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# Starting Strong on the SDGs in Asia: Readiness in South Korea

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## Key Messages

- For more than two decades, Korea has been translating the global drive for sustainable development into domestic actions. Many of Korea's domestic actions have been initiated at the *local* not national level.
- Beginning with Agenda 21 in 1992, local governments and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have made concerted efforts to collaborate on *Local Agenda 21*.
- The result of these concerted efforts have been the establishment of Local Councils for Sustainable Development (LCSD). The LCSDs have played a critical role in driving sustainability initiatives from the bottom-up. These bottom-up efforts have been aided by a relatively effective set of local level participatory institutions.
- These local level efforts have focused on safeguarding natural resources and protecting ecosystems as opposed to the socio-economic dimensions of sustainable development.
- There is hence a significant opportunity for the SDGs to help the national government to raise the profile and broaden the appeal of sustainable development.
- The national government's ability to capitalise on this opportunity nevertheless seems to be limited to institutional arrangements that placed the SDGs under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) without a focal point for domestic action; a significant commitment to promoting green growth as opposed to sustainable development among environmental agencies; and low levels of awareness among the leadership.
- In light of the above, the SDGs might benefit from continued commitment at the local levels that gradually expands to higher levels of governance.

# 1. Introduction

The recently approved Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer an unprecedented opportunity to transform national development patterns. The prospects of achieving this fundamental shift will rest heavily on initial actions on the SDGs. A quick and decisive start on the SDGs could help align the diverse interests required to drive transformational change; a fragmented and protracted effort would fail to galvanise much-needed support at a formative stage. While these initial actions will indeed be critical, they will not occur in a vacuum. For most countries, initial responses to the SDGs will be shaped by existing planning processes and institutional arrangements. The Republic of Korea (South Korea and hereafter Korea) is no exception. This paper provides an overview of both existing processes and institutions as well as recent efforts from Korea to prepare for implementing the SDGs.

For more than two decades, Korea has been translating the global drive for sustainable development into domestic actions. Much of this action has *not* been initiated at the national level. Rather, beginning with Agenda 21 in 1992, local governments and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made a concerted effort to collaborate on *Local Agenda 21*. The result of these collaborative efforts has been the establishment of Local Councils for Sustainable Development (LCSD). The LCSDs have played a critical role in driving sustainability initiatives from the bottom-up. These bottom-up efforts have been aided by a relatively effective set of local participatory institutions. However, these local initiatives have been more inclined to safeguard natural resources and ecosystems rather than promote broader notions of sustainable development. There is hence an opportunity for Korea's national government to use the SDGs to expand the appeal of sustainable development. Capitalising on this opportunity will not be easy; it will require identifying a focal point for national action on the SDGs (apart from the work on the SDGs done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)) and determining how environmental agencies working on green growth can organise themselves around the SDGs. Awareness levels of the SDGs will also need to be raised at the leadership levels. In light of these constraints, the best near-term hopes for the SDGs might be continued commitment at the local levels that gradually expands to higher levels.

This paper is organised into five sections. Section 2 summarises Korea's initial response to sustainable development after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Section 3 describes the preparatory process for the SDGs. Section 4 concentrates on the development of a national and local implementation framework for sustainable development. Section 5 concludes with an overview of challenges and recommendations for successful implementation of the SDGs in Korea.

## 2. Background: Korea's Initial Response to

# Sustainable Development

Since the Rio conference in 1992, sustainable development has been managed chiefly by civil society and NGOs rather than Korea's national government. The embrace of *Local Agenda 21* was initiated by local NGOs as part of an environmental movement that accompanied a decentralising trend following Korea's first local election in 1995. The involvement of civil society groups has meant there is a significant amount of variation in the implementation of sustainable development. The local government's political will and the capacity of civil society groups are two of the key factors influencing the degree of local commitment. Some of the more committed local governments established their *Local Agenda 21* and constructed partnerships to implement sustainable development plans. As of 2016, 210 of 243 local governments—that is, 86.4%—had formulated their *Local Agenda 21*, and around 100 local governments established councils for sustainable development that serve as a three-way partnership between the public, civil society, and business (Yoon, 2016). Based in part on this response, the *Local Agenda 21* movement in Korea was globally recognised as a successful case at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

Matching this international recognition, the institutional arrangements for sustainable development were also established in 2000 and led by the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (PCSD). This commission was comprised of representatives from civil society, business, and government. A representative who was recommended by civil society was appointed as the commission chair, which illustrates the strong multi-stakeholder orientation of this PCSD. *The Framework Act on Sustainable Development* was promulgated in 2007 to form a legal basis for actions taken in the name of sustainable development. However, as *The Framework Act on Low Carbon and Green Growth* was enacted in 2010, *the Sustainable Development Act* was revised and put under *the Framework Act on Low Carbon and Green Growth*; the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) (Yoon 2016).

