



Nordic Voluntary Subnational Review: Local level as driver for transformational change



Nordic countries top global SDG rankings

But we also have some challenges...

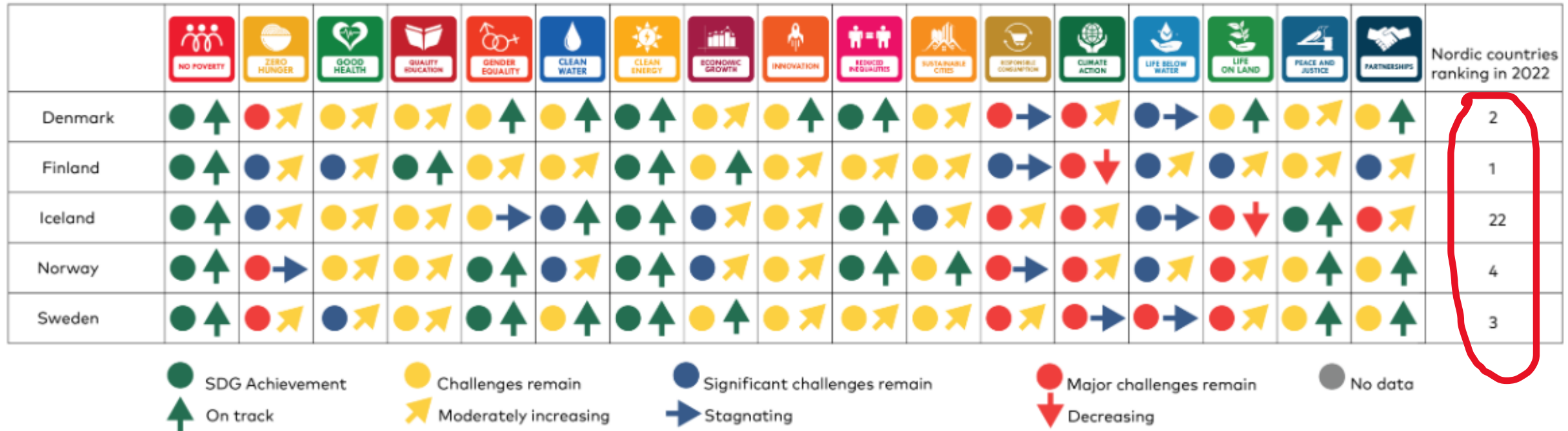


Figure 1. Overview of the Nordic countries' SDGs status reflecting that while countries are making progress, some stagnation can be observed in relation to several goals compared to previous years. Adapted from Sustainable Development Report 2022.

SOURCE: <https://pub.nordregio.org/r-2023-4-the-nordic-region-and-the-2030-agenda/the-nordic-region-and-the-sustainable-development-goals.html>





It is estimated that 65% of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without proper engagement of local and regional governments.”

(OECD: Programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs, 2020)



Nordic Voluntary Subnational Review 2024

What is it?

- A first ever common review based on **interviews and surveys** to Nordic municipalities
- Plus: **Nordic toolbox** (online map): tested local practices for peer learning
- Edited by **Nordregio + Nordic Associations of Local and Regional Governments**
- Financed by Nordic Council of Ministers

