

The City of Kitakyushu, Japan: LINKING PLANET TO PEOPLE AND PROSPERITY TO PROMOTE THE SDGs IN KITAKYUSHU

Key highlights

- The City of Kitakyushu is part of the national government’s SDGs Future City programme and has started to link all its major plans to the SDGs, including targets and indicator frameworks.
- Collaboration between the local government, industries and civil society helped the City of Kitakyushu overcome severe pollution in the 1960s, inspiring a culture of turning environmental challenges into development opportunities.
- The 2030 Agenda presents an opportunity to address the social challenges of the city by linking and promoting synergies between the environmental SDGs and the social/economic SDGs.

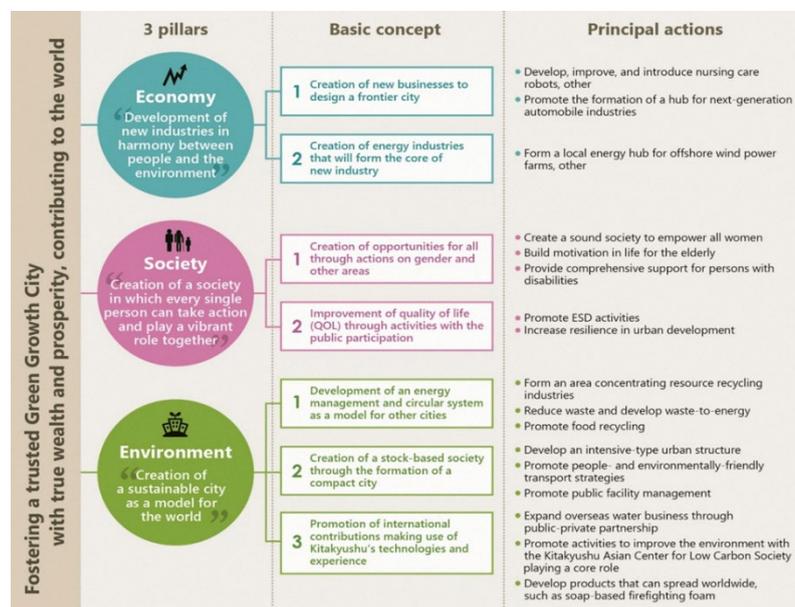
The City of Kitakyushu has been very successful in turning one of its main problems, high levels of pollution in the 1960s, into a strength while applying the concept of green growth and developing an economy based on recycling and green industries, and sustainable and renewable energy. Collaboration between the local government, the industries and civil society - in particular women’s associations - was key to overcoming the issue of pollution. It constitutes a good practice promoted by the City of Kitakyushu to face current challenges, like the need to engage elderly population in social activities and secure appealing jobs for young people to prevent further population decline.

Building on its long-term commitment to sustainability, the city has developed its vision “Fostering a trusted Green Growth City with true wealth and prosperity, contributing to the world”, within the framework of the SDGs Future City programme launched by the Cabinet Office of the Japanese Government. The programme focuses on three

pillars – Economy, Society and Environment – and 17 specific measures to implement it (Figure 1). Kitakyushu had identified eight SDGs that represent the main strengths of the city, mainly linked to the environmental dimension (SDGs 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 17), and now has been working on updating those priority goals through the Kitakyushu City SDGs Council. Kitakyushu was selected for the Eco-Model City in 2008 and for the Future City initiatives in 2011, as well as one of 10 Model SDGs projects for the SDGs Future City programme in 2018.

The City of Kitakyushu is also actively supporting cities in developing countries through decentralised development cooperation, in particular environmental activities like waste and water management. The SDGs offer a key opportunity to further develop the link between local development activities in the city itself and to promote good practices in partner countries.

Figure 1. Vision and Actions for the Kitakyushu SDGs Future City Plan



Source: Kitakyushu City the SDGs Report 2018

The City of Kitakyushu was – together with New York City - the first local government to present a “Local Voluntary Review” at the UN High Level Political Forum in 2018. In collaboration with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the city presented the Kitakyushu Sustainable Development Report 2018, which is based on the UN handbook for preparation of Voluntary National Review.

