



Linkages Between Global Agendas and Local Action: Opportunities, Challenges and Practical Experiences in Follow-up and Review

Recognising that local contributions are critical to the successful implementation of the global agendas, the Cities Alliance launched a call for best practices that take an integrated approach to the Follow-up and Review process for the global sustainability agendas at the local level.

More about the call at

[www.citiesalliance.org/
beyond-sdg11-spotlight](http://www.citiesalliance.org/beyond-sdg11-spotlight)

Introduction

In recent years, United Nations (UN) Member States have adopted a range of ambitious global agendas that address the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. These include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (adopted in September 2015), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda (October 2016), the Paris Agreement (December 2015), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015), and the World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016). Achieving the goals set out in these agendas will require an unprecedented mobilisation of knowledge, expertise, financial and other resources. All relevant actors—not just the signatory Member States—need to be involved in this effort.

Against this background, the Cities Alliance Joint Work Programme (JWP) on Cities in the Global Agendas has commissioned two papers that review the urban development and governance dimension of the global agendas (Satterthwaite et al. 2018) and explore the role of local governments and other local actors in the follow-up and review of the agendas (Dellas et al. 2018). The Cities Alliance also issued a subsequent call for best practices to identify existing successful examples of follow-up and review of the global agendas at the local level. The goal of this paper is to summarise insights gained from these two papers and the call for best practices to identify key opportunities and challenges with respect to the follow-up and review of the global agendas.

In the context of global agendas, follow-up and review can be defined as the process of discussing efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals, based on progress monitored through systematic data collection efforts and reported through various channels (Dellas et al. 2018). Follow-up and review also refers to the process of responding to any recommendations made, gaps identified, and amendments proposed during the review process.

There are many reasons why local governments and other local actors need to play a role in these processes. First, the global agendas highlight the need for inclusiveness and acknowledge that broad ownership is essential for the achievement of their goals. For example, the preamble of the 2030 Agenda highlights that “all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.” Second, action by local governments and other local actors is often indispensable to the implementation of the global agendas. For instance, cities currently account for approximately 70% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and their mandates often include key leverage policies for climate action, such as urban planning and transport policies (UN-Habitat 2016). This makes efforts at the city level crucial to achieving the Paris Agreement. Action by local governments and other local actors is indispensable to achieving up to 65% of the SDG targets (Misselwitz et al. 2016).

The Cities Alliance call for best practices identified five best practices from around the world, three of which—Monitoreo CDMX (Mexico City, Mexico), #weResilient (Potenza, Italy), and Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos (19 urban agglomerations, Colombia)—were invited to present their experiences during the 2018 High Level Political Forum (HLPF). The two best practices that round out the top five are the City Footprint Project (local governments in multiple Latin American countries), and the Marunda Urban Resilience in Action project (Jakarta, Indonesia).