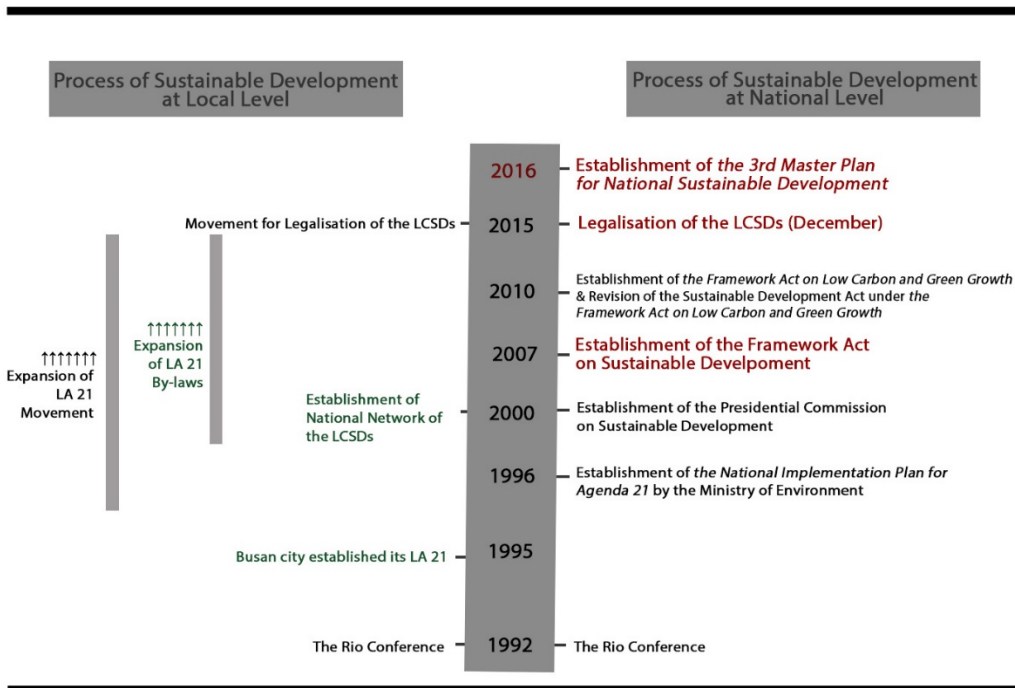
There are no legal provisions linking the national and local implementing institutions on sustainable development, but there was central-local cooperation on these issues through 2010—though the level of cooperation has tapered off in recent years. Most of the cooperation today tends to revolve around several standalone projects rather than real policy cooperation. For example, a representative of LCSDs is not involved in CSD. Thus, even with a 20-year history of work on sustainable development, national and local governments (particularly the national government) regard LCSDs as a kind of non-governmental or intermediary organisation rather than a well-established channel for participatory governance. What has materialised is therefore not really a coherent approach to sustainable development. Beyond the unique evolution of institutions, the lack of coherence is partially attributable to lack of awareness and perhaps even conflict of interest among senior decision-makers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The establishment of PCSD in 2000 and of the Framework Act on Sustainable Development in 2007 were promoted by the democratic party, but the Framework Act on Low Carbon and Green Growth in 2010 was enacted by the conservative party.


For the last 20 years, the LCSDs have operated outside of national law with limited attention from the national government. But in 2015, the LCSDs became formal official organisations charged with promoting local sustainable development. The decision to upgrade the LCSDs was nevertheless not made as a part of a comprehensive programme to strengthen national policy implementation of the SDGs or otherwise solidify links between national and local levels of governments. Rather their chief purpose was to legally support funding for the LCSDs. The 3rd Master Plan for National Sustainable Development (2016-2020) was published in January 2016 by the Ministry of Environment. It linked its strategies and tasks with the SDGs, but did not select a set of national SDG priorities nor did it create institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs. According to a senior official from the Ministry of Environment (MoE), the SDGs and these national level institutional arrangements will be agreed upon after the meeting of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2016.

Figure 1. The History of Sustainable Development in Korea



## 2.1 History of Millennium Development Goals in Korea: International Development Cooperation

Another set of factors that could influence the implementation of the SDGs is Korea's approach to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have been promoted in Korea since 2007 in line with the establishment of Korea's institutional framework for official development assistance



