility to museum work and initiatives. They help to inspire other museum workers who want to do more for sustainable development, and raise awareness among the public and decision makers of the many contributions of museums to society.

### Website

<http://muzeji.lv/lv/ilgtspeja-muzejos/iam-latvijas-muzejos>

### Further information

<http://muzeji.lv/lv/ilgtspeja-muzejos/par-ilgtspeju-muzejos>



## CASE STUDY

# Georgian Library Association creates Green Libraries in Chiatura



### What was the challenge?

Communities in Chiatura municipality damage the natural environment through unsustainable mining of manganese ore, as there are few alternative industries and the manganese ore is a source of income.

### What did they do?

The project 'Green Libraries in Chiatura' transformed five rural libraries in Chiatura into hubs to promote environmental knowledge, dialogue on environmental matters, and to introduce green technologies to the area. Libraries were provided with computers and printers, and the project brought internet access to the villages for the first time. Librarians were trained in environmental matters and in community engagement. The libraries were fitted with solar panels, and energy-efficient firewood stoves and irrigation systems were installed in the villages.

### What difference did the project make?

The project helped build dialogue between communities and the government. A particular aim was to empower women and different social groups to take part in environmental activities and decision-making, and most participants were women. Small community ecological initiatives have grown out of the project, which have helped make environmental improvements, and provide community facilities.

### Website

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2235648123234934>

### Further information

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYULcgyLTs4>





## CASE STUDY

# Alliance of Museums of Georgia promotes libraries' self-sufficiency



### What was the challenge?

Museums lack financial and other resources, and staff are often paid low wages.

### What did they do?

The Alliance of Museums of Georgia co-ordinated activity in the regional museums and in the capital, to promote more effective co-operation across the museums. Participants shared their experiences in managing museums and attracting visitors to their museums with one another, to promote the museums' resilience and self-sufficiency, and to develop the skills of museum workers.

### What difference did the project make?

The project helped empower staff working in regional museums, to strengthen their knowledge and skills in museum management to provide better public services. This initiative could also support museum workers' employment prospects.

### Website

<https://www.facebook.com/AllianceofMuseums>



## CASE STUDY

# Latvian and Moldovan libraries promote media literacy and social inclusion



### What was the challenge?

Pro-Russian propaganda means that people need media-literacy skills to promote critical thinking, notably in a highly digitalized and constantly changing world.

### What did they do?

The project 'Libraries as Builders for Local Democracy, Development and Resilience' involved 45 librarians, with external partners. They identified media literacy and a participatory approach as key factors in building social resilience. A methodology for understanding and building social resilience was developed by Vidzeme University of Applied Arts and rolled out by all project partners. In Moldova, 10 safe spaces and 21 play spaces were developed in local libraries.

### What difference did the project make?

The project helped to promote the key role that libraries, particularly those in rural areas, can play in strengthening communities and society as a whole. The group of 45 librarians were recognized as leaders of change. In Moldova, libraries developed their abilities to organize activities, which involved Ukrainian refugees (women, girls and children) and local families who were socially vulnerable; five Ukrainian refugee women were employed.

### Website

<https://www.facebook.com/abrmoldova>

### Further information

<https://www.facebook.com/cdfmd>



## SECTION 3

# A ROADMAP TO LOCALIZE THE SDGs THROUGH MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES



## SECTION CONTENTS

1. GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGs

2. DECIDE WHERE YOUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE

3. UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE,  
AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE SDGs

4. UNDERSTAND HOW YOU ARE CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THESE  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

5. RE-EXAMINE THE DIFFERENCE YOU SHOULD BE MAKING OR WANT TO MAKE,  
AND THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE AVAILABLE

6. MAKE CONCRETE PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AND TAKE ACTION

1. Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and libraries, and more generally

2. Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs

3. Enable cultural participation for all

4. Support sustainable tourism

5. Enable research in support of the SDGs

6. Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs

7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs

7. MONITORING, EVALUATING AND COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT ACTION





# LOCALIZING THE SDGs A ROADMAP

1

Get started with the SDGs: get up to speed and get organized

2

Decide where your work makes a difference

3

Understand the challenges and opportunities there

4

Understand how you currently contribute to those challenges and opportunities

5

Re-examine the difference you should be making

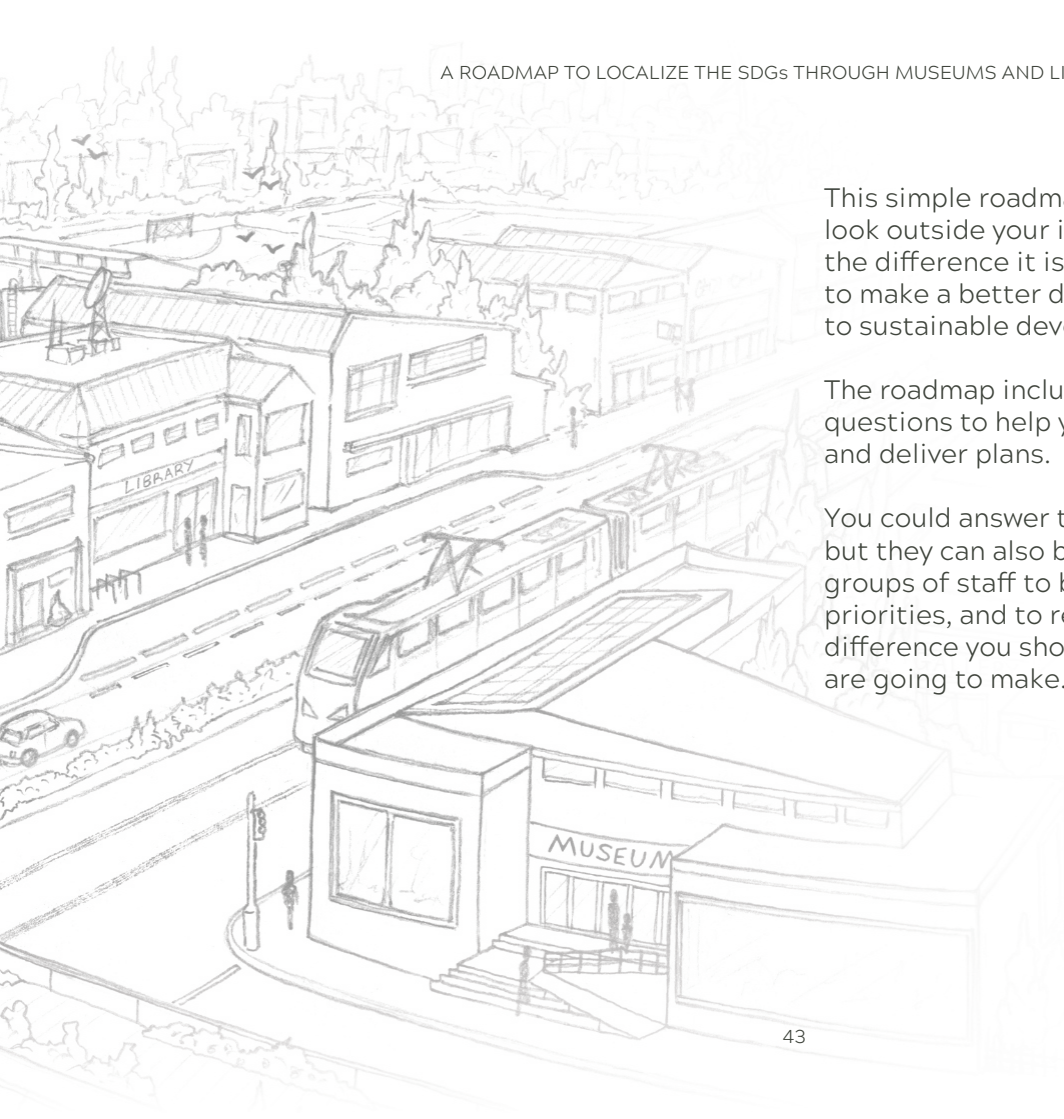
6

Make concrete plans for sustainable development, and take action

7

Monitor, evaluate and communicate your action

- Protect and safeguard heritage
- Learning opportunities for the SDGs
- Cultural participation for all
- Sustainable tourism
- Research for the SDGs
- Internal leadership, management and operations
- External leadership, partnerships and collaborations



This simple roadmap is intended to help you look outside your institution, look inside it at the difference it is making, and to make plans to make a better difference, that contributes to sustainable development.

The roadmap includes suggestions and questions to help you set goals, and make and deliver plans.