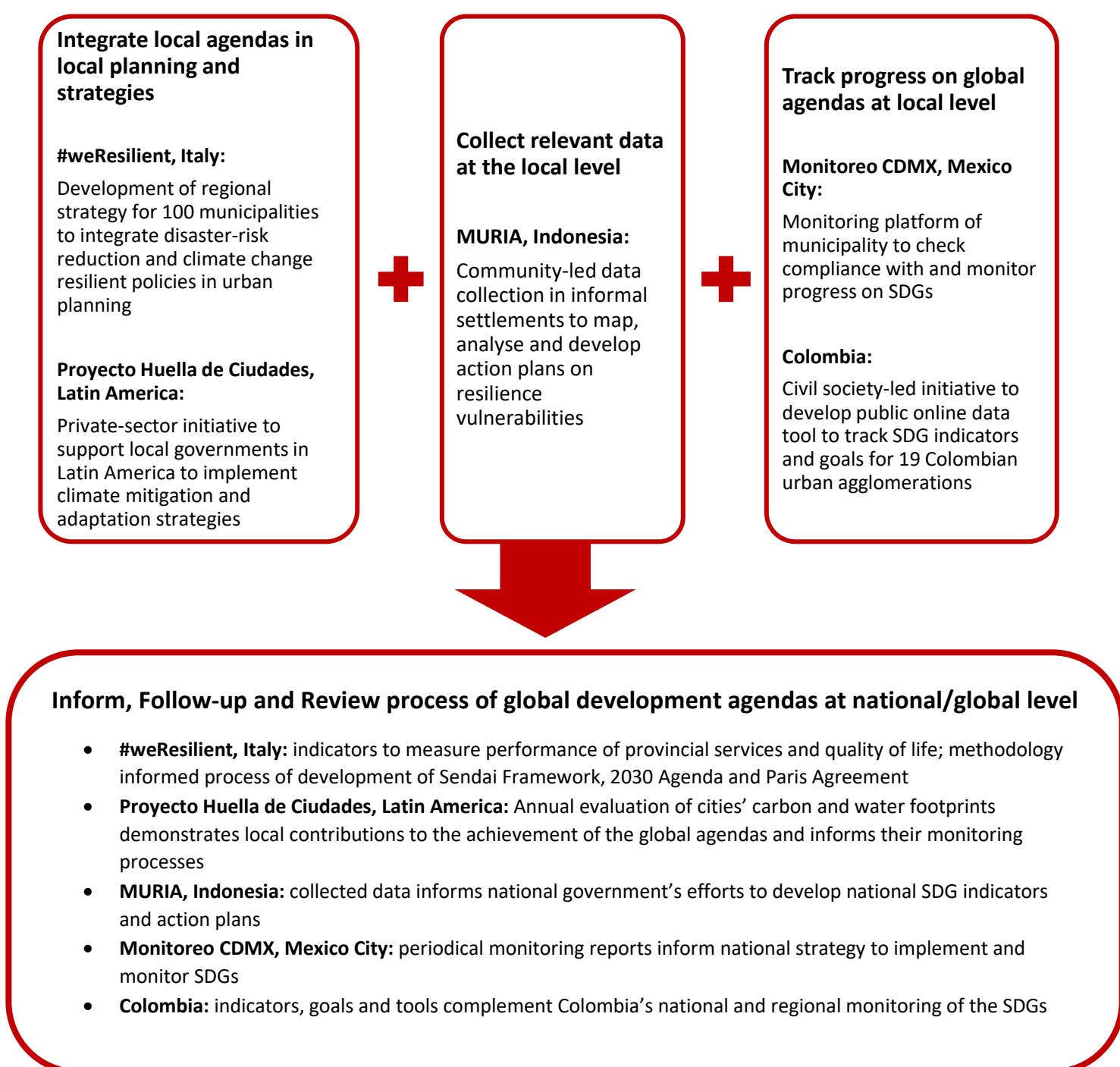
Table 1: Best practices for follow-up and review

Project	Location	Focus	Actors involved	Relevant agendas
<u>Monitoreo CDMX</u>	Mexico City, Mexico	Monitoring platform and online tool that collects quantitative data to help public administration agencies monitor their programmes and contribution to SDG implementation	Mayor's Office of the Government of Mexico City, Public administration agencies in Mexico City	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<u>Measuring progress toward the SDGs in urban contexts in Colombia</u>	Multiple cities, Colombia	Online data tool that tracks SDG indicators and goals for 19 Colombian urban agglomerations	Fundación Corona-Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos, Columbia University's School of Public and International Affairs, SDSN	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<u>#weResilient</u>	Province of Potenza, Italy	Strategy for pursuing territorial development through a structural combination of environmental sustainability, territorial safety, and climate policies	Provincial government, actors engaged in a stakeholder platform (municipalities, social groups, communities, etc.)	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Paris Agreement
<u>Marunda Urban Resilience in Action (MURIA)</u>	Jakarta, Indonesia	Supports slum dwellers facing high disaster risk in working together with other local stakeholders to map and analyze risks, set priorities, and develop and implement appropriate mitigation strategies	Cordaid, KARINA Yogyakarta, Partners for Resilience Strategic Partnership, MURIA multi-stakeholder platform	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement, New Urban Agenda
<u>Footprint of Cities Project</u>	Various cities and countries in South America	Supports local governments in developing and implementing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies based on carbon and water footprints	CAF, AFD, CDKN, FFLA, Servicios Ambientales S.A., Municipal governments	Paris Agreement

The five best practices provide insights on different aspects of the follow-up and review process, such as:

- The process of **localisation** through which stakeholders collaborate on analysing the relevance of global goals for their communities and integrating them into local planning and strategies. This often involves a translation, alignment, and selection process, as not all global goals may be identified as immediately relevant to the local context. Global goals may also need to be aligned with existing, locally agreed goals and targets.
- The processes of **collecting data and tracking progress**, which involves defining locally appropriate indicators and presenting results in a manner that is accessible for the intended target audiences.
- The process of **sharing lessons learned** (locally, nationally, internationally), and contributing data and results to national and international follow-up and review processes.

