

Measuring Sustainable Culture. The integration of the Cultural Dimension in the 2030 Agenda of the Canary Islands

- Lucía Vázquez, Project Coordinator, REDS-SDSN Spain
- coordinacion1@reds-sdsn.es
- +34617005380
- UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID. Oficina Ecocampus-Pabellón servicios universitarios, 28049 MADRID

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Government of the Canary Islands presented its [Canary Islands 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), a document that brings the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with their targets and indicators to the reality of the island territory.



As an innovative element, the Canary Islands 2030 Agenda has incorporated the **Cultural Dimension of the SDGs**, considering that it is necessary to advance in the integration of this Cultural Dimension in local, regional and national strategies for Sustainable Development.

For two years, SDSN Spain has worked closely together with the Canary Island authorities, to advise and accompany the Canary Government in the process of developing the cultural dimension in this agenda.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING GOALS AND INDICATORS

During the first year, SDSN Spain, lead by the expert Alfons Martinell, worked with the Canary Government team on developing an action plan based on:

1. The delimitation of eight 'areas of incidence' that should be present in the targets. The areas selected were:
 - a. Cultural Rights as an element in the construction of cultural citizenship for sustainable development.
 - b. The importance of cultural values in the construction of cultural identities in Sustainable Development.
 - c. Cultural life in the common, social contract and cultural institutionality.
 - d. The cultural system in Sustainable Development.
 - e. Direct and indirect impacts of the cultural system on Sustainable Development.
 - f. Cultural capacities as a driver of Sustainable Development.
 - g. The cultural system in global commitments and multilateralism.

This cultural dimension has been materialized in the Canary Islands 2030 Agenda in the following way:

- **A Challenge Region:** Highlighting the relevance of the cultural ecosystem in the promotion of sustainable development.
- **An Accelerating Policy:** Integration of culture as a key dimension of human and sustainable development, seeking to make visible and profitable its multiple complementarity with the other dimensions of development.
- **Six priorities for action based** on the eight areas of impact defined in the first phase of the project:
 - Guaranteeing cultural rights as an element in the construction of a new cultural citizenship for sustainable development in societies with a high level of development.
 - Construction and design of cultural policies aimed at achieving sustainable development.
 - Cultural life in common and cultural institutionality as a form of governance.
 - Valuation and visibility of the contributions and impact of the cultural ecosystem on sustainable development.
 - The cultural system in global commitments and multilateralism.
 - The creative economy as a driver of sustainable development.
- 22 cultural goals that are included in the different priorities for action.

2. The elaboration of the cultural targets. Based on these six priorities, 22 targets were identified and finally approved to be part of the Canary Islands 2030 Agenda

- TARGET 1. To guarantee fundamental Cultural Rights, promoting a concept of cultural citizenship that respects the diversity of the Canary Islands, gender equality, equal access and the right to participate and be part of minimum cultural services in order to contribute to the integral development of individuals.
- TARGET 2. To protect the intellectual property rights of creators in the different artistic disciplines, to recognize their contribution to the cultural value in the Canary Islands and to promote a solid legal framework to revitalize the creative economy.
- TARGET 3. Adapt the principles of cultural citizenship in the current digital context to avoid gaps and increasing inequalities in access to culture.
- TARGET 4. To continue promoting the study and maintenance of collective memory and to recognize ancestral or traditional knowledge as the common intangible heritage of the archipelago and as expressions of cultural ways of life.
- TARGET 5. Promote the incorporation of the cultural dimension in urban planning, territorial and environmental policies of the Canary Islands, addressing the differentiated links of the archipelago with nature, the biosphere and the oceans with the aim of promoting sustainability plans in the different cultural institutions of the Canary Islands.
- TARGET 6. Recognize the impact of migrations on cultural reality.
- TARGET 7. To generate cultural capabilities in broad groups of the canarian society and specialized training for all the actors belonging to the cultural system of the Canary Islands.
- TARGET 8. Retain the existing cultural talent in the Canary Islands, as well as promote mobility actions and attraction of foreign talent.
- TARGET 9. To incorporate Culture as the axis for the design and development of educational policies in the Canary Islands, placing special emphasis on the importance of cultural education at the different educational levels, promoting a plan for R+D+i and entrepreneurship related to the cultural system, involving universities and applied research centers.
- TARGET 10. Promote participatory governance and the promotion of public-private cooperation in the cultural sector.
- TARGET 11. Promote new forms of tourism related to the field of culture and heritage, such as sustainable cultural tourism, taking advantage of the interconnections and synergies between the two sectors.
- TARGET 12. Promote the role of the cultural sector as a social dynamizer and value its current and potential contribution to sustainable development.
- TARGET 13. To make visible the role of civil society as a historical agent of the evolution of the cultural system in the Canary Islands.
- TARGET 14. To analyze the reality of the different fields of culture in the Canary Islands (heritage, visual arts, performing arts, audiovisual, folklore, etc.) in order to influence their capacity for current and future sustainable development.
- TARGET 15. Promote a system of data and monitoring of the Canary Islands' cultural system that will provide knowledge on the assets it contributes to Sustainable Development.
- TARGET 16. To achieve coherence in the cultural policies developed by the different levels of the Canarian administration (municipal, insular and regional), incorporating a more realistic vision of their impacts and synergies with other public actions.