You could answer the questions on your own, but they can also be used as a tool with groups of staff to build awareness, agree priorities, and to reach consensus about the difference you should be trying to make and are going to make.



A possible timeline for the activities outlined in this section could look like this:

	MONTHS					
	1-2	2-4	4-6	6-8	8-10	10-12
<b>Getting started with the SDGs (1)</b>						
Decide who is going to do what						
Learn about the SDGs						
Raise awareness of the SDGs internally and externally						
Seek partners locally						
Embed SDGs into existing plans and policies						
<b>Decide where your work makes a difference (2)</b>						
<b>Identify challenges and opportunities there (3)</b>						
<b>Understand how you currently contribute to local challenges and opportunities (4)</b>						
<b>Re-examine the difference you want to make (5)</b>						
<b>Make concrete plans (months 4-6), and take action (months 6-12) (6)</b>						
1. Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and more generally						
2. Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs						
3. Enable cultural participation for all						
4. Support sustainable tourism						
5. Enable research in support of the SDGs						
6. Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs						
7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs						
<b>Monitoring, evaluation and communication (7)</b>						
Identify key milestones and indicators for goals, plans and actions						
Monitor and evaluate activity						
Communicate progress (including challenges) both internally and externally						

# 1. GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGs



## The first thing is to realize you have already started!

**Decide who is going to do what.** Will work on the SDGs be led by an individual, a team, across teams, or something else? Make it very clear who is going to do what, and how they are to work with others and communicate their activity.

**Learn about Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, raise awareness internally.** [Find out more from the United Nations](#)<sup>1</sup>

**Explore the 17 SDGs**<sup>2</sup>, in terms of what they mean, the targets for the goals, and annual updates on progress towards them.

**Read the first part of [‘Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’](#)**<sup>3</sup>, including the description of Our World Today and the Vision of the Agenda, and including information on each of the SDGs

There are plenty of videos on Youtube from the United Nations and UN agencies about sustainable development, the SDGs, and particular sustainable development topics.

**Look at your current actions**, and see how they contribute to different SDGs, both positively and negatively.

**Make Agenda 2030 and the SDGs part of staff meetings and discussions**, to normalize them in your workplace.

**Read [‘Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals’](#)**<sup>4</sup>, or at least the framework of Seven Key Activities.

**Find out about progress with the SDGs in your country.** Countries report on their progress with the SDGs periodically to the United Nations in reports called **Voluntary National Reviews**. You could look at your country’s progress - and challenges - in working to address the SDGs. There is a searchable database of all previous reports at [here](#)<sup>5</sup>.

*Make sure the whole team  
(or at least most of it) is onboard* (Inga)



You can [explore data on progress with the SDGs](#)<sup>6</sup>, including at country level, which is the official data source. You can also find information at the [Our World in Data SDG Tracker](#)<sup>7</sup>.

You can also gain an independent assessment of your country's progress in the [SDG Index](#)<sup>8</sup>, that is produced as part of an annual Sustainable Development Report by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. This has a searchable interactive map, providing data on progress with each goal, as well as further information on a set of indicators. The SDG Index uses a simplified set of indicators, different to the official indicator set.

*Involve those responsible for reporting,  
for a bird's-eye view* (Veronika)

**Raise awareness of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs locally.** Any organization that is committed to the principles of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs can use the SDG logo on its website. This helps raise awareness, and also shows what you stand for. The logo can be found [here](#)<sup>9</sup>.

Make sure you use it following the SDG Brand Guidelines (available at the same link). Usually, you can show your logo next to the SDG logo, with the words '[Organization name] supports the Sustainable Development Goals'.

As well as the SDG logo itself, make use of the SDG icons and target icons, and other visual materials, to raise awareness. These can be found [here](#)<sup>10</sup> (including brand guidelines on how the icons and local can, and can't, be used).

Emphasize that Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are about human rights, environmental protection and social justice, and that they are not only for governments and authorities, but an invitation to everyone.

*What do SDG supporters and critics say?* (Irakli)

**Seek partners.** Explore who is doing what locally for sustainable development, and who could be good partners to support your work - and who you could support.

Advertise to others that you are interested in working to support sustainable development and the SDGs, and that you are looking for partners.

Seek partners who have existing knowledge and experience of working with sustainable development, as a whole, and in relation to particular priorities you may have.

Universities, colleges, civil society organizations and NGOs, local authorities, and residents' groups would be good places to start.

Remember to ensure that the voices and perspectives of minorities/under-served people and groups are included in these discussions.

**Incorporate sustainable development and the SDGs into your current policies and plans.** Evaluate the connections between your existing policies and plans with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Use the SDGs and targets to focus work, develop relevant indicators, and to communicate your activity.

Align policies, plans, monitoring, evaluation and communication with external needs and opportunities, identified in Section 2, and be clear on how you are contributing to the SDGs and targets.

Make an explicit statement that you are working to help achieve Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and that you adopt its principles of a rights-based approach, 'Leave No-one Behind', and gender equality.

*Search for strong partners who have influence*

*Motivate yourselves and others* (Elina)



## 2. DECIDE WHERE YOUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Although it may seem obvious, in practice, many museums and libraries are not clear on where their work mainly makes a difference. It is important to decide this to take part in sustainable development activity. It is not very helpful to just think of the institution as being open 'for everyone' or 'wherever people are from'. Even if this is true, in order to make plans you have to have a region in mind, so you can understand the social, economic and environmental challenges there.

Of course, deciding on the place where your work makes a difference does not need to cover all of your visitors or users, but the majority of them. Think of it as your local place.

*Recognize that your work on the SDGs has a background* (Zane)

You could consider where your work makes a difference locally, which is easiest, but also to look at what places are affected in your supply chain.

In addition, your organization might have clear links to other parts of the world, most obviously through its collections and related topics, which can serve as a catalyst for stronger concern for and partnerships with those places.

*Our audience trusts us, we can use the trust to develop SDG activity* (Karin)



### 3. UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE, AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE SDGs



Once you've decided on the place[s] where your work makes a difference, explore the challenges and opportunities there.

Identify a small number of reliable, good-quality sources of information. These might include the Local Development Plan or Strategy, or there might be separate reports for education, environment, business and other sectors. You might be able to get information from the local government or council office, or from local universities. You might be able to get information from local NGOs.

Make sure the sources of information are good quality and reliable.

*Know your audience, listen to them!* (Inga)

It is important that you don't make assumptions or just guess what you think the problems and opportunities are in those places.

These can provide you with access to statistics to help identify trends, challenges and opportunities. Avoid guessing information whenever possible. Good quality sources of information can strengthen your decision-making, and are also more likely to generate activities and outcomes that are worth achieving.

*Understand relevant local policies and plans*



If you don't know something, identify who else is working on a topic and ask them for information. This is also an opportunity to show that you are working on sustainable development challenges, that might lead to partnership with the information provider.

Section 4 includes a range of additional tools and approaches that may help you evaluate and decide upon the sustainable development challenges, and the challenges you want to contribute to more effectively.

*Who are the most vulnerable/excluded people and communities?*

### **What are the key social challenges and opportunities?**

Where are these challenges (are they evenly spread or do particular communities face them more acutely)?

What minorities/under-served groups live there?

What are the main local policies and action plans?

Who else is working on these challenges and opportunities?

### **What are the key economic challenges and opportunities?**

What industries are struggling or thriving, and which ones could contribute to the green economy?

What are the main local policies and action plans?

Who else is working on these challenges and opportunities?

**What are the key environmental challenges and opportunities?**

Is nature well protected, and being restored? What are the sources of pollution to air, water and as waste? What natural hazards are there, and how is climate change impacting the area?

What industries and activities are most harmful to the environment?

Can people access good quality green spaces and more natural areas?

Who is impacted by natural hazards, and how?

Are people's levels of consumption of natural resources acceptable, and which social groups are contributing most positively and most negatively to the environment.

What are the main local policies and action plans?

Who else is work on environmental challenges and opportunities?

**How stable is peace, what are the sources of conflict, and what efforts are being made to reduce conflict?**

What are the main local policies and action plans?

Who else is working on peace and conflict reduction?

**How easy is it to form and take part in partnerships, with different sectors, NGOs, and authorities?**

Who has particular responsibilities for social, environmental and economic topics and agendas?

Remember that social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities are connected to one another, and that the goal of sustainable development is to achieve a harmonious balance between them. That means that, for example, economic opportunities should not be harmful to society or the environment.