Table 2: Insights from the best practices on different aspects of follow-up and review



Challenges and opportunities

While all six of the global agendas mentioned above address urban issues in some way, their focus remains on national governments as the key actors, and local and regional governments as one stakeholder group among many (Satterthwaite et al. 2018). Thus, perhaps not unsurprisingly, the agendas tend to lack specificity with respect to the role of local actors. Satterthwaite et al. (2018) suggest that clear guidelines for local actors are useful to secure their buy-in. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide clear goals and targets that can be adapted for local contexts. The Sendai Framework also provides a concise list of targets for local governments by defining “The Ten Essentials for Making Cities Resilient.” Other agendas—such as the New Urban Agenda—lack such specific goals or guidelines that address local governments directly or can be easily adapted for local contexts.

In that vein, localisation of these global agendas will require translation efforts, including clear and coherent texts that operationalise them for urban areas (Satterthwaite et al. 2018). Experience has shown that local governments are likely to respond and commit to such clear guidelines, which could be developed and disseminated in partnership with local government associations (ibid.). Such clear guidelines also support the establishment of local follow-up and review processes.

Many local governments are already acting to integrate global agendas into their own local planning, decision making, and follow-up and review processes. For example, Monitoreo CDMX is a monitoring platform that allows different public administration bodies in Mexico City to access data and indicators related to the local achievement of the SDGs. While the platform predates the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it was adapted to support analysis of the extent to which different programmes and actions in the city support the implementation of the SDGs. It is thus an example of a local government operationalizing a global agenda and integrating it into a clear, concise platform that can be used by different public agencies within the city. Monitoring reports are published periodically, which public agencies are using to reorient and adjust their programmes where necessary. The experience of Monitoreo CDMX indicates that a key challenge for such a project is obtaining trust, but that an inclusive approach—involving all key stakeholders, such as public agencies and the mayor’s office—has helped secure the necessary buy-in.

The global agendas do not fully recognise or harness the potential of local actors to contribute to implementation and follow-up and review. For example, organisations of shack/slum dwellers are engaging in data collection efforts that provide detailed information on conditions in their environments (Satterthwaite et al. 2018). Such information provides street- and neighbourhood-level data that is necessary for local decision-making processes (ibid.). However, the integration of such data collection efforts by local actors into decision-making processes at all levels remains limited, leading to risks that the overall picture of progress will miss a substantial part of the picture (Dellas et al. 2018).

