



UN Directors Group Retreat

5-6 February 2025

Venue: Local2030 Coalition Secretariat (6th floor), Historical Archive of Euskadi, Bilbao, Spain | MS Teams
[@Local2030](#) [#SDGLocalization](#)

Background

The Local2030 Coalition is convening the second United Nations Directors Group Retreat in Bilbao, Spain, on 5-6 February 2025. This meeting will provide a unique platform for strategic dialogue and collective planning, with the goal of harnessing the transformative power of localization as a critical accelerator to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Aligning and coordinating the strategies, efforts and expertise of UN members, the retreat will bring together the directors of the Local2030 Coalition to set the strategic lines of the Coalition's operational phase, geared towards operationalization and systemic, transformational impact.

Retreat Overview

Over the past two years, through the ongoing initiatives led by the Coalition and the steadfast contributions of its UN members and various partners, the concept of localization has gained significant traction within some of the most influential global development frameworks, including the High-level Political Forum – with the identification of Local2030 – and the Pact for the Future. In addition, it has been a central theme at the SDG Summit, where stakeholders emphasized the need for context-specific solutions that empower local actors.

Furthermore, the approach has received critical support through resolutions, conclusions, and strategic opinions from influential non-UN entities at the local, national, regional, and global levels, including in strategic documents of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Regions, and other supranational bodies from different regions. These various discussions, analyses, and policy endorsements reflect a growing consensus on localization and its potential to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2024 UN Directors' Group Retreat accelerated the set-up and expansion of the Coalition, its substantial value proposition, and its positioning within and outside the UN system in the broader framework of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It validated a unified set of messages to make the concept of localization and the work of the Local 2030 Coalition widespread, saw as an outcome the creation of two working groups and the SDG Localization Marker that established an ambition to further elevate this work throughout the UN system.

As a result, the Coalition has been consolidated as an institutionalized platform for Coalition members and constituencies to collaborate more effectively, culminating internally with the installation of the Secretariat team in late 2024, and externally with its positioning as a key player in the localization of the Pact for the Future.

As the localization agenda enters a new operational phase in 2025, a pivotal opportunity arises for Coalition members, together with the Local 2030 Hubs, and under the strategic guidance of the

Steering Committee. This moment is a chance to advance and solidify a systemic approach to localization that delivers meaningful impact on the ground. By advancing in the three workstreams – advocacy, action and monitoring – with innovative solutions, the Coalition aims to produce tangible results that not only accelerate the operationalization of localization within the UN system and beyond, but that connect global agendas and processes to local priorities and systems and effectively accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including by localizing the SDG transitions and the Pact for the Future.

Main Proposed Principles for the Coalition’s Operational Phase

Based on weeks of preparatory work with UN member entities and constituencies, a synthesis has been proposed below. This includes the key principles driving the Coalition’s operational phase, which will translate into clear strategic focus areas to be set by the Directors at the Retreat.

- *Transition from an advocacy-driven effort to one focused on operationalization.* This transition emphasizes practical implementation, ensuring that the Coalition's strategies and workplan are effectively translated into meaningful action with a systemic approach to localization that delivers meaningful impact on the ground.
- *Empowerment of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs):* To empower UNCTs to take a more active role in implementing and advancing the Coalition's goals, equipping UNCTs with the necessary tools, resources and strategies.
- *Systemic Approach:* To integrate localization into broader, systemic approaches, focusing on bridging gaps between local, national and global processes and between public and private sectors.
- *Collaboration and Ownership:* To foster a collaborative environment, strengthen joint efforts among member organizations, and ensure mutual accountability to advance localization through shared goals and clear roles.
- *Platform for Change:* To consolidate the Local 2030 Coalition as a central platform for members’ best practices, partnerships, and resource mobilization, expanding its influence to position localization as an increasingly recognized global priority.
- *Enhancement of the Coalition's political influence in intergovernmental processes:* Through active engagement with decision-makers and through strategic advocacy, the Coalition aims to achieve greater visibility and impact within these processes, ensuring that its priorities are reflected in global and regional policy-making.
- *Scaling Proven Impact:* Scaling up processes by identifying, replicating, and scaling up best practices that showcase system-wide examples of SDG localization, providing tailored and contextualized solutions to advance the 2030 Agenda and demonstrate a coordinated and unified approach.

Objectives:

- Develop a shared vision, through a collective foresight exercise, for the Coalition's position and role until 2030, contributing meaningfully to the overarching vision for the UN System in 2030.
- Design a shared roadmap, based on backcasting from this vision, for the 2027 SDG Summit as a key milestone and beyond, with clear, actionable and measurable goals to guide the Coalition's activities for 2025 and beyond.
- Select tools and best practices exemplifying local actions that accelerate the operationalization of localization at the country levels through their adaptation by UN member entities, UNCTs and constituencies in other contexts and thematic areas, scaling up and promoting the differentiated impact of localization.
- Secure ownership, leadership, and engagement from Coalition members at the Directors level, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to support localization at all levels and take forward the Coalition's action.

Outputs:

- Action plan for the involvement of local actors in the Pact for the Future process, ensuring their active participation and integration in decision-making.
- Concrete roles for the Coalition, engaging its capacity in key ongoing global processes, including the Ocean Conference, Financing for Development (FFD4), UN Food Systems Summit, HLPF 2025, World Social Summit and COP30.
- A clear, actionable strategy to enhance the capacity of Local 2030 Hubs, enabling them to exchange their best practices and lessons learned, as well as to actively engage in and contribute to global processes.
- Strategic goals and actions for the Knowledge and Scientific Network (KSN) to foster greater international collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- A set of UN Local 2030 Flagship Programmes that showcase effective SDG localization, illustrating best practices and providing UNCTs with localization strategies and tools tailored to country-level needs.
- Definition of the technical capacity and targeted support through capacity-building initiatives and tools to be provided by the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Development Coordination Office (DCO), the Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA) and the Flagship-leading agencies.
- Workplan for the Working Groups providing interagency strategic guidance to ensure their deliverables align with high-level priorities.
- Definition of the scope, key stakeholders, and timeline for piloting the next phase of the Localization Marker process.
- Identify collaboration modalities for UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) and UNCTs, identifying key resources and timing for empowering them to implement localization strategies at the country level.
- An action plan to support catalytic initiatives in collaboration with the SDG Localization Portfolio which includes the seed funding proposals.

Participants One representative at the director level and one technical representative from each member of the Local2030 Coalition UN Directors Group

Format Hybrid

Language

English