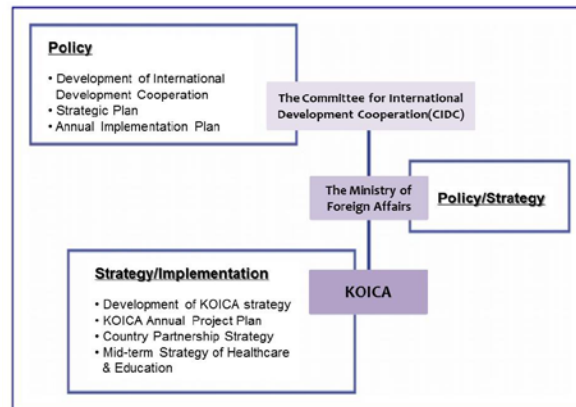
(ODA) in 2006. Korea's ODA architecture consists of a coordinating body, supervising ministries, and executing ministries and agencies. The Committee on International Development Cooperation (CIDC) serves as a coordinating body; in this role it determines the structure of the overall ODA strategy in an effort to bring coherence to the delivery of aid programmes. The Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) supervises concessional loans and grants respectively. KOICA (under MOFA) and the Korea Eximbank (under MOSF) implement grants and concessional loans respectively (ODA Korea 2016).

The mid-term ODA policy 2008-2010 aimed at: 1) increasing humanitarian aid to Africa to help achieve the MDGs; 2) supporting the MDGs related to education and information technology; and 3) strengthening cooperation with other multilateral development organisations to support the achievement of MDGs and sustainable development in developing countries (CIDC, 2007). In 2010, the Korean government devised its first *Strategic Plan for International Development Cooperation (Strategic Plan) 2011-2015*. In the mid-term ODA policy of the Strategic Plan, a premium was placed on achieving MDGs (CIDC, 2010).

The summary draft of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Plan 2016-2020 was discussed in the meeting of the CIDC in November 2015, but a final version has yet to be published. A draft of this document states that the contribution to the achievement of the SDGs is a priority. Its six key strategies are as follows: 1) to strengthen the strategy for allocating grant and credit assistance ODA; 2) to establish a strategic plan in a top-down manner; 3) to increase the quality of ODA projects; 4) to improve the ODA evaluation and feedback system; 5) to capitalise on synergies with NGOs, business groups, and academia; and 6) to facilitate active citizen participation in ODA (CIDC, 2015).

The Mid-Term ODA Policy 2008-2010 also references a yet-to-be-published white paper on ODA practices. Only summary drafts of this paper and a report from the CIDC meeting have been circulated and are available from the CIDC website. According to a researcher at KOICA, the problems with Korean International Development Cooperation policy and process include: 1) the lack of public openness regarding national ODA policy and strategies; 2) the limited linkages between policy units (the CIDC, MOFA) and executing agency (KOICA); and 3) an insufficient monitoring and evaluation (IM, 2012). In addition, the same KOICA researcher pointed out that the awareness of Korean government on the MDGs was still relatively low and the MDGs were largely financed via ODA grants (as opposed to loans or other non-concessional financing arrangements).

Figure 2. The Process to Promote the MDGs in Korea



Source: IM, 2012: Figure 4, translated by author

### 3. Preparatory Process for the SDGs

#### National Government: Lack of integrative and participatory process

In the lead up to the Rio+20 conference in 2012, the Korean government was selected as a chair for the conference and was thus actively engaged in meeting preparations (MOFA, 2015). Although the MOE had been charged with managing international negotiations on sustainable development since 1992, the Rio+20 conference was overseen by MOFA. This shift reflected the fact that MOFA was actively involved in the MDGs and thus would play a role in the SDGs. Since 2012, MOFA has served as the lead agency on international negotiations over the 2030 Development Agenda (MOFA, 2015). Governmental organisations and agencies such as Korea Development Institute (KDI), Korea Environment Institute (KEI), and KOICA have convened several international and national forums and conferences on the 2030 Agenda in Korea. However, these were not part of an official government-led preparatory process but rather research programmes carried out by relevant institutions and agencies.

On 29 December, 2014, the Post-2015 Task Force under MOFA was formed to prepare for the 3rd international conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in July 2015 as well as the SDGs (MOFA, 2015). The Task Force consisted of directors from 15 ministries and agencies (MOFA, 2015). According to internal documents, the process to gather opinions from multiple stakeholders for the SDGs was structured so as to solicit initial communications from each ministry with MOFA overseeing coordination (MOFA, 2015).

Figure 3. Government structure to prepare the international negotiations on the SDGs



Source: internal document of MOFA, edited by author.

Despite the intentions in this original plan, it is hard to see that initial communication and partnership with different stakeholder groups had a significant influence on the government officials. In addition, MOFA had only limited communication with major CSOs and NGOs on the SDGs. Since 2013, MOFA held several unofficial meetings with civil society groups (largely NGOs focusing on international development cooperation) before the UN Assembly in 2015. However, there were no follow-up processes or publicly available documents circulated after those dialogues. Signs that civil society views were reflected in government statements at those international conferences and the UN assembly also appear to be few and far between. MOFA publicly opened its summary draft of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategic Plan for International Development Cooperation in November 2015, but it concentrated on the implications of the SDGs for ODA policy. In 2014, the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy and Five-Year Plan for Green Growth, which is an umbrella plan for sustainable development, was published by the office of the Prime Minister. However, this umbrella plan does not refer to the Post-2015 Agenda or the SDGs.

The MOE is the most logical counterpart for work on sustainable development. It announced its third Master Plan for Sustainable Development in January 2016. This links its strategy and operational tasks with the SDGs. However, in the preparatory process for the third master plan, the CSD rarely coordinated with major groups on its overarching strategy and/or narrower tasks; much of the discussion was conducted through a limited number of public multi-stakeholder meetings.

### Local Government: Not much follow-up on the SDGs yet

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), Korea and the Local Sustainability Alliance of Korea (LSAK) worked together to track issues at the Rio+20 conference. They organised several local governments (e.g. Seoul and Suwon) and local civil society groups, and attended the 2012 conference. However, they could not continue these activities due to the absence of a natural counterpart agency; almost by definition there is no local counterpart for MOFA. A shortage of human capacity within these organisations was another factor contributing to the



limited follow-up. It was not until the last half of 2015 that *Local Agenda 21* groups started to discuss integrating SDGs into their future strategies. At the moment, they are focusing on raising civil society awareness of the SDGs at the local level as well as among local governments.

## Civil Society, Academia & Scientists, and Business & Industry: Low awareness of the SDGs

There were two main groups that actively followed the SDG process in Korea: 1) NGOs working on international cooperation; and 2) academia. From 2012, NGOs and philanthropic organisations created the "Beyond 2015" Korea network to follow and respond to the Post-2015 Agenda (KoFID et al., 2016). They developed position papers on relevant themes and shared information through newsletters, seminars and forums. In addition, they organised several dialogues to communicate with national government agencies such as MOFA. In 2014, KCOC, KoFID, and GCAP-Korea were among the several groups in this network that formed an initiative called "Action/2015 Korea" to promote the SDGs in Korea.

Despite these well-intentioned efforts, the impacts of their efforts were, as with other efforts, rather limited in breadth and depth. The Beyond 2015 network and the action/2015 Korea did not include local civil society groups who work on domestic issues. Because of the absence of domestic NGOs, the information on the SDGs was not disseminated nationally. In consequence, possible views on key economic, social, environmental and governance themes related to the SDGs were neither raised nor expressed. In addition, this group's involvement unintentionally fed the misperception that the SDGs were primarily about international cooperation rather than an international and domestic issue.

Korean domestic NGOs, largely environmental NGOs, initiated advocacy activities on the issues featured during the Rio+20 conference from 2011 to 2012 through seminars, workshops and forums (Korean NGOs Network for the Rio+20, 2012). However, they could not follow the SDGs after Rio+20 due to capacity constraints. Recently several Korean environmental NGOs have expressed a modest interest in the SDGs. By and large, however, awareness levels remain low. In light of these conditions, other civil society groups such as labour, youth, women and farmers have little awareness on the SDGs. For academics and researchers, the Sustainable Development Solution Network Korea (SDSN-Korea) was established in the end of 2013. The SDSN-Korea is a national branch of UN SDSN that aims to mobilise global scientific and technological expertise around the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. It has organised seminars, workshops and conferences for scholars and scientists and tried to raise awareness of the SDGs in Korea.

Meanwhile, business & industry groups have engaged in relevant processes through the Korea Business Council for Sustainable Development (KBCSD) and the Business Institute for Sustainable Development (BISD) under the Korea Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI). KBCSD and BISD have encouraged companies to embrace more sustainable business practices and consider incorporating various management programmes and tools such as Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) and Social Responsibility Investment (SRI) into their work. In addition, in 2015 they produced a Business Declaration on Sustainable Korea 2030. KBCSD also published *the Mid-and Long-term Sustainable Development Master Plan for Business* in 2015; according to the plan, companies are to prioritise energy and climate change, safety in the workplace, and sustainable value chain management (KBCSD 2015). It is frequently the case that active response from the business community requires a strong show of support from the government. For the time being, such a signal on the SDGs is lacking.

In sum, several government agencies and civil society groups had a hand in the SDGs preparatory process in Korea. In part due to this division of labour, the institutional and policy response has been a rather fragmented and incoherent at the national level. Three reasons are arguably responsible for the current status of the response:

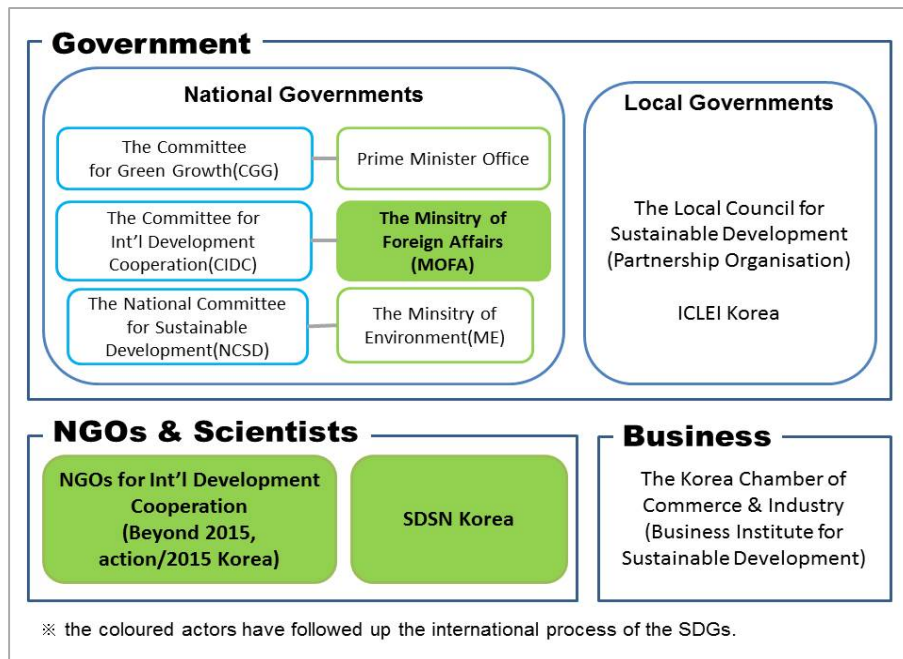
- 1) the interagency whole-of-government approach needed for this agenda has not yet materialised;
- 2) political will, especially among partners with civil society groups, has been lacking; and
- 3) awareness levels remain low.

Although there is a national Committee on Green Growth (CGG) under the Prime Minister's Office and the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) under the Ministry of Environment that could presumably coordinate on the 2030 Agenda, both committees have yet to take action on the SDGs. As MOFA has led the preparatory process for the SDGs, it is natural that the SDGs have concentrated on international development and remain somewhat detached from domestic sustainability concerns. The reason that MOFA has been designated as the lead agency on the 2015 Development Agenda, as opposed to the aforementioned coordinating and governance bodies, is that the remit of the Committee on Green Growth covers only part of the issues under the SDGs. It therefore lacks the administrative standing and related capacities to deal with these issues. Moreover, the Committee on Sustainable Development has no authority to coordinate with other government agencies. All in all, a lack of understanding from government on sustainable development has permeated institutional arrangements that would foreseeably be tasked with implementing this agenda. This has, in turn, hamstrung preparations on the SDGs.

In addition, most civil society groups have little understanding of sustainable development at the national level. They therefore have less interest in networking and advocating for a broader and more all-encompassing sustainability agenda that reaches beyond their local area of concern. An exception here is the attention devoted to climate change, which has drawn relatively more interest than the SDGs. For example, in 2015 the Korean NGOs Network was organised to advocate on climate change for the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris. That said, major domestic policy NGOs, international development cooperation groups, and local sustainability groups have more recently formed a Korean Civil Society Network for SDGs, and there is ample scope for expanding the reach and

growth of these partnerships.

Figure 4. Major Actors for the SDGs in Korea



## 4. The National and Local Implementation Framework on Sustainable Development

### National system: Structural challenges

Regarding the national implementation arrangements for sustainable development, two features of the institutional architecture merit attention in Korea: *the Framework Act on Low Carbon and Green Growth (LCGG Act)* and *the Sustainable Development Act (SD Act)*. The LCGG Act is the statute that provides for the SD Act; it coordinates policies on climate change, green growth and sustainable development. The LCGG Act was established in 2010 under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Office. It requires promulgating a national strategy for green growth every five years. The strategy, as its name implies, deals with green technology & industry, green economy, climate change and energy policies. According to law, the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy and Five Year Plan for Green Growth was introduced in 2014; it consists of three goals, five strategies and 20 tasks for the 2014-2018 period.

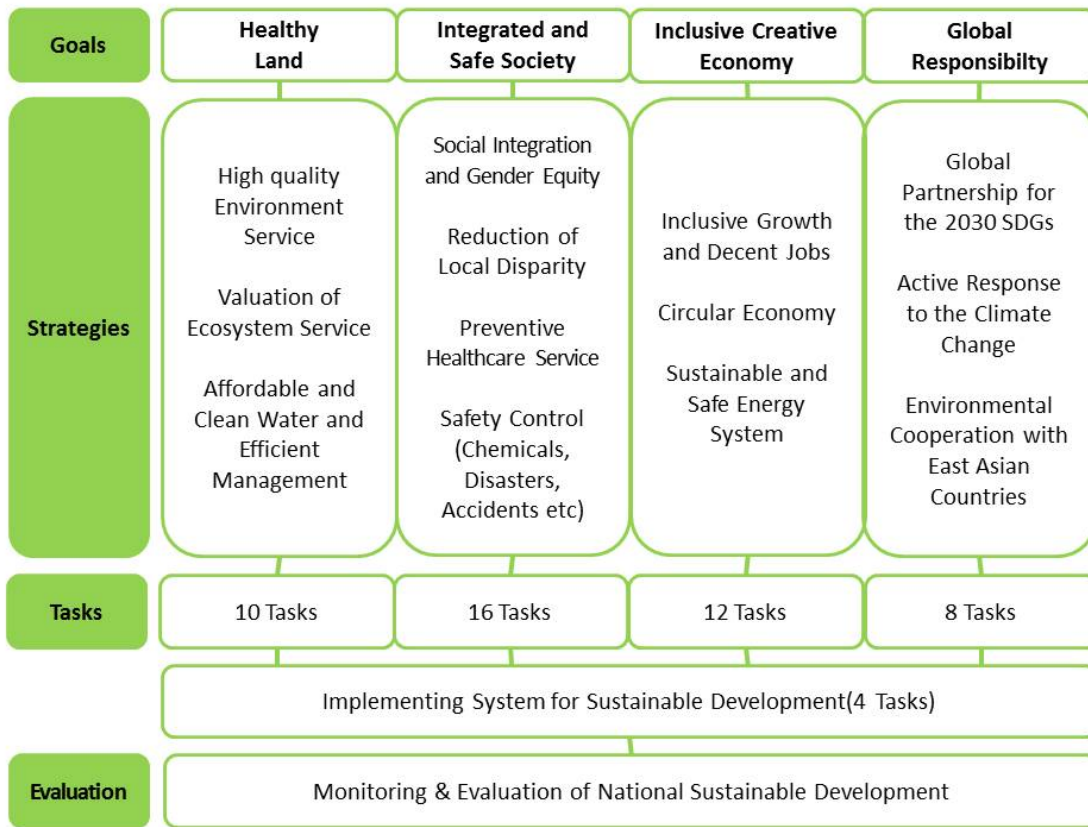
Figure 5. Basic System of the Second National Strategy and 5-year Plan for Green Growth 2014-2018

Goals	Low Carbon Economic and Social Infrastructure	Creative Economy based on the Green Tech & ICT	Climate Change Adapted Lifestyle		
Strategies	Reduction of CO2	Sustainable Energy System	Green Industry Ecosystem	Green Society	Global Green Partnership
Tasks	CO2 Reduction CDM and Carbon Market Long term Goals for CO2 Reduction Carbon Sink	Demand-side Management New and Renewable Energy Distributed Power Plant System Safety of Energy Facilities	Innovative and Green Convergence Technology Creative Green Industry Circular Economy Rationalization of Regulation And Human Resource	Adaptation to Climate Change Eco-friendly Lifestyle Green Space Welfare & Governance	Global Climate Negotiation Regional Cooperation for Green Growth Cooperation with the Developing Countries Cooperation for GGGI/GCF

Source: the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy and 5-year Plan for Green Growth, translated and edited by author

In addition, according to article 50 of the LCGG Act, the Ministry of Environment must establish a Master Plan of National Sustainable Development every five years based on the Green Growth strategy and plan. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan for 2016-2020 was announced in January 2016, and it includes four goals, 14 strategies and 50 tasks related to sustainable development.

Figure 6. The Organisation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan on National Sustainable Development

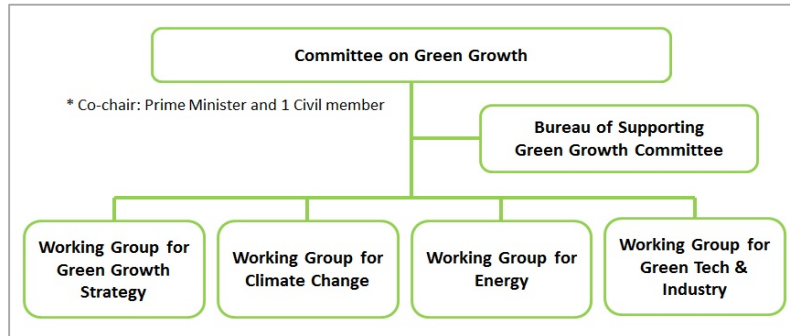


Source: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan of National Sustainable Development, translated and edited by author

The Sustainable Development Act under the LCGG Act covers sustainable development such as the coordination of national and local sustainable development plans, the development of sustainability indicators, and the publication of a National Sustainable Development Report.

As a high-level deliberative body on Green Growth policy, the Committee on Green Growth (CGG) is under the Prime Minister’s office. It handles not only strategy and plans related to the Green Growth but also climate change, energy and sustainable development. The committee consists of 17 *ex officio* government officials and 21 external experts who are appointed annually.

Figure 7. Organisational Structure of the Committee on Green Growth (CGG)



Source: website of the CGG, translated by author

According to the Sustainable Development Act, the CSD is under the MoE. It is charged with deliberating on the national strategy and plans for sustainable development, sustainable development indicators & evaluation, national reports on sustainable development, and education for sustainable development. The committee consists of a maximum of 50 ministries and external experts. The external experts are appointed every two years. For the period between September 2015-August 2017, 27 external experts are engaged in the committee.

Figure 8. Organisational Structure of the Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD)



Source: the LCGG Act and the SD Act, translated and drawn by author

## Local system: Environment-centred participatory governance

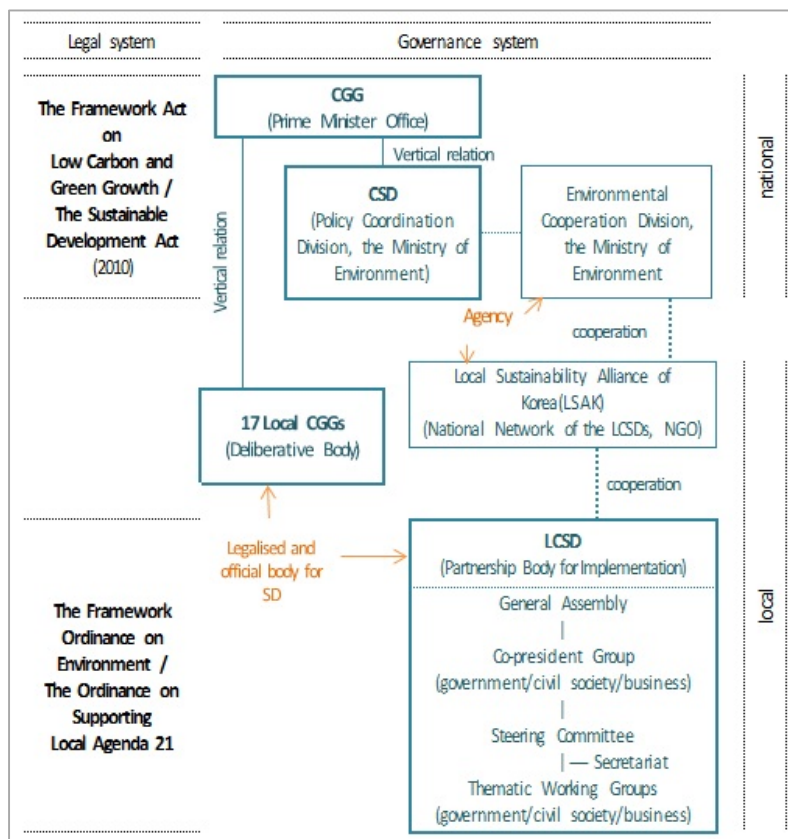
The LCGG Act requires the formation of a local plan on Green Growth and a Local Committee on Green Growth in 17 metropolitan and provincial governments. The local committees have nonetheless seldom registered significant impacts because they operate at the local governments' discretion. Apart from the LCGG Act, a local governance system for promoting sustainable development has been established by local governments in partnership with civil society since 1995. In some local governments, it has been regulated by *The Framework Ordinance on Environment Policy* under *the Framework Act on Environment Policy*; in others, it has been legalised by the autonomous Ordinance on Local Agenda 21. Based on these ordinances, as of 2015 around 100

local governments had established a partnership organisation to implement *Local Agenda 21* in the form of the aforementioned LCSD. Most of the LCSDs are under the jurisdiction of the environment department, meaning that they focus chiefly on environmental issues. Unlike the local committee on green growth, the LCSDs are relatively more active as they are created by the local government and civil society.


The chief form of implementation is the open involvement in decision-making and implementation processes for *Local Agenda 21*. The general organisational structure consists of four decision-making bodies: a general assembly as a top decision-making body; a co-presidents group; a steering committee; and thematic working groups based on local sustainable development goals and tasks. The co-president group is primarily symbolic and consists of representatives from the local government, civil society and business groups. The steering committee is made up of one to two representatives of working groups, and as *ex officio* members, a secretary general of the LCSD and a director of the department in charge of local government. The criteria to organise working groups are different from each local government (Yoon 2016).

As the MOE has supported partnerships as a pragmatic approach to promoting local sustainability since the late of 1990s, the LCSDs work closely with the MOE. However, the LCSDs are not recognised as governmental organisations by the national government; they therefore share an amicable business relationship.

Figure 9. Implementing System on Sustainable Development in Korea as of 2015



Source: Yoon, 2016: 2, updated by author



There are two structural problems in the implementation framework on sustainable development in Korea. The first concerns the relationship between the LCGG Act and the SD Act. Although green growth is arguably a critical but not the only constitutive element of sustainable development, the institutional structure organises the two issues in the opposite manner—that is, sustainable development is embedded in institutional arrangements promoting green growth. Due to the ordering of these issues, integrating sustainable development policies into sectoral policies in Korea has proven challenging. The Second Green Growth Strategy and the Third Sustainable Development Plan illustrate the challenge: the former focuses on economic issues and the latter on environment. Moreover, the social agenda is not given sufficient attention and pressing social issues such as housing and welfare that are gaining in importance with a rapidly changing demographics and socioeconomic landscape are given short shrift in plans.

A second set of concerns, as illustrated in Figure 9, is that the communication process between local and national bodies on sustainable development is both complex and inefficient. There is no connection between the LCGGs and the LCSDs at the local level. Moreover, there is no direct communication channel between the LCSDs and the national CSD for sustainable development. A representative of the LCSDs is not involved in the national CSD at the moment. In sum, there are missing links both horizontally at the local level and vertically between the local and national levels. However, taken as a whole, it warrants pointing out that the implementation on sustainable development has made progress as it has evolved in a bottom-up manner for the last 20 years, and participatory forms of governance have helped to advance the cause at least at local level. How this bottom-up approach can be leveraged to localise the SDGs nonetheless remains to be seen.


## 5. Conclusion

### Key features of the implementation for sustainable development

As described in earlier sections, the implementation for sustainable development in Korea can be summarised by the following six critical points:

- 1) The institutionalisation of sustainable development has evolved from the bottom-up;
- 2) Civil society organisations have played an important role in driving sustainability initiatives;
- 3) Much of the focus of work on sustainable development has been on environmental as opposed to socioeconomic issues;
- 4) Relatively participatory governance institutions exist at the local but not at national level;
- 5) A set of sustainable development institutions is subordinate to green growth institutions;
- 6) Interest in sustainable development at national level remains rather low.





In sum, the implementation of sustainable development has been relatively more dynamic at the local than the national level. The LCSDs are absolutely essential to driving that activity. Even though they still have several limitations (i.e. limited integration of social issues or practical involvement of multi-stakeholders), they will be critical to building and maintaining partnerships for sustainable development at the local level.

The effects of the LCSDs is likely to rest on the capacity of civil society groups to engage constructively with governments. When proactive civil society groups meet mayors with strong political will, a powerful coalition for change will be well placed to help advance a more sustainable agenda. For example, Jeonju city will establish its Urban Framework Plan and Strategy through the Jeonju Council for Sustainable Development in 2016. However, it warrants underlining that the strong political will of the mayor is necessary but not sufficient to drive this change forward. Even forward-looking mayors who are willing to take a more sustainable approach government can be limited by bureaucracy or civil society groups that lack the capacity to implement their sustainability vision.

For the past 20 years, local governments and civil society groups have cultivated a gradually expanding knowledge base on sustainable development. In addition, Korea has promulgated laws and established governance institutions related to sustainable development. In short, the infrastructure for sustainable development exists to some degree. Nevertheless, the narrow interpretation of sustainable development and the lack of political will of national governments have meant that much of the *de facto* action falls to the local level. Without restructuring the national governance system on sustainable development and green growth, the implementation of sustainable development, including the SDGs at a domestic level, is poised to remain rather fragmented and, unfortunately, ineffectual.

# Annex 1. The 3rd Master Plan of National Sustainable Development in linkage with the SDGs

SDGs	14 Strategies of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Master Plan
SDG1. No Poverty	2-1. Social Integration and Gender Equity
SDG2. Zero Hunger	2-2. Reduction of Local Disparity 2-3. Preventive Healthcare Service
SDG3. Good Health & Well-being	2-3. Preventive Healthcare Service
SDG4. Quality Education	2-1. Social Integration and Gender Equity
SDG5. Gender Equality	
SDG6. Clean Water & Sanitation	1-3. Affordable and Clean Water and Efficient Management
SDG7. Affordable and Clean Energy	3-3. Sustainable and Safe Energy System
SDG8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	3-1. Inclusive Growth and Decent Jobs
SDG9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	
SDG10. Reduced Inequalities	2-1. Social Integration and Gender Equity
SDG11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	1-1. High quality Environment Service 2-4. Safety Control(Chemicals, Disasters, Accidents etc)
SDG12. Responsible Consumption and Production	3-2. Circular Economy
SDG13. Climate Action	4-2. Active Response to the Climate Change
SDG14. Life below Water	1-2. Valuation of Ecosystem Service
SDG15. Life on Land	
SDG16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	Implementing System for Sustainable Development
SDG17. Partnership for the Goals	4-1. Global Partnership for the 2030 SDGs 4-3. Environmental Cooperation with East Asian Countries

Source: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Master Plan of National Sustainable Development, p35.

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