## 4. UNDERSTAND HOW YOU ARE CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTING TO THESE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Having looked outside your institutions, to the situation in your region, now look inside the organization to see how you are currently working on the local social, economic and environmental challenges.

**How do you contribute positively and negatively to the key social challenges and opportunities?**

**How reflective of society in the region are your visitors and other users, in terms of minorities/under-served groups?**

**How do you contribute positively and negatively to the key economic challenges and opportunities?**

**How do you contribute positively and negatively to the key environmental challenges and opportunities?**

**How do you contribute positively and negatively towards peace-building and conflict?**

**What untapped potential exists for your organization to contribute more effectively to social, economic and environmental challenges?**

**Which local actors working on social, economic and environmental challenges do you partner with, and which major actors do you not have relationships with?**

Look at the following seven statements, and ask yourself how much your organization is currently contributing towards these activities, positively, negatively, and what potential is untapped. You could, for example, give a score on a scale of 1-10 for each of these three aspects.

You could also use this as a team-based or whole-organization exercise, to build a common understanding among staff.

### Key activity

Cultural and natural heritage are effectively protected, safeguarded, developed and used sustainably across the region.

Everyone across the region has the knowledge, motivation and practical skills to take part in sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Everyone across the region is empowered to take part in cultural activities, to know their own culture and that of other people, and to contribute to the cultural life of the community.

Tourism is well-managed across the region, helping bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the region, and the negative impacts of tourism are well managed and minimized.

The region benefits from research carried out on collections, and the organization acts as a platform to communicate research findings, that help contribute to sustainable development.

The region benefits from the operational and business decisions of our institution, in terms of contributing to sustainable development and the SDGs.

The region has strong local/regional partnerships and collaborations, that contribute effectively to sustainable development and the SDGs.





*Some problems go away if you give them time. Is it still a problem two weeks later?* (Veronika)

*Ask for feedback* (Klementina)

*Let life challenge you and go with the flow* (Emils)

*Don't operate with buzzwords!  
Work with what you really care for* (Inga)

## 5. RE-EXAMINE THE DIFFERENCE YOU SHOULD BE MAKING OR WANT TO MAKE, AND THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE AVAILABLE

This step can involve a bit of soul-searching, as it means critically evaluating what your organization aims to do, and what it is actually doing.

Think about your organization's mission and vision. These should state the difference the organization is aiming to make for society.

Do the mission and vision aim to make the right difference, that is, to address the social, environmental and economic challenges and opportunities locally and globally? Are you doing enough? Should you be doing more for sustainable development, and if so what could you usefully do?

The seven activities in ‘Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals’ can be used as the basis of statements that set out your commitment to sustainable development:

**We are committed to ensuring that cultural and natural heritage is effectively protected and safeguarded in our region.**

**We are committed to ensuring that everyone in our region has the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to take part in sustainable development, and that they can learn about their own culture and that of others, and of natural heritage.**

**We are committed to ensuring that everyone in our region can participate in cultural life, understand different cultures and contribute to the cultural life of the community. We are committed to ensuring no-one is ‘left behind’.**

**We are committed to contributing towards sustainable tourism, that benefits communities, economies and the environment, and reduces the negative impacts of tourism.**

**We are committed to ensuring that the research potential of our resources contributes to sustainable development, locally and globally, and that people benefit from research findings.**

**We are committed to ensuring our operational and management decisions contribute to sustainable development, locally and globally.**

**We are committed to supporting and taking part in partnerships and collaborations that contribute to sustainable development, locally and globally.**

How well do these statements describe your organization?

Do you want to make a bigger, better difference using these - or similar - statements as a guide?

You could ask your various stakeholders what kind of difference your organization should be making, and what difference it is making, to help raise ambition for sustainable development.

You are very unlikely to achieve different results, let alone better results, if you just continue to do the same thing. If you want to be more effective, and contribute more positively and less negatively to the world, you must do things differently.





## 6. MAKE CONCRETE PLANS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AND TAKE ACTION

*Do you have the knowledge you will need?* (Irakli)

*Make sure activities can continue after projects end*

*Develop both short- and long-term strategies* (Valeria)

This part of the Roadmap makes suggestions on activities that can strengthen your contributions to sustainable development and the SDGs. You don't have to do all of them.

Suggested activities are set out under the Seven Key Activities set out in 'Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals'. Remember, plans that aren't followed up by action do not achieve anything.

When you have decided which of these activities you are going to focus on, use the next part of the Roadmap on Monitoring, Evaluation and Communication to identify concrete measures of progress for these activities.



## KEY ACTIVITY 1

### Protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, both in museums and libraries, and more generally

Embed sustainable development and the SDGs into your collections and concerns for cultural and natural heritage.

---

Review collections in terms of local and global social, economic and environmental challenges and opportunities.

---

Develop collections that can help interpret and understand local and global sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

---

Share unneeded collections with other organizations, that can help them contribute to interpretation and understanding of local and global sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

---

Tag collections, for example on shelves, in databases, websites, social media and in images, in relation to the SDGs and to sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

---

Work with partners to identify, protect, safeguard, develop and make use of cultural and natural heritage in the region, using sustainable development and the SDGs as a guiding framework.

---



## KEY ACTIVITY 2

### Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs

Bring sustainable development and the SDGs into your existing educational and awareness-raising activities, for example you could consider which SDGs and targets programmes support, or you could interpret collections in relation to the SDGs and related topics.

---

Create multiple educational, awareness-raising and participation opportunities that support sustainable development and the SDGs.

---

Adopt Education for Sustainable Development, and Global Citizenship Education, as the basis for learning programmes. There are many good quality resources available to support this, and opportunities to take part in initiatives, such as ESD2030, the ESD 2030 toolkit, Global Citizenship Education Clearing House, and/or [Our Collections Matter Toolkit](#).<sup>11</sup>

---

Use collections, exhibitions, events and educational activities as resources and opportunities for disaster risk management and reduction, to empower people to understand current and potential threats to them, their property and others, and how potential threats can be reduced or managed.

---

Ensure educational activities are appropriate to the needs and aspirations of different groups of people, to avoid 'blanket' approaches. Incorporate the educational aspects of different international agreements as appropriate into programmes, eg. ICERD (to end racial discrimination), UNDRIP (Indigenous people), UNDROP (small-scale producers), CEDAW (women and girls), CRPD (disabled people), CRC (Children).

---



### KEY ACTIVITY 3

#### Enable cultural participation for all

Embrace human rights as a basis for decision-making and planning and delivering activity.

---

Empower everyone to understand their human rights and how they relate to museum and library activities.

---

Make sure that everyone understands the rights of marginalized/under-served people and groups.

---

Make use of the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a basis for how to work with people as individuals and communities.

---

Raise awareness of local and global sustainable development challenges and opportunities, aiming to reach all people using different methods of communication.

---

Raise awareness of your country's or your authorities' stated commitments for sustainable development and the SDGs, to promote awareness and accountability.

---

Create opportunities for people to contribute viewpoints on local and global sustainable development challenges and opportunities, and to create, debate and decide on visions of the community's future.

---

Promote International Days, Years and Decades in exhibitions, events, educational activities and on social media.

---

Use many platforms (exhibitions, events, educational activities, websites, publications, social media) to raise awareness of, and participation in sustainable development and the SDGs.

---

Make special efforts to reach out to marginalized/under-served people and groups, to take part in educational, awareness-raising and participation opportunities related to sustainable development and the SDGs.

---



## KEY ACTIVITY 4

### Support sustainable tourism

Tourism creates both positive and negative impacts, for example recognize that visitor emissions from travel are part of your organization's carbon footprint (part of its Scope 3 emissions). Tourism can create jobs and markets for local products, and provide money for nature conservation; but, it can also result in a lot of waste and badly managed tourism puts pressure on communities and prices locals out of local housing. An over-emphasis on tourism deprives local people of their cultural heritage (for example when museums are closed outside the tourist season).

Adopt sustainable tourism, to enhance the positive aspects of tourism, and reduce and eliminate its negative impacts. For example, make use of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council Criteria, which are the global standards for sustainability in travel and tourism. The Criteria are an excellent checklist that can be applied to destinations and in tourism policy, for tour operators, and for business travel. The GSTC also offers accreditation and membership. The Criteria are available [here](#)<sup>12</sup>.

If you aren't already, follow the UN World Tourism Code of Ethics. The [UNWTO](#)<sup>13</sup> has a major focus on sustainable development and the SDGs.

Take part in more local sustainable tourism initiatives, for example regional or national schemes.