- TARGET 17. Improve the working conditions of the cultural professions and promote the creation of markets for culture and the cultural and creative industries at the local, regional, national and international levels.
- TARGET 18. Protect and safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage as an asset contributing to Sustainable Development.
- TARGET 19. Promote the participation of cultural agents on the international scene and encourage commitments between public institutions and all cultural actors in the Canary Islands, in favor of diversity and intercultural dialogue both in the archipelago and abroad.
- TARGET 20. To incorporate culture in the design and implementation of future development cooperation policies carried out by the Canary Islands public administrations.
- TARGET 21. Promote the digital transformation of the cultural sector.
- TARGET 22. To revitalize the creative economy in order to boost its long-term growth in the Canary Islands, supporting entrepreneurial initiatives and projects, offering facilities for their location and promoting spaces for their development.

3. The setting of a first draft of indicators for these targets. 128 indicators were presented based on the Culture 2030 indicators elaborated by UNESCO.

Throughout the second year, SDSN Spain settled down a working group alongside the statistical team as well as the cultural workers of the regional government. The work was focused on the review and reduction of indicators and the identification of sources that could measure them.

The statistics team had already been working on [localizing the SDG targets](#) and creating specific targets for the Canary Islands context for each of the goals. With this experience and knowledge of sources, the following work phases were established:

Phase 1. Review of indicators

Three types of indicators were identified:

- **Safe/Insurance indicators:** Those indicators that can be measured because there is data available
- **Probable indicators:** Those indicators whose measurement is known by the working group, even though there is no data available
- **Desired indicators:** Those indicators that would be desirable to measure in the future in order to know the progression of the goal.

In this phase, the difference between classic cultural indicators and those that would fall within the Sustainable Cultural Development approach, was discussed. In this last category for example, would enter indicators that integrate Cultural Rights. This vision is not linear and requires a more qualitative measurement, which implies an additional challenge.

Here there are three examples of each type:

- **Safe indicator**
 - TARGET 11. Promote new forms of tourism related to the field of culture and heritage, such as sustainable cultural tourism, taking advantage of the interconnections and synergies between the two sectors.

- Indicator 1: Number of trips by residents of the community made mainly for cultural reasons, with respect to total trips for leisure, recreation or vacations by destination.
 - Indicator 2: Expenditure on trips made for cultural reasons.
 - Data source: [Survey](#) on tourism expenditure in the Canary Islands. Questions 10, 27 and 29 relate to cultural tourism.
 - **Probable indicator**
 - TARGET 1. To guarantee fundamental Cultural Rights, promoting a concept of cultural citizenship that respects the diversity of the Canary Islands, gender equality, equal access and the right to participate in minimum cultural services in order to contribute to the integral development of individuals.
 - Indicator 1: Participation in cultural life
 - Data source:
 - Annual number of calls for proposals / subsidies/ in Culture awarded
 - Number of annual requests for funding in Culture granted and excluded
 - Annual claims for the exclusion of funding requests in Culture
 - Percentage of women professionals or legal representatives of cultural enterprises that are selected in public calls for proposals, by public cultural entities in the Canary Islands.

