United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

Strengthening Local and National Coordination for the SDGs

National Capacity Building Workshop on Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) in South Africa

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ideas for a prosperous Africa

Origins and Rationale for VLRs

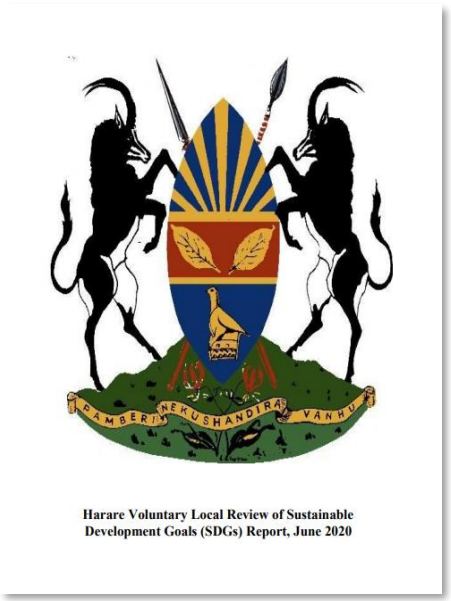
Voluntary Local Reviews originated from the need to complement Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), to further SDG localization, and to put localities in the driver's seat.

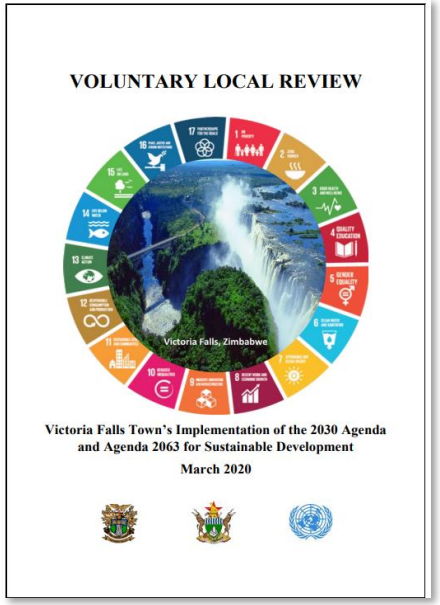
They serve many functions. Including:

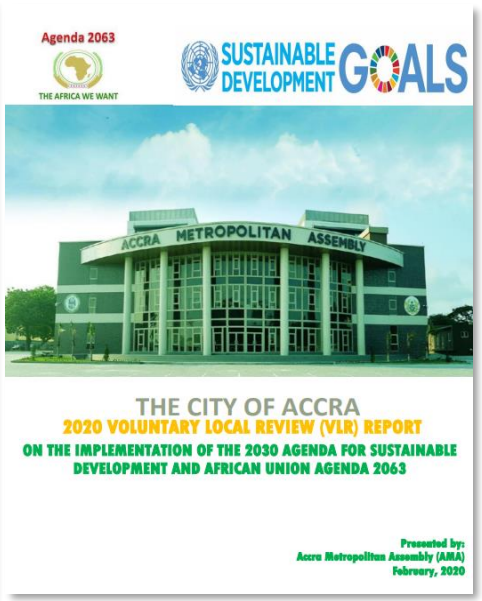
1. Link country / localities' sustainable development efforts
2. Take stock of progress towards regional / global goals
3. Tool to engage stakeholders
4. Build a roadmap towards specific targets
5. Share lessons with others
6. Link with national SDG processes and reporting obligations