## KEY ACTIVITY 5

### Enable research in support of the SDGs

Provide researchers with access to ready-to-use, research-useful collections that can help address sustainable development topics and challenges.

---

Develop collections, collections facilities and access to collections information, to meet the needs of current and future researchers.

---

Work with researchers to use museums as a test-bed for research ideas that can support sustainable development.

---

Support heritage science, which supports the protection, safeguarding and sustainable use of cultural and natural heritage.

---

Support developing countries to make effective use of collections from those countries, and related information, for research purposes.

---

Some museums will undertake research themselves, and this could be directed towards sustainable development and the SDGs.

---



## KEY ACTIVITY 6

### Direct internal leadership, management and operations to support the SDGs

Every operational, management and financial decision can be directed towards contributing to sustainable development. Here are some suggestions how:

#### Employment

Advertise job opportunities in ways that reach the whole community, notably under-served parts of the community, and create training opportunities to support people's employment.

---

Make sustainable development part of everyone's jobs and appraisal.

---

Provide staff training on Agenda 2030, the SDGs, and local sustainable development challenges and opportunities.

---

Provide good-quality jobs, and protect workers' rights.

---



### Responsible use of resources

Adopt an ambitious greenhouse gas emission-reducing target, such as the Science-based Targets Initiative, and/or other recognized emissions reduction schemes.

---

Set ambitious targets to reduce consumption of resources and production of wastes. Take part in local waste-reduction and waste-management schemes, to help reduce pollution and waste, and promote recycling.

---

Provide transparent access to goals, progress and challenges through reporting sustainability commitments and actions.

---

TARGET 12-6



ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

### Commercial activities and procurement

Purchase goods and services that prioritize social and environmental considerations, favouring small, local suppliers, ethical companies, and low-environmental-impact options.

---

TARGET 12-7



PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES



## Ethical and responsible leadership and management

Embed sustainable development, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs into management approaches, policies and plans.

---

Incorporate relevant agreements and policies, for example human rights agreements and environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and Paris Agreement, into your goals and policies.

---

Commit to, implement and promote awareness of the UN Global Compact Ten Principles.

---

Commit to the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

---

Write a human rights policy statement.

---

TARGET 16-6



DEVELOP EFFECTIVE,  
ACCOUNTABLE AND  
TRANSPARENT  
INSTITUTIONS

TARGET 16-B



PROMOTE AND  
ENFORCE  
NON-DISCRIMINATORY  
LAWS AND POLICIES

*Don't make a separate plan,  
put concrete actions in existing plans* (Māra)



## Disaster management and risk reduction

Understand local disaster risk (hazards, exposure and vulnerability), to plan for the present and the future.

---

Find out who is responsible for disaster risk management and reduction.

---

Ensure collections and buildings are factored into local plans for disaster management and risk reduction.

---



## KEY ACTIVITY 7

### Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs

Become a partner and collaborator in sustainable development.

---

Advertise your interest in the SDGs to other agencies, partners and potential partners locally, to work together on planning and training for mutual benefit and to work together more effectively.

---

From the potential partners you identified in Section 1 ‘Getting Started With the SDGs’, select a small number of key partners, and a longer list of potential partners and organizations to keep in touch with and to share information with.

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Connect with and promote initiatives related to the SDGs, such as Global Goals Week and the World’s Largest Lesson, as well as local and national initiatives that are related to sustainable development challenges.

---

Embed International Days, Years or Decades into your work (beyond awareness-raising or promoting them) so that you become an active partner in them, such as:

International Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-30)

International Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-30)

Global Biodiversity Framework (2022-30)

The Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment.

International Decade on Indigenous Languages (2021-31)

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Use the opportunities of museums and libraries to ask people and communities what their priorities are, in relation to sustainable development, to inform planning and training for agencies in the community.

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Contribute to capacity development for the SDGs for the cultural sector more widely. Share your experiences, lessons learnt and good practices widely, for example on platforms such as the SDG Helpdesk, tag #CultureForSDGs on twitter, or on various other platforms such as the UNFCCC Nazca Platform, UN World Tourism Organization website, IFLA Library Map of the World SDG Stories, Global Citizenship Education Clearing House and other opportunities.

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Get your organization written into local plans for social inclusion, Disaster Risk Reduction, nature conservation and other topics as appropriate.

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TARGET 17-16



ENHANCE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

TARGET 17-17



ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS



## 7. MONITORING, EVALUATING AND COMMUNICATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACTION

The Seven Key Activities in ‘Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals’ can help you identify some key actions that contribute to relevant SDG targets, and to identify indicators to monitor, evaluate and communicate your progress.

This part of the Roadmap provides suggested indicators, modified from the ICCROM [Our Collections Matter](#)<sup>14</sup>




*Write down your exact wishes and plans* (Elina)

*Establish a baseline to be able  
to compare a difference* (Kristine)


*Evaluate the situation from the  
moment you start* (Emils)



*Set an evaluation framework before you start*  
(Inga)

You can select an indicator for each activity you are working on, or make up your own, to monitor,



Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)
<p>1. Strengthen efforts to identify, protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage, identified in Section 2</p>	 <p>11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage</p> <p>Official indicator: “total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage.”</p>	<p>Budget dedicated to collections care, collecting, staffing, documenting and conserving collections.</p> <p>Plans, policies and procedures in place for the identification, safeguarding and protection of cultural and natural heritage.</p> <p>Collecting programmes to protect, safeguard and make use of cultural and natural heritage.</p> <p>Proportion of collections in good condition.</p> <p>Proportion of collections that are well documented, and published online and in publications.</p>




Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)
<p>2. Support and provide learning opportunities that help address social, economic and environmental challenges identified in Section 2, and that aim to ‘leave no-one behind’</p>	 <p>4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.</p>	<p>Numbers of people in each type of programme.</p> <p>Proportion of educational programmes incorporating Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education approaches.</p> <p>Evidence that learners have acquired knowledge, motivation and skills to promote sustainable development.</p>

Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)	
<p><b>3. Enable cultural participation for all, focussing especially on people and groups currently under-served identified in Section 2</b></p>		<p>10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.</p>	<p>Collecting to reflect under-served communities' interests and aspirations.</p> <p>Numbers of people from different social groups making use of collections.</p> <p>Numbers and proportions of people from different demographic groups involved in decision-making processes, both in relation to collections and collections-based institutions, and in current affairs.</p>
		<p>11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Numbers of people accessing collecting institutions from different demographic groups, notably women, children, older people, persons with disabilities, and under-served people.</p> <p>Extent of green space provided by collections institutions.</p>







Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)
<p>4. Adopt sustainable tourism approaches to address social, economic and environmental challenges identified in Section 2</p>	 <p>TARGET 8-9 PROMOTE BENEFICIAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM</p>	<p>8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.</p> <p>Numbers of jobs created or supported that relate to sustainable tourism drawing on local cultural practices and products (e.g. craft producers).</p> <p>Actions to reduce and eliminate the negative impacts of tourism (e.g. waste, emissions).</p>
<p>5. Unlock the research potential of collections and other resources, to contribute to local sustainable development challenges identified in Section 2</p>	 <p>TARGET 9-5 ENHANCE RESEARCH AND UPGRADE INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGIES</p>	<p>9.5 Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.</p> <p>Number and proportion of collections facilities that effectively support research and researchers.</p> <p>Number of research outputs based on collections (scientific and other publications).</p> <p>Expenditure on initiatives to enhance and upgrade collections facilities and collections.</p> <p>Numbers of staff dedicated to supporting and developing research use based on collections.</p>






Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)
<p>6. Adopt sustainable working practices and sustainability reporting, and contribute to meeting sustainable development challenges identified in Section 2</p>	 <p>8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.</p>	<p>Appropriate staffing levels for collections curation, conservation, education and other activities.</p> <p>Proportion of staff in secure employment, elimination of short-term or insecure work.</p> <p>Adoption of decent work principles.</p> <p>Actions to promote decent work for women and minorities.</p> <p>Actions to ensure people in the supply chain are fairly paid and well-treated.</p>



Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)	
<p>6. Adopt sustainable working practices and sustainability reporting, and contribute to meeting sustainable development challenges identified in Section 2</p>	<p><b>TARGET 12-6</b></p>  <p>ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO ADOPT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING</p>	<p>12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.</p>	<p>Publicly available visions, goals, strategies and plans relating to sustainability.</p> <p>Commitments to be in line with local, regional, national and/or international targets and ambitions.</p> <p>Membership of corporate social responsibility schemes (e.g. UN Global Compact).</p> <p>Incorporation of sustainability into reporting for funders and other stakeholders, including the public.</p> <p>Reporting to include both progress and challenges.</p>
	<p><b>TARGET 12-7</b></p>  <p>PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES</p>	<p>12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.</p>	<p>Incorporation of sustainability considerations into procurement, in terms of advertisement and invitation to tender, contracts, and selection criteria for suppliers.</p>