Why? Share Nordic learnings with local governments worldwide

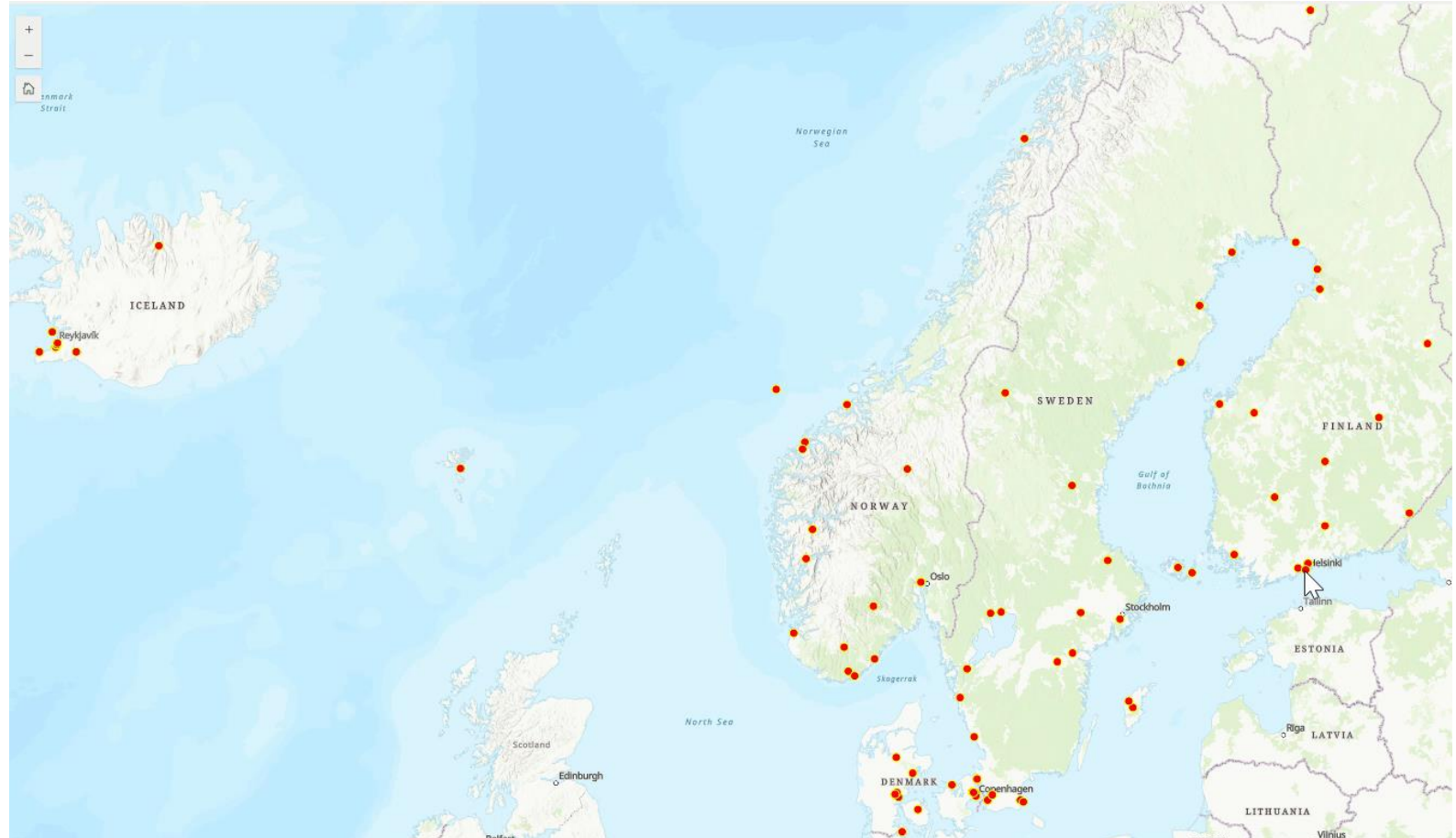
Showcase the vital role of local level to reach SDGs & ignite more local action

- **Show status on localization** and integration of SDGs in steering documents
- Review SDG governance, partnerships, and **national-level support**
- Subchapters to highlight role of **civil society** and **youth inclusion**



Copy with pride from the “Nordic toolbox”

Nordic municipalities added their best initiatives, methods and tools to implement the SDGs at local level.



<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/f6674a8cb9f249fe8bb72b22ade8608b/?draft=true>



Stakeholder engagement and launch event

Webinar 9 April

Subchapters in the report by:

- *Nordic Civil Society Network*
- *Nordic Youth for Sustainability Network*



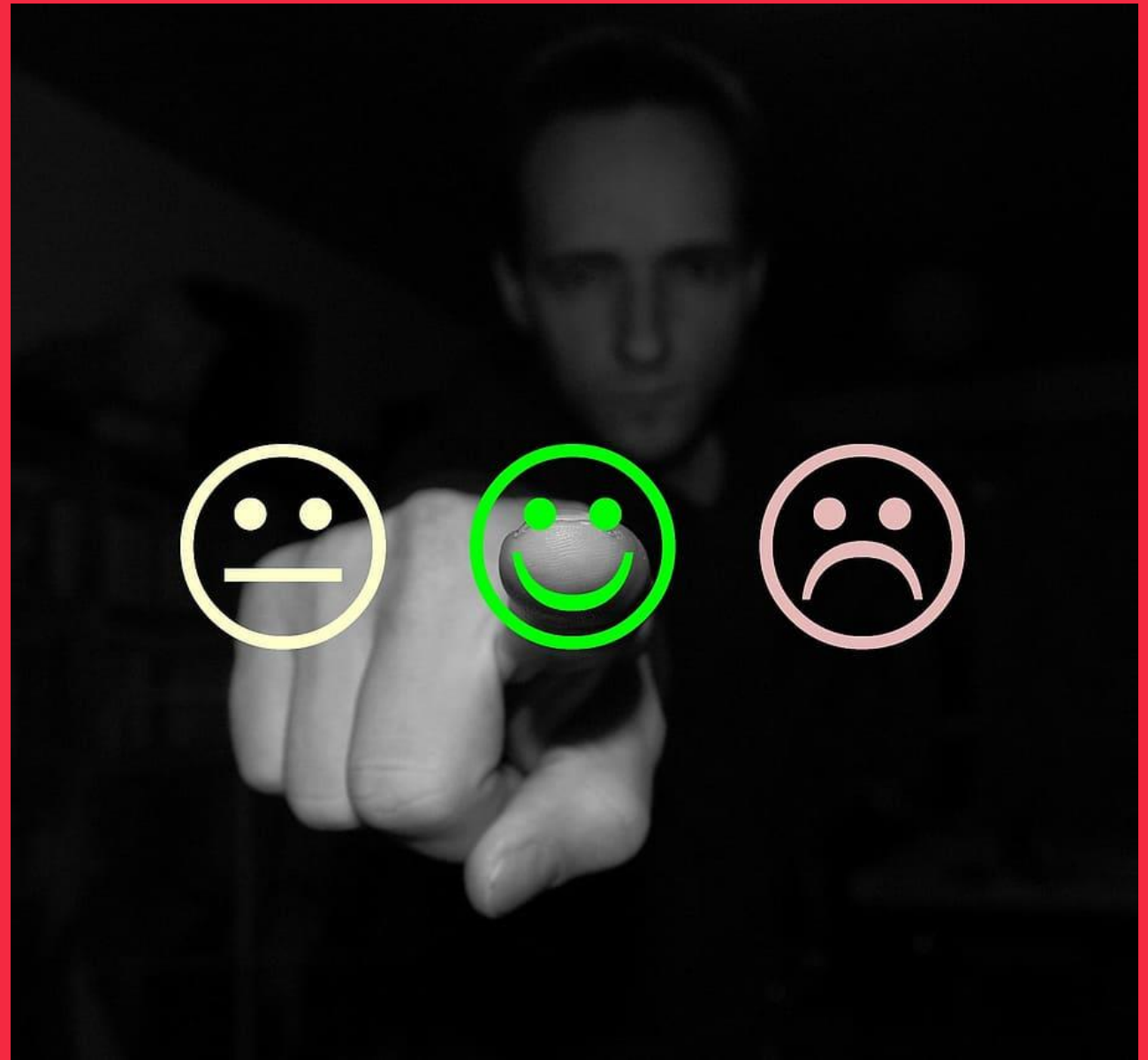
Launch event at UN High-Level Political Forum – **9 July 2024**

- Collaboration with Sweden, other Nordic delegations, UCLG, UN-Habitat etc.



