



Supporting SDG localization through the establishment of a twinning programme to facilitate the development of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

Trebinje (Republika Srpska), Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), Kakanj (Federation of BiH), Siroki Brijeg (Federation of BiH), Poti (Georgia), Kashuri (Georgia)

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Concept note

When adopting the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Member States committed to work closely with local and regional governments on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2015, sub-national authorities have been actively localizing the 2030 Agenda, bringing the SDGs closer to the people they serve and using the framework as a tool for planning and implementation.

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79). Paragraph 89 of the 2030 Agenda calls on major groups and other stakeholders, including local authorities, to report on their contribution to SDG implementation.

In this spirit, local and regional governments are increasingly engaging in such sub-national reviews of SDG implementation, also called Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) or Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs). While the VLRs/VSRs hold no official status, the process of undertaking these sub-national reviews is providing multiple benefits to the entities engaging in them and to SDG implementation at large: strengthening commitment of local authorities and other stakeholders on SDG implementation, promoting dialogues and knowledge exchange, and empowering them to take action.

In close cooperation with UN-Habitat (technical leading the VLRs and with extended knowledge on sustainable urban development), and UNDP (leading the VLRs in two municipalities in Georgia), FAO is supporting the development of VLRs with a specific focus on integrating food systems-related issues and a focus on the SDGs directly linked to FAO's mandate (in particular SDG2 and SDG 12).

On this purpose, FAO, in close cooperation with UN-Habitat and UNDP, is organizing a study tour of selected municipalities from BiH and Georgia that are currently developing their VLRs, to the Municipality of Mafra, Portugal, which has distinguished itself through its outstanding VLR work and strong commitment to SDG implementation.

The target municipalities in BiH and Georgia are: Trebinje (Republika Srpska), Bijeljina (Republika Srpska), Kakanj (Federation of BiH), Siroki Brijeg (Federation of BiH), Poti (Georgia), Kashuri (Georgia).

Objectives

The objectives of the study tour are to:

- Promote and facilitate knowledge exchange, technical capacities and cooperation on the development of VLRs, learning from the experience of the Municipality of Mafra, and from the municipalities in BiH and Georgia currently developing their VLRs.
- Provide the municipalities from BiH and Georgia with an opportunity to see first-hand some of the ongoing food systems-related initiatives in the Municipality of Mafra.

Agenda

27 April: Arrival in Lisbon and pick up of the delegation	
Day 1 (28 April) Development of the SDG Voluntary Local Reviews and visit to food systems-related initiatives in Mafra	
9:15	Pick up of the delegation to join the Meeting
9.30 -10.30	Welcome Meeting – City Council Hall • Welcome remarks from the President of the Municipal Council/Mayor of Mafra • Welcome remarks from UN-Habitat and FAO • Introduction of the delegation • Mafra's Experience in Voluntary Local Review: Overview of Mafra's experience with VLR • Open discussion and experience exchange from the floor Speakers: President of the Municipal Council and City Councillors
10.45-11.30	Lab SDG's – Meeting room A focus on SDG 2, SDG 6 and SDG 12 from the Voluntary Local Review of Mafra - Reporting on SDG 2, 6 and 12 in the VLR of Mafra: experience sharing Speaker: Pedro das Neves, PhD SDG Specialist
11:00-12:15	Lab SDG's – Meeting room BioValue and FoodLink Mafra BioValue Mafra is part of a European project aimed at integrating biodiversity into urban and spatial planning to promote sustainable development. The initiative involves the collaboration of the Municipality of Mafra and various partners to enhance local biodiversity through innovative planning practices. FoodLink is a collaborative network created to promote a sustainable food transition in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA), including the municipality of Mafra. Its origins trace back to the Metropolitan Network of Agri-food Parks, which evolved into FoodLink in 2022 with the aim of developing a regional food strategy grounded in scientific evidence and participatory practices. Speakers: Conceição Santos, Engineer from CCDR LVT, and Sofia Santos, Urban Planner and Landscape Architecture Specialist
12.30-13.30	Lunch break

14.00-15.30	Tour to Mafra Forest "Tapada": <u>Tapada Nacional de Mafra</u> The Mafra Forest, or "Tapada," is a vast royal hunting reserve dating back to the 18th century, now open to the public. It provides visitors with opportunities for nature walks, wildlife watching, and exploration of its scenic trails. Speaker: Carlos Pais, President of the Board of Directors at Tapada Nacional de Mafra
16.15-17.30	Bioresidues Tour to Tratolixo Company: <u>Tratolixo - gestão de resíduos urbanos</u> The Municipality of Mafra has implemented an innovative system for the selective collection of bioresidues, called "Separe Mais & Transforme Melhor," aimed at increasing organic waste recycling and reducing the amount of mixed waste. This project involved distributing brown bins and green bags to residents in urban areas of Mafra to facilitate the proper separation and disposal of food scraps and green waste. Speaker: Nuno Soares, President of Tratolixo Company, and Ana Teresa Barbosa of Communication Division of Tratolixo
Day 2 (29 April) SDG Seminar organized by the Municipality of Mafra	
09.00	<i>Pick up of the delegation to join the SDG Seminar (see the detailed programme below)</i>
Programa here: https://www.cm-mafra.pt/p/seminario-ods	
17.30-19.00	<u>Only for UN-Habitat colleagues:</u> Meeting between UN Habitat and Portuguese Municipalities • Almada • Braga • Fundão • Mafra • Matosinhos • Loulé
Day 3 (30 April) The importance of SDG data and SDG budgeting at local level and tour of the Municipality	
9.00	Pick up of the delegation to join the meetings
9.30-10.30	Leveraging Data for Sustainable Development: A Meeting on Statistics for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) – Joana Abreu, Catholic University • The experience from Mafra: opportunities and challenges • Open Discussion Speaker: Joana Abreu, Coordinator of the CESOP-Local project for Sustainable Territories, Catholic University
11.30-12.15	Integrating SDGs into Municipal Budgets

	• The experience from Mafra: opportunities and challenges • Open Discussion Speaker: Miguel Almeida, President of the Portuguese Municipal Support Fund
12.30- 13.00	A focus on reuse of wastewater: Tour to “Parque Desportivo Municipal”: Parque Desportivo Municipal de Mafra Mafra Example of 27 years of reuse of wastewater from the wastewater treatment plant for irrigation of the Park 22 hectares. Speaker: Marta Gomes, Councilwoman
13.15-14.15	Lunch break
14.15-16.30	Visit Palace of Mafra: Palácio Nacional de Mafra Mafra Built in the 18th century by King João V, the Palace of Mafra is an impressive Baroque palace and convent, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is one of Portugal's most significant historical and architectural landmarks, attracting visitors for its grandeur and rich history. Tour Zambujal Fort: Circuitos Mafra Located near Mafra, the Zambujal Fort is a historical military structure once used for defensive purposes. Today, it offers visitors a glimpse into the region's military past and strategic importance.
17.00-18.30	Outdoor activities in the seaside community of Ericeira