The City of Kitakyushu is now incorporating the SDGs into its various development plans, including establishing indicators relevant for the SDGs in their monitoring. Under the Kitakyushu City Plan for the SDGs Future City, 22 indicators have been established in collaboration with the national government (Figure 2). Additional indicators will be identified through the OECD programme.

The city of Kitakyushu has established an institutional and governance framework to implement the SDGs. The key structures include the SDGs Future City Promotion Headquarters, strengthening collaboration and coordination across departments, under the direct leadership of the Mayor. The city also established the Kitakyushu City SDGs Council, which is expected to provide advice on the implementation of the SDGs through the engagement of eight experts in environmental, economic and social fields from civil society, private sector, finance and academia. The city also created the Kitakyushu SDGs Club, which is open to everybody - citizens, companies, NGOs, schools, etc. – with the aim to raise awareness on 2030 Agenda, promote SDGs activities and foster collaboration.

Civil society, universities and research institutes, as well as private sector actors, are also engaged on the SDGs. For example, the department of regional development of the University of Kitakyushu seeks to support sustainable development by promoting education for sustainable development (ESD), agriculture, social welfare, supporting disabled persons and revitalisation of local shops. Through the Kitakyushu Eco-town project, intensive industry-academia-government collaboration further helps to address environmental, economic and social goals of the City of Kitakyushu.

Figure 2. Proposed localisation of indicators for selected SDGs in Kitakyushu

SDGs	Proposed localisation of indicators
	<p><i>Example of national-level target:</i> Extend to which education for sustainable development are mainstreamed at all levels of education (target 4.7.1)</p> <p>➤ <i>Example of city-level indicator:</i> Number of citizens who are engaging in ESD</p>
	<p><i>Example of national-level target:</i> Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance (6.a.1)</p> <p>➤ <i>Example of city-level indicator:</i> Number of water- and sewage-related international cooperation under the intercity collaboration.</p>
	<p><i>Example of national-level target:</i> Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption (7.2.1)</p> <p>➤ <i>Example of city-level indicator:</i> Introduced renewable energy (Amount of renewable energy produced within the city)</p>
	<p><i>Example of national-level target:</i> Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies (17.7.1)</p> <p>➤ <i>Example of city-level indicator:</i> Number of projects in developing countries by the intercity cooperation</p> <p><i>Example of national-level target:</i> Dollar value of financial and technical assistance committed to developing countries (17.9.1)</p> <p>➤ <i>Example of city-level indicator:</i> Number of trainees from the cities of developing countries accepted at the city to support capacity building.</p>

Source: OECD elaboration on Kitakyushu City the SDGs Report 2018

FORWARD LOOKING POLICY RESPONSES

Use the SDGs Club to connect the ongoing efforts as well as to promote the development of joint and concrete actions for the SDGs, strengthening the collaboration among private companies, the local government, universities and civil society. This platform should be connected to the SDGs Council and implement the ideas emerging from the Council.

Strengthen the indicators system to monitor progress to guide the policies and the actions. The SDGs offer an integrated framework to improve the monitoring and evaluation culture of the city and the baseline information for benchmarking.

Link Planet to People and Prosperity, using the environmental SDGs to improve the economic and social SDGs. Identify the SDGs where the city could do better and measure the synergies across social, economic and environmental SDGs, including through the participation of the local stakeholders and the development of a matrix should be the first step. For example, some economic sectors connected to the environmental dimension, such as eco-industry offshore wind power generation, eco-tourism and culture could offer additional job opportunities to youth and promote social cohesion through intergenerational solidarity.

Support the universities and the education systems including elementary, junior and high schools in their ongoing efforts to raise awareness on the SDGs, including through life-long learning opportunities and Education for Sustainable Development. Programmes like the Kitakyushu City educational plan for children’s future could be linked more and more to the 2030 Agenda.

Use the SDGs in designing and implementing international cooperation activities as well as in promoting business opportunities abroad. The universality of the 2030 Agenda represents a key opportunity to promote city-to-city cooperation connecting the “internal” activities on sustainability with the international cooperation actions. These activities should focus on the SDGs where the city has a comparative advantage and knowledge/good practices to share with its peers.