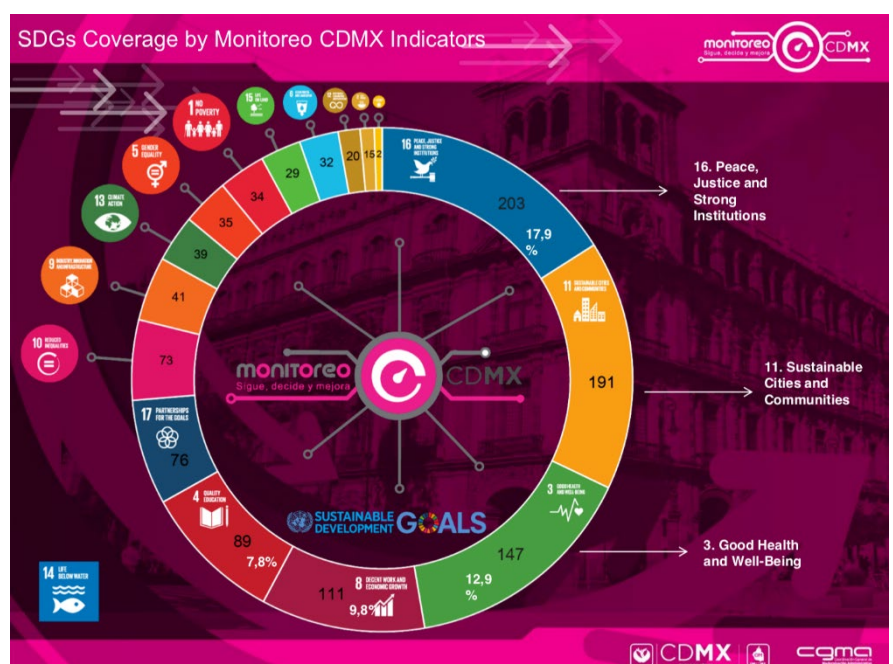


Figure 1: Alignment of Monitoreo CDMX Indicators with the SDGs

It also implies that understandings of the successes and challenges faced at the local level may be inadequate, leading to missed opportunities (to learn from good practices) and lacking support (in addressing challenges) (ibid.).

Best practices on how to respond to challenges and harness opportunities

#weResilient

The #weResilient strategy (Territorial Coordination Master Plan, or TCP, 2013) that is implemented by the Province of Potenza, Italy places a strong focus on participation of different actors. It is intended as a local governance and accountability model for territorial and community resilience. The strategy outlines an approach for pursuing territorial development through a structural combination of environmental sustainability, territorial safety and climate change contrasting policies. Monitoring is an important aspect of the project, which uses different methodologies and tools—such as qualitative/quantitative data and standardized indicators¹—to track the performance of services and quality of life in cities. For the initiative, the Province of Potenza has set up a permanent local platform aimed at engaging its 100 cities, institutions/authorities, stakeholders, major and social groups, communities and citizens in the initial development, review, and adjustment of the TCP.

The figure below illustrates how the TCP provides an overarching framework for sub-provincial, inter-municipal and municipal plans and strategies.



Figure 2: Province of Potenza's Territorial Coordination Master Plan, showing flow chart of interactions with sub regional and urban planning and related tools

Marunda Urban Resilience in Action (MURIA)

The benefits of integrating data from informal actors into formal local decision-making processes are demonstrated by the MURIA project, which supports slum dwellers in Jakarta's Marunda neighbourhood to collaborate with other local stakeholders to map and analyse capacities, vulnerabilities, and risks related to disasters. Marunda is a densely populated and poor coastal neighbourhood that is subject to monthly small and large-scale floods, which have negative implications for sanitation, health, and household assets. MURIA supports the development of a risk-management and urban development plan, thereby increasing household and neighbourhood resilience to hazards. This project highlights the importance of collaboration with different stakeholder groups in urban risk appraisal and related priority-setting and community action plan development.

¹ ISO 37120, ISTAT, ESW (BES), LGSATs/Scorecard, Covenant of Mayors Climate and Energy, etc