Activity	Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)	
<p>6. Adopt sustainable working practices and sustainability reporting, and contribute to meeting sustainable development challenges identified in Section 2</p>		<p>16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.</p>	<p>Proportion of the population [audience/users/non-users] satisfied with their last experience of public services.</p> <p>Access to information, and accountability policies and mechanisms.</p> <p>Effective arrangements to fulfil legal and social responsibilities.</p> <p>Long-term plans with realistic budgets.</p>
		<p>16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.</p>	<p>Proportion of population [audience/users/non-users] reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>Number and proportion of policies that incorporate sustainable development considerations, including all relevant Conventions, Declarations, environmental agreements and human rights.</p>



Activity		Relevant SDG targets	Suggested indicators for museums and libraries (select one or more)
<p>6. Adopt sustainable working practices and sustainability reporting, and contribute to meeting sustainable development challenges identified in Section 2</p>	 <p>TARGET 11-5 REDUCE THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS</p>	<p>11.5 By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic products caused by disasters...</p>	<p>Sources of disaster risk understood.</p> <p>Disaster Risk Reduction plans in place and being implemented effectively.</p> <p>Collections and other resources factored into local disaster management plans.</p>
<p>7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs</p>	 <p>TARGET 17-16 ENHANCE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</p>	<p>17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships...</p>	<p>Global and/or international multi-partnerships that share collection-related knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to address the SDGs.</p> <p>Promoting international initiatives such as international days, decades and years.</p>
	 <p>TARGET 17-17 ENCOURAGE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS</p>	<p>17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.</p>	<p>Expenditure committed to public-private and civil society partnerships.</p> <p>Number and/or increase in number, and diversity of local, national and regional partnerships that address the SDGs.</p>

## Reporting and communicating

Reporting and communicating your work with sustainable development and the SDGs can help build awareness of your activity, and ambition and accountability in your organization.

Holding yourself accountable, and being held accountable, are a part of good governance, and also help to ensure an organization is relevant and thus help protect its future. You can use the steps in the Roadmap in this guide as a basis for reporting and communication, to show how you are embedding the SDGs into your work and contributing to their achievement.

In reporting and communicating your activity, don't just mention which SDGs or targets your work relates to, but how your activity concretely contributed to achieving them. That is, what difference was made, where, for whom, how, and how you know.

Activity for the SDGs can be communicated in both quantitative (numbers-based) and qualitative (narrative-based) ways.

*Not quantity, but quality* (Zane)

*Use simple and specific communication* (Klementina)

As activity for the SDGs is based on addressing particular/ pre-identified challenges and opportunities, your reporting and communication should outline why you worked on particular topics, and your progress towards meeting goals and targets.

Remember to emphasize the principles of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs: as a bottom-up as well as top-down programme (from the Right to Development); emphasize the connection to human rights and rights-based approaches; the principles of 'Leave No-one Behind' and gender equality; and the connection between the dimensions of sustainability (social, economic and environmental).

As headline messages, you could use the 5 Ps as a basis for communication.

Remember that there is no 'silver bullet' in communication. The key messages and methods will depend on what you intend to communicate and to whom. You may be reporting to comply with funding conditions, or to build awareness of your activity, or as a good practice in effective institutions, or for other reasons.



Remember that your readers may not be aware of the SDGs or their principles, so remember to explain these in reporting and communication where necessary. This is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the SDGs and sustainable development.

International Days, Years and Decades are an opportunity, both to put your activity into a bigger perspective and as regular opportunities to highlight your activity. For example, communicate your activity on relevant International Days and use the relevant social media tags.

Remember to report and communicate what your goals were and include relevant SDG targets, and indicators to communicate progress and challenges towards your goals. Help readers understand how your activity in a particular period or year is part of a longer programme of activity, and highlight how you are progressing to achieve your goals.

### Writing a sustainability report

A sustainability report may be a separate report, or incorporated into other reports. A sustainability report will generally have the following sections:

**Foreword:** Signed statement from the most senior member of staff, or the Board of Trustees

**Organizational profile and governance:** Brief description of the organization, including its mission and governance structure.

**Strategy and analysis:** A strategic summary that outlines how the organization relates to sustainable development challenges and how these are incorporated into its vision, strategic plan, operational plans and reporting.

**Environment**

**Society**

**Economy**

**The core subject matter.**

This will identify relevant goals, targets and indicators, and report on progress with addressing these. Both positive and negative contributions to each aspect of sustainability should be reported.

**Conclusions:** A summary of the key findings of the report. This can discuss what has been achieved and what has not, and set the priorities for future activity.

## How countries, cities and regions report on the SDGs

Countries report on their progress with the SDGs at an event called the High Level Political Forum, held in July. A year before they submit, countries express their intention to submit a report in a publicly accessible letter. All the reports can be viewed online, along with accompanying letters and supporting documents. The report is called a Voluntary National Review. Some towns/cities/regions are also creating their own, more local reports, called Voluntary Local Reviews. Again, these can all be viewed online.



## Voluntary National Reviews

The [Voluntary National Reviews](#)<sup>15</sup> website gives access to previous VNRs, as well as access to tools to support VNR preparation, and good practices. It also identifies who the lead contact (focal point) is for each country. This website should be your main point of information on VNRs.

The UN says “*Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are the cornerstone of the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The VNR process culminates in a country report that is submitted to and presented at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The VNRs are most meaningful when they are conducted through an inclusive, participatory, transparent and thorough review process at the national and sub-national levels, when they are evidence-based, and produce tangible lessons, solutions and commitments, and when they are followed by concrete action and collaboration that drives implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*” (VNR Handbook 2022, Annex 2)

The ‘[Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews](#)<sup>16</sup>’ by UN DESA is an invaluable tool for preparing a VNR following the principles of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. It helps set out how to start the process, who should be involved, and how to present the report to the HLPF. A key principle of the VNR process is multistakeholder

participation, something that museums and libraries are very well placed to support. They can invite contributions towards reporting; raise awareness of the process of developing a VNR; strengthen scrutiny and accountability; and empower people to take part in sustainable development and critically assess the progress of governments and other authorities.

The VNR Handbook notes: “*The participation of stakeholders promotes effective decisions, by giving groups affected by those decisions the opportunity to communicate their needs and interests and support governments in tailoring, implementing and reviewing public policies. Participation and consultation also build ownership of the 2030 Agenda, and therefore contributes to a whole-of-society approach to the implementation of the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda calls upon stakeholders to be actively engaged throughout the process of design, implementation, monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda.*” (VNR Handbook 2022, p.11).

The ‘[Guidelines to Support Country Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals](#)’ (2017, p.19)<sup>17</sup>, prepared by the UN Development Group, suggest the following format for a VNR. Suggestions as to how museums and libraries could contribute to the sections are made in the table opposite.



Section	Description	How museums and libraries could contribute to this section
Introduction	Sets context, purpose, structure, summary.	An opportunity for countries to emphasize multistakeholder dialogue, participation, transparency.
Tracking progress	Whether country is on track, slow or behind of targets, comparing with similar countries.	Museums and libraries could contribute data to reflect their contributions to the SDGs, with a focus on the SDG targets outlined in earlier sections, and other targets as appropriate.
Assessing means of implementation	Covers financial and other resources, and, in particular, how integrated the means of implementation are.	This section is a major opportunity for museums and libraries, in terms of supporting the bottom-up aspects of sustainable development, participation, rights-based approaches, education and access to information, and involvement of minorities/under-served groups to ‘Leave No-one Behind’.
Analysing thematic issues	This section can cover cross-cutting issues, such as inequality, discrimination, gender equality, children and youth, peace, climate change, participation and more.	Another major opportunity for museums and libraries, in terms of supporting cross-cutting issues in terms of the content of activities, participation of social groups, and cross-sector and all-of-society approaches to education and participation.