Selected VSR survey results

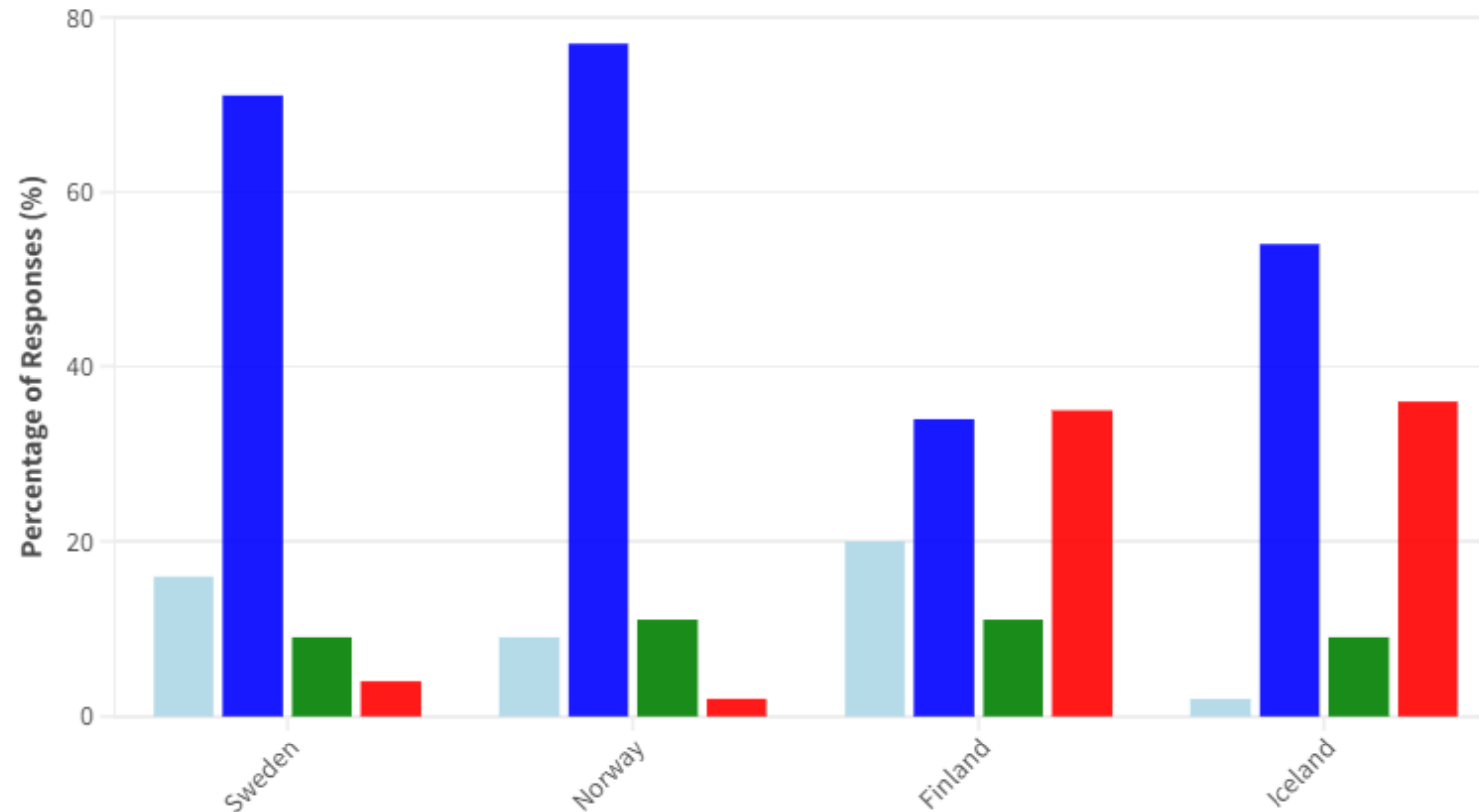
Different response rates
in the countries: from
ca 30% in NO and FI
to 99% in IS



Progress in the implementation of the SDGs

How far has your municipality come in working with the Agenda 2030/the SDGs?

- We have just started the work
- We are working on it
- We see our municipality as a pioneer in the work with the 2030 Agenda
- We have not started working with the 2030 Agenda