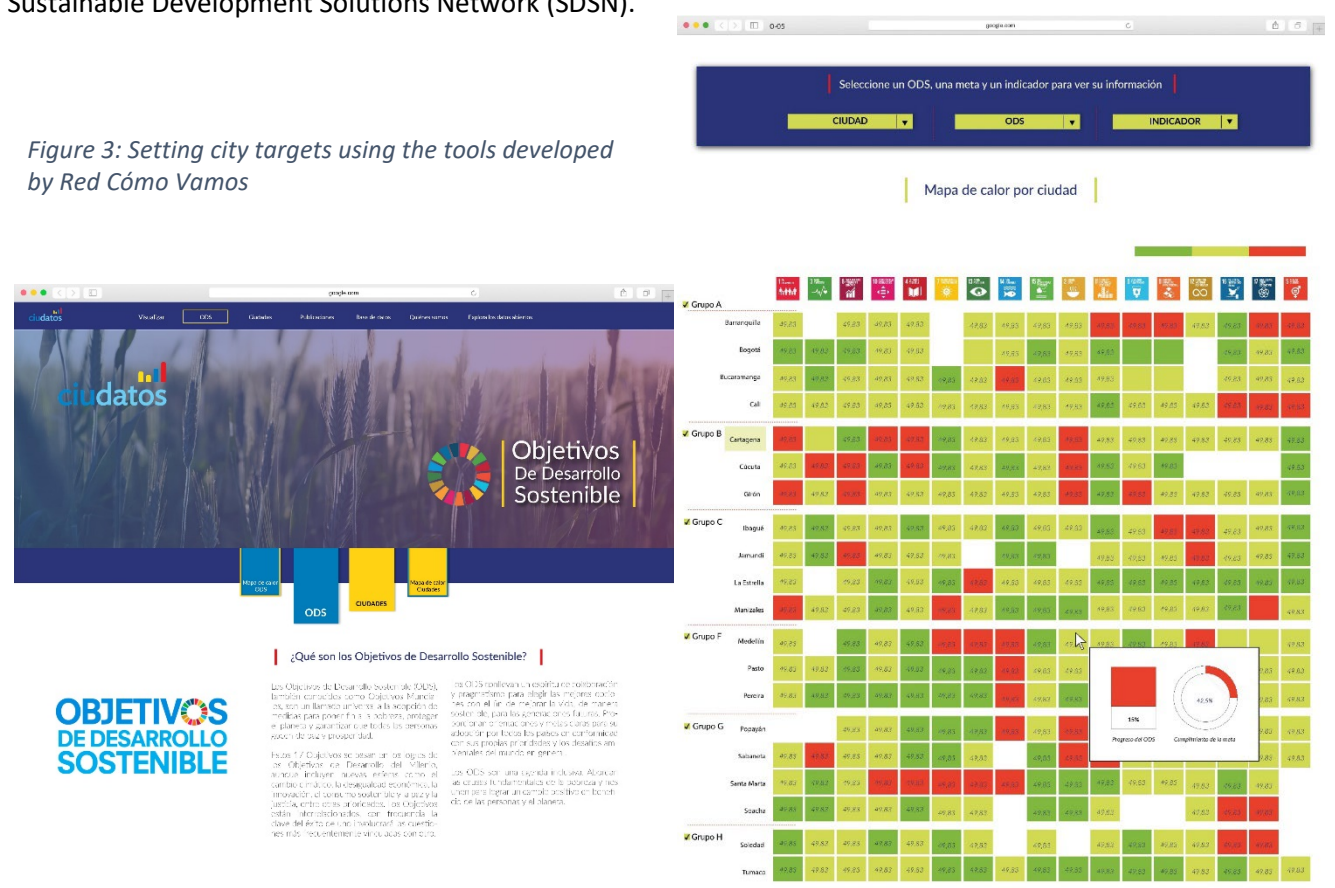
Supporting local implementation of global agendas will require efforts to integrate local perspectives into follow-up and review processes at all levels. Crucially, local governments need to be involved in national follow-up and review processes, as national legal, financial, and institutional frameworks may support—or obstruct—implementation by local governments (Dellas et al. 2018). Local governments also need to be involved in national-level follow-up and review to enable learning across levels of government on adjustments to legal, financial, and institutional frameworks that can better support implementation at all levels (ibid.).

Measuring progress toward the SDGs in urban contexts in Colombia

The project measuring progress toward the SDGs in urban contexts in Colombia is an example of an initiative that aims to strengthen links between local action and national-level follow-up and review processes to localise SDGs in Colombian cities. The project, led by the Red de Ciudades Cómo Vamos with the support of the University of Colombia and Fundacion Corona, builds on 20 years of experience with the Cómo Vamos model, first implemented in Bogotá in 1998. It focuses on tracking and evaluating quality of life in Colombian cities, using a combination of objective and subjective (citizen perception) indicators collected and produced by each city programme. After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Red Cómo Vamos decided to offer its work and capacity to support the localisation of the SDGs, sharing its experience in monitoring cities through local data.

The project involves the development of a public, online data tool that will track SDG indicators and goals for more than 35 Colombian cities (including 15 capital cities), covering over 60% of the country’s urban population. The project builds on Red Cómo Vamos’ experience measuring the Social Progress Index in Colombian cities (together with the Social Progress Imperative, Avina, Deloitte and F. Corona). The index is a tool that has been used and appropriated by different local governments across Colombia as a model to measure social progress in cities. This will complement Colombia’s national monitoring of the SDGs, which focuses on the national and regional level. Because the project is a collaboration among academia, local government, civil society and other partners, it is an example of an effort to mobilise the complementary knowledge, expertise, technology, finance, and other resources of different actors to support follow-up and review of the urban dimension of a global sustainability agenda (Dellas et al. 2018). The development of the project benefited from a grant from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

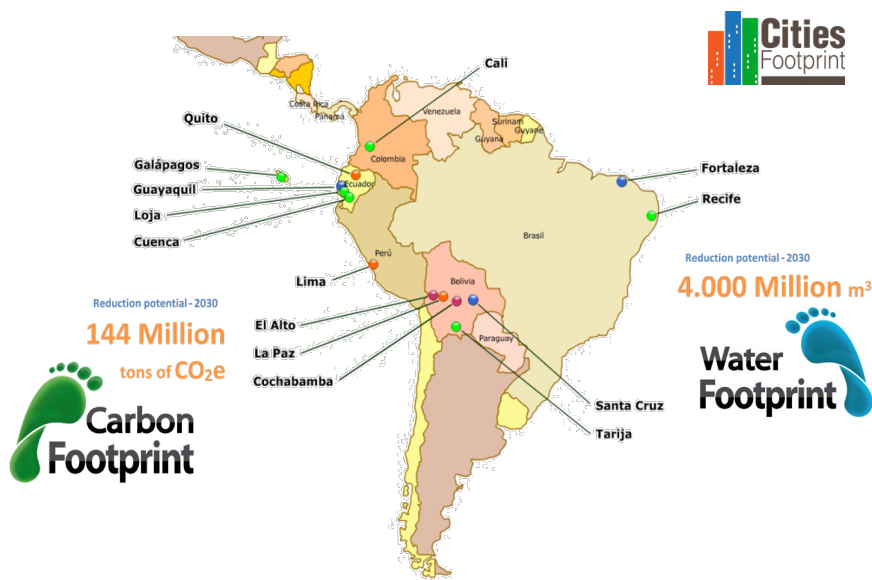
Figure 3: Setting city targets using the tools developed by Red Cómo Vamos



Cities Footprint Project (Proyecto Huella de Ciudades)

The Cities Footprint Project, which benefited from support from a range of actors including CAF-Latin American Development Bank, also strengthens multi-level monitoring and reporting processes. It supports local governments and decision makers in cities in several South American countries in developing urban climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. As a first step, the project evaluates the carbon and water footprints of the participating cities using the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emission Inventories (GPC) and the methodology of the Water Footprint Network.

This diagnosis is used to identify and develop goals, action plans, and scalable pilot mitigation and adaptation actions. In this second step, stakeholders are involved in verifying the data and developing appropriate responses. Response strategies are developed in a manner that aligns with both local objectives and nationally determined contributions (NDCs). These data collection efforts have enabled several participating cities to submit reports to global reporting mechanisms, e.g. by submitting their GHG inventories to the Covenant of Mayors.



To ensure continuity and build capacities, the project also trains local government staff in the application of the footprint calculation methodologies and software. Several participating cities have institutionalized the calculation of footprints on an annual basis.

Conclusion

The five examples discussed in this paper illustrate how local and regional governments are acting to implement global sustainability agendas within their jurisdictions. Crucially, the examples indicate that action by local and regional governments, civil society and other actors can help address some of the key challenges to localising the global agendas that were identified in the papers by Satterthwaite et al. (2018) and by Dellas et al. (2018). They are, for example, engaging in efforts to translate and operationalise the agendas at the local level, engaging in efforts to integrate different sources of local data, including citizen-generated data, into local decision-making and monitoring processes, and are establishing links to follow-up and review processes at the national and global levels.

These cases also indicate that drivers for such local and regional follow-up and review efforts include:

- Political will and commitment: for example, Monitoreo CDMX has benefitted from the long-term commitment of the Mexico City government, as well as the active participation of all the public agencies involved in the project;
- Availability of funding or sufficient budget: for some of the projects, grants from international organizations such as SDSN, foundations and development banks such as CAF were crucial in enabling the development and implementation of follow-up and review initiatives;
- Collaboration with data experts such as academia: Red Cómo Vamos exemplifies the value that can be gained from collaborations with a range of stakeholders, including academics/researchers that can provide the necessary technical expertise;
- Opportunities to learn from the experiences of other local and regional follow-up and review efforts; and
- Opportunities to engage in different global agendas processes.

Going forward, strengthened support from and collaboration with national governments will be crucial to scale up such efforts and ensure their consistent inclusion in national follow-up and review processes. Among the best practices discussed in this paper, there is a strong focus on the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the observation by Satterthwaite et al. (2018) that these agendas provide clearer targets and goals for local governments to commit to. However, additional efforts may be needed to make other agendas—such as the New Urban Agenda—equally tangible drivers for local action.

Sources

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