Section	Description	How museums and libraries could contribute to this section
Evaluating policies and strategies	This section can scrutinize policy gaps and deficits, especially in terms of integration of Agenda 2030 elements.	Another section that museums and libraries can contribute meaningfully towards, in terms of public involvement in policy critique, participation in policy making, and assessing the relationships between different policy topics through public events.
Concluding with recommendations	A final section to synthesize finding and make suggestions for policy options and strategies to accelerate progress.	Another opportunity to emphasize the need for greater all-of-society and bottom-up approaches, that involve more people in sustainable development, and that empower more people to enjoy their human rights through participation in decision-making.
Statistical annexes	These can include basic data, as well as discussing data availability and plans to address data gaps.	Museum and library data could be usefully included, where this relates to SDG-specific activities, and that adds distinctively to data, for example around awareness and participation in policy making through events, and/or that adds value to official reporting.

## What you can do

- Whether your town/city/region is doing a Voluntary Local Review or not, it can be possible to include the work of museums and libraries in Voluntary National Reviews.
- Read through the last Voluntary National Review and consider how the points raised reflect priorities of communities, towns, cities and regions.
- Find out when your country is next due to submit a VNR, as the more preparation time you have, the better the work of museums and libraries can be reflected in the VNR.
- Find out who the lead person is for the Voluntary National Review, and get in touch with them to express your interest in contributing to the VNR process and/or report.
- Find out who has been asked to contribute to the Voluntary National Review from the department most closely related to your work (e.g. a department of culture, department of education, or the department responsible for tourism), and work with them to develop and share content on your work.
- Get your story straight about the work that you have been doing that contributes to the achievement of the SDGs, or work with museum/library organizations to tell a collective story with other museums/libraries.
- Prepare a briefing note on the ways that museums and libraries can help address the key issues raised in the last VNR, not only in terms of the SDGs themselves, but the means of stakeholder engagement and awareness raising. Include case studies/examples of how museums and libraries have already been contributing to these or similar challenges raised in the last VNR.
- For a good example of how museums and libraries can be included in Voluntary National Reviews, see Latvia's VNR for 2022. [The Culture2030 Goal campaign](#)<sup>18</sup> reviews the ways that 'culture' features in the annual VNR reports.
- Remember, the VNR is not simply a description of all the services and activities in a country, but a report that outlines how the country has identified SDG challenges, and how it is achieving them through focused action.



### Voluntary Local Reviews

Voluntary Local Reviews are voluntary reports that are usually prepared by local or regional governments or departments.

A report on VLRs, in 2020, identified the following aspects of [VLRs](#)<sup>19</sup> (see also [here](#)<sup>20</sup>):

- The number of VLRs is increasing rapidly.
- They can be a powerful tool to help localize the SDGs, strengthening co-ordination, accountability, transparency, co-operation, participation and awareness of the SDGs.
- VLRs are drivers of innovation, as there is no standardized review process, and implementation is voluntary.
- VLRs provide information on how local and regional governments are supporting implementation and innovation for the SDGs.
- Local review are changing the local-national dynamic through VNR-VLR linkages.
- The emergence of VLRs and the information they provide is changing the approach to the VNR itself.
- Local reviews have changed the way we think of SDG localization. VLRs help local and regional governments engage with communities in a much more transparent and accountable way, while embedding the SDGs in their own processes to provide better public services and 'Leave No-one Behind'.
- VLRs have supported local governments and other sustainable development actors to create and use data for SDG communication purposes. VLRs have pushed forward adaptation of SDG indicators to be relevant to local challenges and opportunities.
- VLRs offer new means of participation, to involve people and communities in the governance of local challenges and opportunities.
- VLRs are strengthening the link between the SDGs and COVID-19 recovery, to support transformations that build resilience through new activities.

For further information on VLRs see: [UN DESA. 'Global Guiding Elements for Voluntary Local Reviews \(VLRs\) of SDG Implementation'](#)<sup>21</sup>.

The [Shimokawa Method for Voluntary Local Review](#)<sup>22</sup> provides a blueprint for towns, cities and regions to plan and deliver a successful VLR, based on a method developed in the small Japanese town of Shimokawa.

In addition to VLRs, voluntary reports at a regional level are growing in number and importance. These are called Voluntary Subnational Reviews, or VSRs for short. Comprehensive guidelines on these, including preparation and the format of the report, can be found in a manual from UCLG, ['Guidelines for Voluntary Subnational Reviews' \(2021\)](#)<sup>23</sup>.





## CASE STUDY

# Lithuanian Art Centre TARTLE takes part in partnership project on climate action



### What was the challenge?

Exhibition-making in museums can be both expensive and have a negative environmental impact from the waste generated. TARTLE wanted to reduce these negative impacts through closer partnership working.

### What did they do?

In 2020-2021, TARTLE took part in a project organized by We Are Museums. Representatives from 20 Lithuanian museums shared their experiences in climate action with one another and the wider museum sector. As a result of the project, the Lithuanian partners created a Facebook group called 'Museums against climate change', to continue to exchange ideas and to share exhibition materials between local museums.

### What difference did the project make?

Participating in the project has helped TARTLE and other partners to build relationships to share exhibition materials and to avoid 'single use' exhibitions. As well as being economically sensible, this helps make good use of natural resources and reduces the negative environmental impact of waste from exhibitions.

### Website

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2235648123234934>

### Further information

[https://www.tartle.lt/en/news/museums\\_facing\\_extinction.html](https://www.tartle.lt/en/news/museums_facing_extinction.html)



## CASE STUDY

# Vilnius County Adomas Mickevičius Public Library launches ‘The Declaration of Sustainability’



### What was the challenge?

The Library wanted to embed sustainability goals and actions into its work in a strategic way, with the values of responsibility, partnership, openness and ongoing improvement.

### What did they do?

In 2022, the Library launched ‘The Declaration of Sustainability’, as a statement of ambition and intent, to contribute to the environmental aspect of sustainable development. The Declaration is intended for the use of Library staff, local colleagues in regional libraries, readers and library visitors, publishers and partners. The Declaration sets out the Library’s commitment, together with key actions and the roles of staff in contributing to its

achievement. The Declaration includes practical guidelines for staff to make choices that manage the environmental impact of their work, covering public-facing activities, operational decisions, and partnerships and external relationships.

### What difference did the project make?

The aim of this long-term strategy is for joint learning and action, sharing good practices and ideas on how to contribute to the environmental aspect of sustainable development, and to promote collaboration for environmental sustainability, within the Library and more widely.

### Website

<https://www.amb.lt/en/discover/about/sustainable-library/3808>

### Further information

<https://www.naplesisterlibraries.org/vilnius-county-adomas-mickevicius-public-library-lithuania-organized-sustainability-afternoons-in-the-cosy-courtyard-of-the-old-town-part-1/>





## CASE STUDY

# Tallinn Central Library raises public awareness of the SDGs



### What was the challenge?

There was a low level of public awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals, or how they could be achieved, among the inhabitants of Tallinn.

### What did they do?

The Library ran a series of public-facing campaigns and activities to highlight the many ways that libraries can support communities to take part in sustainable development. As well as books, the Library lends out sporting equipment, tools and musical instruments. It 'lends out' seeds to encourage people to grow plants and vegetables in Tallinn. It also provides maker spaces with 3D printers and sewing machines, to promote low-environmental-impact craft-making activities. During 2023, when Tallinn was European Green Capital, the Library ran public lectures and workshop on SDG-related

topics. The Library also aims to lead by example, by adding solar panels to the building, reusing materials in public events, introducing waste-sorting programmes, and tackling digital waste.

### What difference did the project make?

These initiatives contributed to promoting public awareness of the 'green city' Tallinn is trying to become, with an aim of providing a healthy environment for every inhabitant of Tallinn. Sharing resources promotes both environmental sustainability and combats economic inequality. The public programmes created opportunities for people to explore the work of specialists.

### Website

[www.keskraamatukogu.ee](http://www.keskraamatukogu.ee)





## CASE STUDY

# Estonian Art Museum creates a model for sustainable exhibition making



### What was the challenge?

The Estonian Art Museum wanted to minimize its negative impacts, and enhance positive impacts, through exhibition-making activities.

### What did they do?

The Museum set up a sustainability working group, and developed a Sustainability Policy, action plan and sustainable exhibition making checklist. The Sustainability Policy covers environmental, social, and work-related aspects of sustainability and sustainable development. Recent exhibitions have used a reusable construction system, that also makes multiple use of chipboard sheets. Local plants replace cut flowers in the Museum, and exhibitions have addressed contemporary environmental topics. The Sustainability Policy and checklist can be found on the Museum's website.

### What difference did the project make?

These initiatives help to create an empowering environment for staff to contribute to the Museum's overall sustainable development aspirations. They also emphasize that sustainable workplaces must value their staff. The Sustainable Exhibition Model online tool can empower and inspire workers in other museums.