**In order to have this indicator well measured, a systematized data collection model needs to be transferred to other administrations.

- **Desired indicator**
 - TARGET 5. Promote the incorporation of the cultural dimension in the urban planning, territorial and environmental policies of the Canary Islands, addressing the differentiated links of the archipelago with nature, the biosphere and the oceans with the aim of promoting sustainability plans in the different cultural institutions of the Canary Islands.
 - Indicator 1. Number of cultural organizations that publish sustainability reports.
 - Data source desired: Survey of cultural organizations as to whether they have a plan in any of the dimensions of Sustainable Development.

Phase 2. Review of the data available

Once the previous criteria is established (safe-probable-desirable) the working group made a detailed research of the sources available to be used to measure the different indicators.

In a first revision, some goals remain without indicators due to the complexity of the goal and the lack of data.

- TARGET 4. To continue promoting the study and maintenance of collective memory and to recognize ancestral or traditional knowledge as the common intangible heritage of the archipelago and as expressions of cultural ways of life.
- TARGET 6. Recognize the impact of migrations on cultural reality.
- TARGET 8. Retain the existing cultural talent in the Canary Islands, as well as promote mobility actions and attraction of foreign talent.
- TARGET 9. To incorporate Culture as the axis for the design and development of educational policies in the Canary Islands, placing special emphasis on the

importance of cultural education at the different educational levels, promoting a plan for R+D+i and entrepreneurship related to the cultural system, involving universities and applied research centers.

- TARGET 10. Promote participatory governance and the promotion of public-private cooperation in the cultural sector.

Thanks to the wide knowledge and experience of the statistical and cultural team of the Canary Government, the research is open to data sources that were apparently unrelated to culture, as the Judicial Statistics, Crime Statistics used to build indicators related to Intellectual Property Rights for Target 2.

Phase 3. Synchrony Goal-Indicator-Source

After the successive reviews and contributions, a face-to-face working session was held in Tenerife to analyze the feasibility of the indicators, the synchrony with the goal and the convenience of the data source.

Finally, the working group has come out with 56 indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, to measure the contribution of culture to the SDGs.

FINAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed indicators are the result of a dynamic and interdisciplinary work process, in which the issues are inherent to the Sustainable Cultural Development approach, which implies a transversal and qualitative vision that goes beyond the classic quantitative measurement of results. Thus, there were innovative approaches to taking advantage of existing resources, sources and information, specifically addressing the limitations, difficulties and challenges presented by cultural measurement in itself.

The main challenges have been:

- The methodological difficulty of creating cultural indicators
- It is not possible to evaluate everything, culture is very broad, so it is necessary to select:
 - What can be measured
 - What could be measured because data exists
 - What is desirable to be measure in the future
- The difference between classical cultural indicators and those that would fall under the sustainable cultural development approach that integrates, for example, cultural rights, is emphasized. This vision is not linear and requires a more qualitative measurement, which implies an additional challenge.

The definitive indicators are a first and pioneer step in overcoming traditionally intuitive practices, to which the confluence of efforts by experts in the cultural and statistical sector has undoubtedly contributed. Hopefully, this work can be replicated to make Culture's contribution to the SDGs visible.

For this reason, by way of conclusion, we consider it important to name and recognize the hard work of all the people who have been part of this study.

- The team of Sustainable Development Indicators for the Canary Islands: Noelia Martín, Rafael Betancor and Jhoner Perdomo
- The team of the Institute of Cultural Development, Jose Manuel González, Hao Higuchi and Juan Vicente Rodríguez
- The SDSN Spain team, Alfons Martinell, Pedro Canut, María Cristina Heredia and Lucía Vázquez.

- All of this under the direction of David Padrón, General Manager for Research and Coordination of Sustainable Development of the Canary Island Government.

This case has recently been recognized as a [good practice](#) by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations.