

## Chapter 13

# SDGs in South Eastern Europe and the Black Sea in Light of the Pandemic: The Impact of the COVID–19 Pandemic on the Sustainable Development of Cities and Territories

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### ABSTRACT

*In this chapter, the authors analyze the monitoring of the achievement of the SDGs at different levels of the economy, taking into account the experience of Russia. The aim of the study was to assess the possibility of constructing a statistically comparable set of indicators for assessing the achievement of the SDGs in the Russian Federation at three levels: national, territorial, and at the city level. Of particular interest is the experience of million-plus cities in the development of a set of SDG indicators, since they have become the focus of attention in the context of the spread of COVID-19. The study used data from two Russian million-plus cities: Moscow and Rostov-on-Don.*

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that we must act together and give our fight against this crisis the necessary impetus to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The pandemic has become a signal to act for governments, businesses, and citizens. During the pandemic, a high degree of inequality in the world was noted and the problems that formed the basis of the “Sustainable Development Agenda

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for the period up to 2030” became more obvious. All over the world are making efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and in order for the goal to be achieved, it is important to devote more time to promoting the agenda and clearly assess the results of the work done. In this situation, it becomes necessary to design a system for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs at each management level - international, national, regional, territorial, business and household. From these positions, the purpose of this study is the possibility of building such a systematic statistically comparable monitoring at the following levels of government - international, national and regional. At the same time, the possibility of singling out for statistical observation at the territorial level cities with a population of more than 1 million as the most susceptible to the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19) is also being considered.

## **BACKGROUND**

Goals for the period up to 2015 in the sphere of Millenium Development were set out by the UN General Assembly in 2000. In 2015, new goals were approved in the UN Summit “Transformation of our world: Agenda in the sphere of sustainable development for the period up to 2030” document. Quantity of goals has changed significantly (Table 1) - 8 goals were transformed into 17 goals and 231 indicators, though upon closer inspection of their content it becomes obvious that the goals have a fairly complete continuity, are formulated clearer and describe current economic, social and ecological situation better (United Nations. Goals of sustainable development, 2022). Targeting of developing countries is expanded to the whole world, although the goals’ structure of three elements has not changed.

The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 interrelated goals that were developed in 2015 by the UN General Assembly to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all (SDG Indicators, 2022). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) cover problems of an economic, social and environmental nature, take into account the interests of all socially vulnerable groups and are aimed at closing the gap between rich and poor countries; they address the implementation of human rights to adequate food, safe water, decent housing and equality.

The SDG are enshrined in the” 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, adopted by the UN member states on September 25, 2015. This indicates that the world has come to realize that the problems of the surrounding world need to be solved together and comprehensively.

The SDGs are being addressed at the global, national, regional, and local levels. This contributes to the fact that every person at the level of his city, district, street, house will feel an improvement in life (Homepage. UNECE, 2022).

However, COVID-19 has become a challenge that has threatened sustainable development and directly the achievement of the goals that were declared by the UN (United Nations, 2022). On February 22, 2022, at the forum of the International Labor Organization, UN Secretary-General António Guterres made an assessment of the current situation, characterizing it as one with rising poverty and a continuing increase in inequality. Speaking about environmental issues, a serious deviation from the goals as a whole was indicated.

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