### Website

<https://kunstimuuseum.ekm.ee/en/the-art-museum-of-estonia-sustainability-policy/#sustainable-work-culture>

### Further information

<https://kestliknaitus.ekm.ee/parimad-praktikad>





SECTION 4

# TOOLS TO EVALUATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**SECTION CONTENTS**

USING THE LOCAL PLAN

USING THE SEVEN KEY ACTIVITIES

A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

A RISK-INFORMED APPROACH

USING THE 5 Ps OF AGENDA 2030

USING THE PESTLE FRAMEWORK

USING THE SDGs AS A WHOLE

FOCUS ON A PARTICULAR SDG AND ITS TARGETS



This section includes a variety of tools that you can use to assess the external, local (or global) sustainable development challenges, to help set priorities for your organization's activity.

## USING THE LOCAL PLAN

Most communities, towns and regions will have a plan, usually developed by the local government or other authorities. The local plan can inform your organization's planning, to connect with real-world challenges and avoid museums and libraries simply making their own plan.

Find the local development plan (a plan from the local government or authorities). It will usually be on the authority's website.

What particular social, environmental and economic challenges does it identify?

How are cultural institutions featured in the plan?

How have people and communities shaped the plan?

What opportunities do you have to help people explore the plan, in terms of the history of the social, environmental and economic challenges, and to understand current proposals and alternative possible futures?

What opportunities do you have or can you create to help more people shape the plan and decide on desirable futures, for example public consultations or meeting with authorities?

How can you adapt your museum or library to help achieve the plan more ambitiously, for example by providing different or additional sources of information and educational activities for the public?

How can cultural institutions be protected as the plan is developed, that is, to make sure that culture and heritage are part of the future of the community?

How will museums and libraries have to change as the plan is turned into reality, for example as communities change?

## USING THE SEVEN KEY ACTIVITIES

The Seven Key Activities in ‘Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals’ can be used to assess the sustainable development challenges and opportunities in your place. As these seven activities are a suggested framework that museums (and other cultural institutions) can readily support, this approach can make for a simple and effective way to connect the strengths and capabilities of these institutions and sectors with the external challenges and opportunities. Here are two different ways to use them.

**Look at these seven statements, and consider how well they describe your region (e.g. on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest):**

Key Activity
Cultural and natural heritage are effectively identified, protected, safeguarded, developed and used sustainably across the region
Everyone across the region has the knowledge, motivation and practical skills to take part in sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals
Everyone across the region is empowered to take part in cultural activities, to know their own culture and that of other people, and to contribute to the cultural life of the community
Tourism is well-managed across the region, helping bring social, economic and environmental benefits to the region, and the negative impacts of tourism are well managed and minimized.
The region benefits from research carried out on collections, that helps contribute to sustainable development.
The region benefits from the operational and business decisions of institutions, which contribute to sustainable development and the SDGs
The region has strong partnerships and collaborations, that contribute effectively to sustainable development and the SDGs.



Look at these statements, and consider how well they describe your region (e.g. on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest):

Activity	People	Planet	Prosperity
<p>1. Protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage, both within museums and libraries and more generally [SDG 11.4]</p>	<p>Is cultural heritage well protected and being developed (enhanced) effectively; is it appreciated, understood and accessible in your context? Is it used or experienced in ways that themselves support sustainable development?</p>	<p>Is natural heritage well protected, being developed (enhanced) effectively; is it appreciated, understood and accessible in your context? Is it used or experienced in ways that themselves support sustainable development?</p>	<p>Are cultural and natural heritage recognised and developed both as a non-economic form of collective wealth? Are they safeguarded and enhanced so they can contribute to fulfilling lives and productive livelihoods?</p>
<p>2. Support and provide learning opportunities in support of the SDGs [SDG 4.7]</p>	<p>Are people empowered to understand and contribute to sustainable development positively, through knowledge, attitudes and skills?</p>	<p>Do programmes empower people to play a part in protecting the environment, through their lifestyle choices and support for nature conservation?</p>	<p>Do programmes empower people to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills linked to fulfilling lives and productive employment?</p>

TOOLS TO EVALUATE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Activity	People	Planet	Prosperity
3. Enable cultural participation for all [SDG 10.2]	Are special efforts made to remove barriers to participation so that everyone has equal opportunity to access, participate in, and contribute to cultural life?	Are special efforts made to remove barriers to participation so that everyone has equal opportunity to access, experience and protect the natural environment?	Are special efforts made to remove barriers to participation so that everyone has equal opportunity to lead fulfilling and productive lives?
4. Support sustainable tourism [SDG 8.9]	Are tourism activities contributing positively to host and visiting communities, promoting understanding and tolerance?	Are the positive and negative environmental impacts of tourism being managed appropriately? Are emissions from visitor travel being eliminated?	Are tourism activities contributing to local economies in fair ways that benefit local businesses and communities?
5. Enable research in support of the SDGs [SDG 9.5]	Is the research potential of museums and libraries to support positive social outcomes being realized?	Is the research potential of museums and libraries to support positive environmental outcomes being realized?	Is the potential of research activities to develop new jobs, products or services being realized?



Activity	People	Planet	Prosperity
<p>6. Direct internal leadership, management and operations towards the SDGs [SDG 8.5, 12.6, 16.B]</p>	<p>Do leadership, management and operations support people in fair employment, and address negative social impacts of all operations?</p>	<p>Are leadership, management and operations directed towards supporting activities that are positive for the natural environment and removing negative environmental impacts?</p>	<p>Are leadership, management and operations directed towards sustainable business models and economic activities (procurement, finance, pensions, etc.) that secure museums and libraries' long-term futures, and that promote sustainable development and the green economy in the wider world?</p>
<p>7. Direct external leadership, collaboration and partnerships towards the SDGs [SDG 17.16, 17.17]</p>	<p>Are leadership, collaboration and partnerships directed towards addressing social challenges effectively?</p>	<p>Are leadership, collaboration and partnerships directed towards addressing environmental challenges effectively?</p>	<p>Are leadership, collaboration and partnerships directed towards securing a vibrant, prosperous future for museums and libraries, their communities, wider society and nature?</p>



# A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

The Human Rights-based Approach is a project approach that aims to:

- **Empower people to claim and exercise their human rights**
- **Strengthen the ability of organizations and institutions to provide public services, that respect, protect and fulfil people's rights, most notably those who are marginalized/ under-served.**

The Human Rights-based Approach thus helps people claim their rights, and organizations to fulfil their obligations to people and society.

**In a summary form, the Human Rights-based Approach involves:**

1. Situation analysis: whose needs and rights are not being met, and which rights in particular? See the section on Museums, Libraries and Human Rights.
2. Causality analysis: what is the problem and what are the impacts, why is it happening?
3. Role pattern analysis: who are the rights holders and the duty bearers? This stage should involve consultation with representatives of both rights holders (people and communities) and duty bearers (organizations).
4. Capacity gap analysis: what is it that is stopping people and communities from experiencing their human rights, and organizations from fulfilling their duties?
5. Making some plans to address the situation.
6. Identifying key partners to work with.
7. Designing the project, delivering the project, monitoring, evaluation and communication.

See ['Museums and Human Rights'](#)<sup>24</sup> for more information, on particular human rights, human rights agreements, and on the steps of the Human Rights-based Approach.



## A RISK-INFORMED APPROACH

Sustainable development and Disaster Risk Reduction are closely related, as both aim to strengthen people's, nature's and the economy's positive strengths and abilities, and to reduce and aim to eliminate threats of all kinds.

A risk management approach recognizes that it is not always possible to eliminate risk, but by planning effectively we can live with risk, by reducing it to acceptable levels and having plans in place to survive challenges.

A risk-informed approach involves identifying the sources of risk, who is exposed to those risks, who is especially vulnerable to the impacts of potential hazards, and also what resources exist that can help to mitigate the impacts of challenges.

Risk-informed approaches are closely associated to sustainable development, as we try to strengthen the positive and useful resources, tools, knowledge, relationships and skills, and to reduce and eliminate (where possible) the challenges and vulnerabilities.

**The Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient is an initiative to promote resilient cities and to make use of Disaster Risk Reduction approaches. The Ten Essentials are:**

1. Organize for disaster resilience. Put in place an organizational structure with strong leadership and clarity of coordination and responsibilities
2. Identify, understand, and use current and future risk scenarios
3. Strengthen financial capacity for resilience
4. Pursue resilient urban development and design
5. Safeguard natural buffers to enhance the protective functions offered by natural ecosystems
6. Strengthen institutional capacity for resilience
7. Understand and strengthen societal capacity for resilience
8. Increase infrastructure resilience
9. Ensure effective preparedness and disaster response
10. Expedite recovery and build back better

You can apply this framework to museums and libraries, both to ensure they are resilient themselves, and so they contribute effectively to local Disaster Risk Reduction. See **'Museums and Disaster Risk Reduction'**<sup>25</sup> for more information, and to connect this framework with the Seven Key Activities from **'Museums and the Sustainable Development Goals'**<sup>26</sup>.



## USE THE 5 Ps OF AGENDA 2030

The 5 Ps of Agenda 2030 are a good starting point to identify what area of activity you want to work in. As you work to strengthen activity in one area, you should also identify areas of potential conflict (other aspects you could negatively impact upon), to come up with strategies to enhance the benefits, and reduce the negative costs. For example, when developing a project, consider the following three questions, in relation to each of the 5 Ps:

1. **What potential does this project have to contribute POSITIVELY to this aspect of Agenda 2030, and how can I strengthen that positive contribution?**
2. **What potential does this project have to contribute NEGATIVELY to this aspect of Agenda 2030, and how can I reduce/eliminate the potential negative impacts?**
3. **Which SDGs and targets can help focus on strengthening positive benefits and reducing negative impacts?**

This approach helps to get away from simply aligning particular SDGs or targets to organizations' activities, but to using them as practical tools to set goals, develop plans, and monitor and communicate action. See the section on the 5 Ps for further information.



## USING THE PESTLE FRAMEWORK

A PESTLE analysis is a tool to help understand the key factors that affect an organization. The different aspects of a PESTLE framework agree fairly well with the 5 Ps of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

**Political:** What are the relevant laws and policies that affect an organization? How stable is political decision-making, and how strong is the social contract between politicians and society?

**Economic:** How strong is the economy, are people financially well off, and how high is the unemployment rate?

**Social:** Is the population healthy? Is it getting older or younger? Who are the main social groups? Are relations between different groups of people positive, or are there tensions between particular social groups?

**Technological:** Is the community well-served in terms of communications, and is technology and industry clean and efficient in energy use?

**Legal:** How strong is the Rule of Law and is justice available for all, equally? Are laws and policies for sustainable development being implemented?

**Environmental:** How clean, healthy and sustainable is the natural environment; is climate change being addressed and climate impacts well managed? Is biodiversity being conserved and restored?



# USE THE SDGs AS A WHOLE

The SDGs can be used as a whole set, to scan for potential strengths and challenges in a place. This has a lot of benefit, as if you can find a way to capture the information, you can communicate it easily. For example, the SDG Index uses a traffic-light system to present the SDGs as a dashboard of the 17 SDGs coloured using a traffic-light system, where green means an SDG has been achieved, yellow means challenges remain, orange means significant challenges remain, and red means major challenges remain. This is also shown with an arrow for each goal in the same colours, to indicate whether progress is good (green), slow (yellow), has stopped (orange) or is going in reverse (red). This visual approach can help communicate activity across sectors, and also to the public. You could ask partners, and members of the public to decide what colour should be used to represent your locality.

## United Kingdom

OECD member



BACK OVERVIEW INDICATORS FACT SHEET POLICY EFFORTS



### SDG Dashboards and Trends

Click on a goal to view more information.



Dashboards: ● SDG achieved ● Challenges remain ● Significant challenges remain ● Major challenges remain ● Information unavailable  
Trends: ◀ On track or maintaining SDG achievement ▶ Moderately improving ↗ Stagnating ↘ Decreasing ↔ Trend information unavailable

UK country profile from the SDG Index 2023

Available at <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/united-kingdom>  
(Creative Commons license CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0)

## FOCUS ON A PARTICULAR SDG AND ITS TARGETS

Use a particular SDG as a focus. For example, SDG 11 is described as ‘the urban goal’, but it relates to sustainable communities of all sizes and the targets within SDG 11 can be used as a blueprint. Remember to view these in terms of the overall goal:

SDG 11.1: to ensure everyone has access to decent housing

SDG 11.2: to ensure everyone has access to decent transportation links and sustainable travel

SDG 11.3: everyone can contribute to decisions affecting the future of the community

SDG 11.4: cultural and natural heritage are protected and safeguarded

SDG 11.5: people, property and nature are protected against harm and disasters

SDG 11.6: the negative environmental impact of communities, towns and cities is reduced, for example in terms of air quality

SDG 11.7: everyone can access good quality green and public spaces, such as parks, natural areas, libraries, museums and other public facilities

SDG 11.A: larger built up areas, such as towns and cities, and smaller communities in surrounding areas, such as villages and rural areas, exist in harmony and are complementary to one another

SDG 11.B: the community has effective plans in place, to manage and reduce the potential impact of disasters, to promote social inclusion, for the efficient use of natural resources and protection of nature

Using this method is not ideal, as the SDGs are related to one another. If you do use it, make sure you make connections to other goals too.





# FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES





**Localising the Sustainable Development Goals Through Museums and Libraries (Ask Your Museum! Ask Your Library!).**

Online conference, 23-24 September 2021

<https://baltic-museums-libraries-sdg.lnb.lv/home/>

Video of day one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5udMSeQ54NU&t=39s>

Video of day two <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5o1my74MKc>

**Localising the Sustainable Development Goals Through Museums and Libraries II (Ask Your Museum! Ask Your Library!).**

Online conference, 27 September 2023

<https://muzeji.lv/lv/specialistiem/conference-localising-the-sustainable-development-goals-through-museums-and-libraries-ii>

Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxM4DZlthvQ#:~:text=On%2027%20September%202023%2C%20the,of%20UNESCO%20Participation%20Programme%20and>

**Reports on progress with the SDGs**

Each year, the UN Secretary General presents a report on progress with the SDGs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

**United Cities and Local Government SDG localization resources including:**

United Cities and Local Government (2016). Roadmap for Localizing the SDGs: Implementation and monitoring at subnational level. UCLG, available at [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap\\_for\\_localizing\\_the\\_sdgs\\_0.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/roadmap_for_localizing_the_sdgs_0.pdf)

United Cities and Local Government (2018). Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: a guide for local action. UCLG, available at [https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culturesdgs\\_web\\_en.pdf](https://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culturesdgs_web_en.pdf)

United Cities and Local Government (2022). Country Profiles on SDG Localization: local and regional governments stepping forward for achieving the 2030 Agenda. UCLG.

[https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/country\\_profiles\\_on\\_sdg\\_localization\\_2022.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/country_profiles_on_sdg_localization_2022.pdf) [an important source of reference on the mechanisms for SDG implementation, data collection and reporting in countries, and of more local and regional contributions to implementation]

United Cities and Local Government, Localizing the SDGs online course, <https://learning.uclg.org/localizing-the-sdgs/> [a training-the-trainers course in four modules, with facilitator's handbooks, powerpoints and handouts that can be used in delivering workshops for capacity building around localization].

United Cities and Local Government online course on Voluntary Local Reviews, <https://learningwith.uclg.org/p/voluntary-local-reviews>.

**Local2030: Localizing the SDGs**

<https://www.local2030.org/> is a network and platform that supports the on-the-ground delivery of the SDGs, with a focus on those furthest behind. It provides access to tools, experiences, new solutions and guides to support SDG localization. A core feature is the toolbox, which contains a range of concrete, practical and adaptable mechanisms and instruments that support the development, implementation, monitoring and review of locally-appropriate SDG actions.

**OECD programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs, which includes:**

OECD (2020). A Territorial Approach to the SDGs [toolkit]. OECD. [an important source of reference]

Pilot City and Region Snapshots [Annex to the OECD Toolkit for a Territorial Approach to the SDGs].

'Measure the Distance to the SDGs' visualization tool for cities and regions.

## Further reading

American Planning Association: Arts, Culture, and Creativity Briefing Papers [www.planning.org/research/arts](http://www.planning.org/research/arts)

CMAP (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (no date)). Arts and Culture Planning: A Toolkit for Communities. CMAP. <https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/460065/FY14-0006+ARTS+AND+CULTURE+TOOLKIT+lowres.pdf>

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3. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
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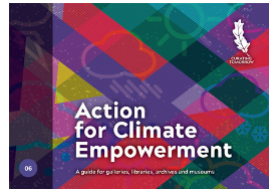
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