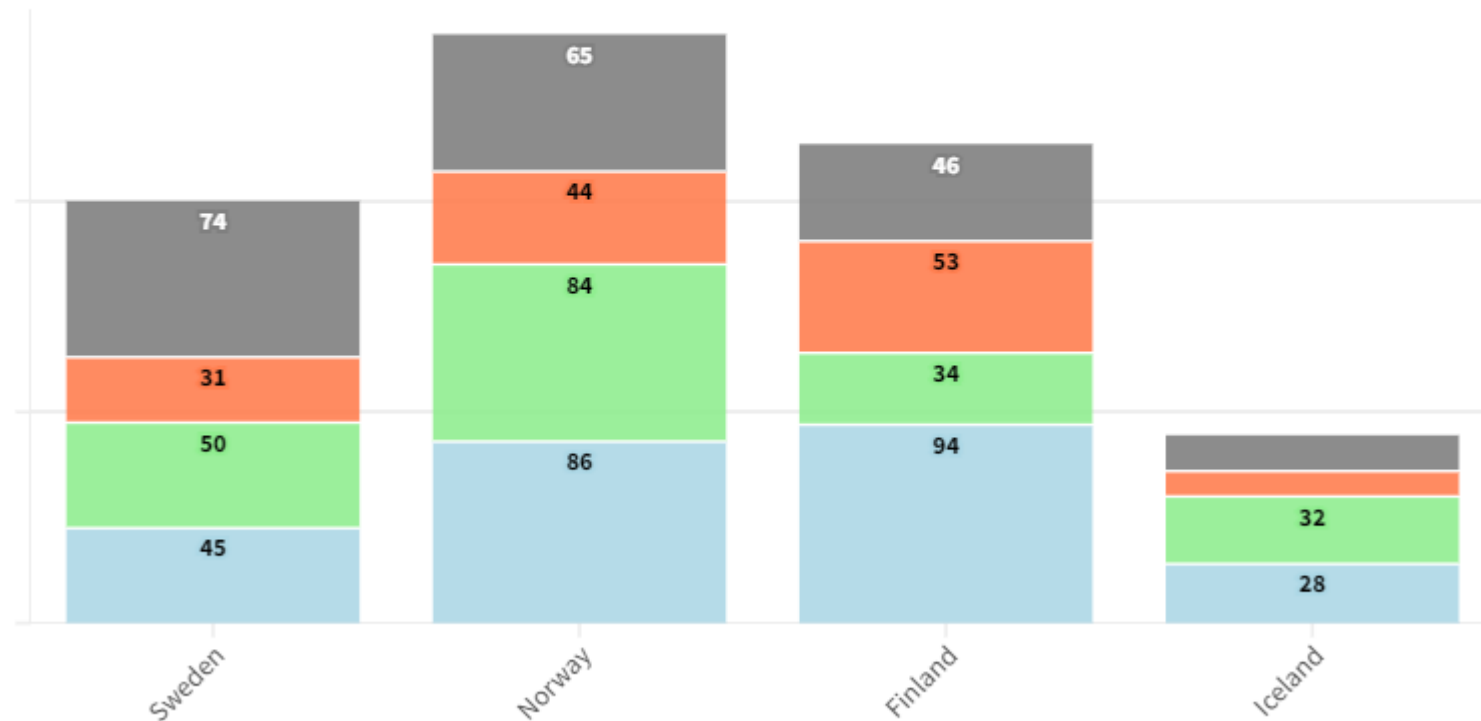


Integration of Agenda 2030 in steering documents

Into which of the following steering documents have you integrated the Agenda 2030

- The municipality's overall strategy and vision
- The local planning system
- The local procurement guidelines
- The local budget

Percentage of Responses (%)



*Multiple answers possible



Top Success factors



1. Capacity to work with the 2030 Agenda



2. Political prioritization of the Agenda 2030



3. Anchoring of the Agenda 2030 in the administrative management of the municipality



4. Translation of the Agenda 2030 into the local context

Top Challenges



1. Lack of capacity to work with the 2030 Agenda



2. Lack of political prioritisation



3. Lack of support from the state



4. Lack of methods and tools





One of the main benefits of working with SDGs is having a shared language across sectors. Even when the municipality's attention may vary, the business sector and civil society keep the SDGs high on their agenda, putting pressure on us. This can be helpful in times of political shifts."

Ingvild Gundersen Little, Sustainability Adviser,
Kristiansand kommune, Norway



Nordic SDG governance challenges

- **Decline in use of SDGs as holistic framework; SDG fatigue** at different levels
- **Limited government support** in some countries: Political polarization led to reduction in budgets:
 - **Sweden** discontinued **National Agenda 2030 Coordinator** and '*Glocal Sweden*' peer learning network that had just gained momentum
 - **Denmark:** KL shifts from SDGs to climate plans and actions – Risk to divert resources
- **Youth distrust** politicians' ability to solve key problems; increasing **inequalities**
- **Lack of resources, capacity & progress indicators** hinder many municipalities
- **Frequent shifts in political leadership locally** >> Need to anchor the goals and host recurring SDG trainings
- Difficult to work holistically when **national policies remain in silos**



Learnings for national governments

1. **Acknowledge global commitment to the SDGs:** your role in the transition
2. **Maintain SDGs as holistic framework** for sustainability, uphold policy coherence and reduce any negative spill-overs
3. **Strengthen role of LRGAs** to offer **peer learning: Copy with pride!**
4. **Consult regularly** with LRGAs on policy measures and local needs
5. Continue effective **national support programmes** for municipalities
6. Support design of **local-level indicators**, data collection, and reporting
7. Include innovation and SDG targets in **public procurement guidelines.**
8. Encourage systematic engagement of **youth, schools and civil society**
9. Support VSRs and participation in **international networks**





QUESTION from LOCAL Level to panel:

What are you as national level representatives planning to do in concrete terms to further support and acknowledge the vital role of municipalities in the transition?

For example:

- targeted support programmes for green investments***
- strengthen the role of LRGAs facilitating capacity building and peer learning for local administrators.***



Nordregio's Agenda 2030 Nordic knowledge hub

- **Webinar recordings**
- Reports and policy briefs
- Frontrunner cities share:
 - Tools to work on challenging SDGs
 - Steering & monitoring tools
 - Procurement strategies
 - Youth engagement models



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<https://nordregioprojects.org/agenda2030local/>