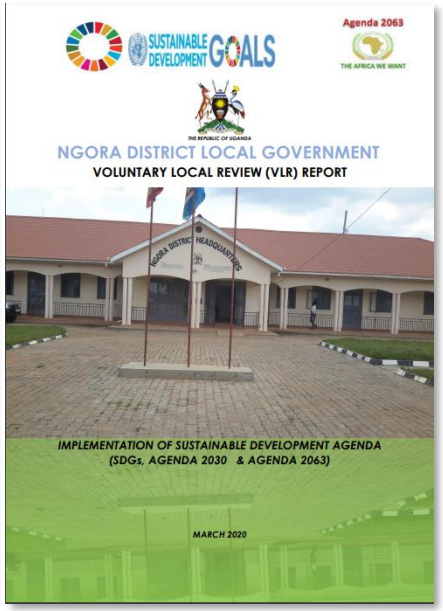
VLRs in Africa have Grown Exponentially

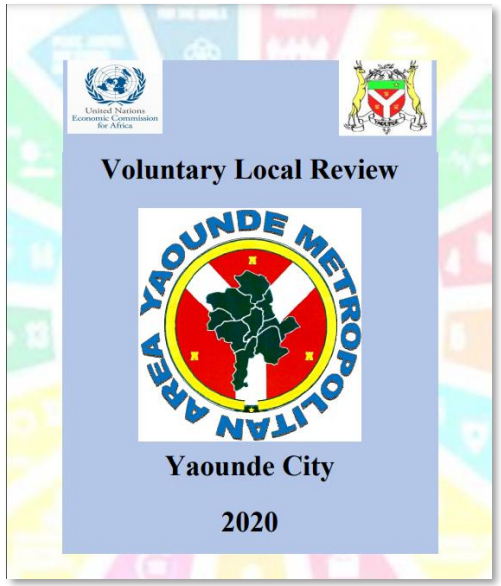
- **Completed VLRs**: Accra, Harare, Ngora, Victoria Falls, Yaoundé (supported by ECA); Cape Town, 4 in Kenya
- **Current VLRs**: 4 in Benin, Brazzaville, 4 in Gambia, Ghana, 4 in Zimbabwe, many in Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, and several others





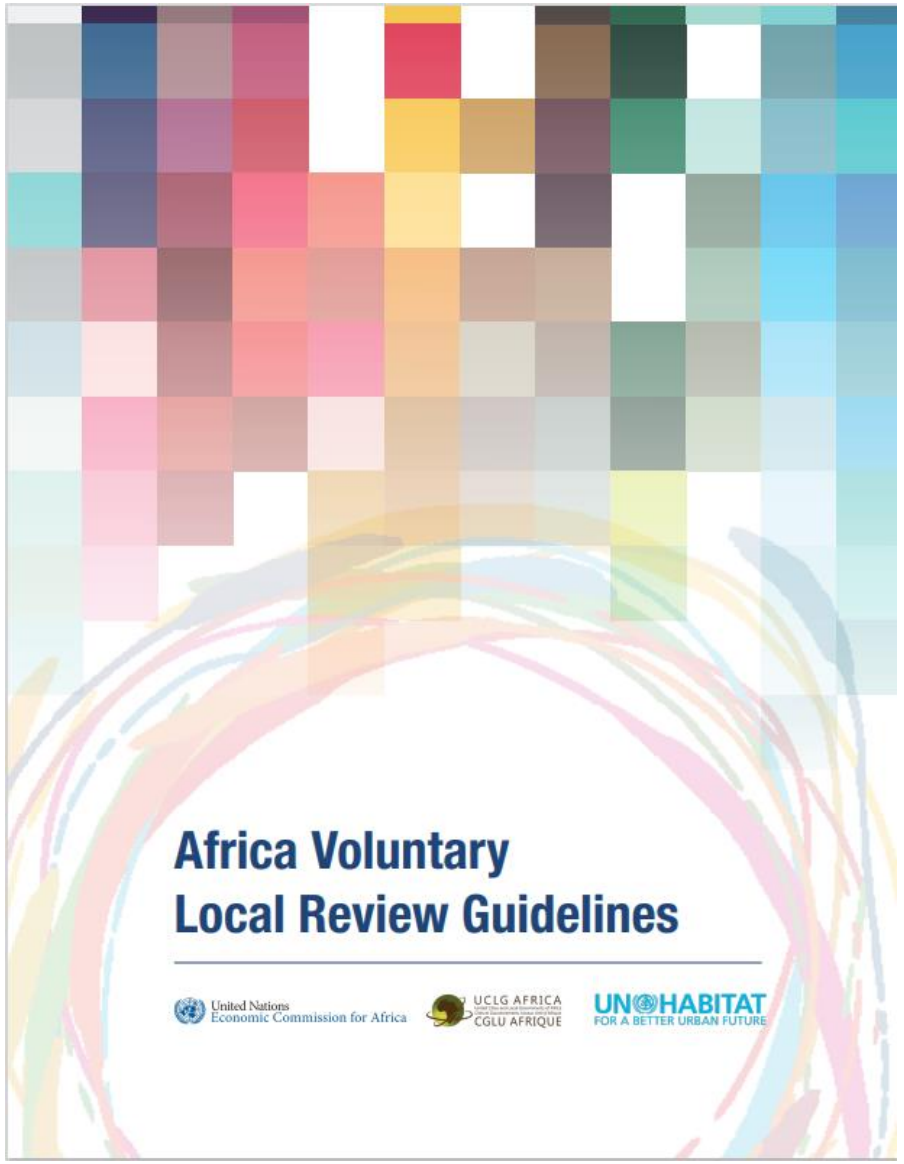






Why Africa VLR Guidelines

1. Request by Member States at the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
2. Contextual specificity
3. Regional specificities of Agenda 2063
4. Need to accelerate progress
5. Peer Review Mechanism



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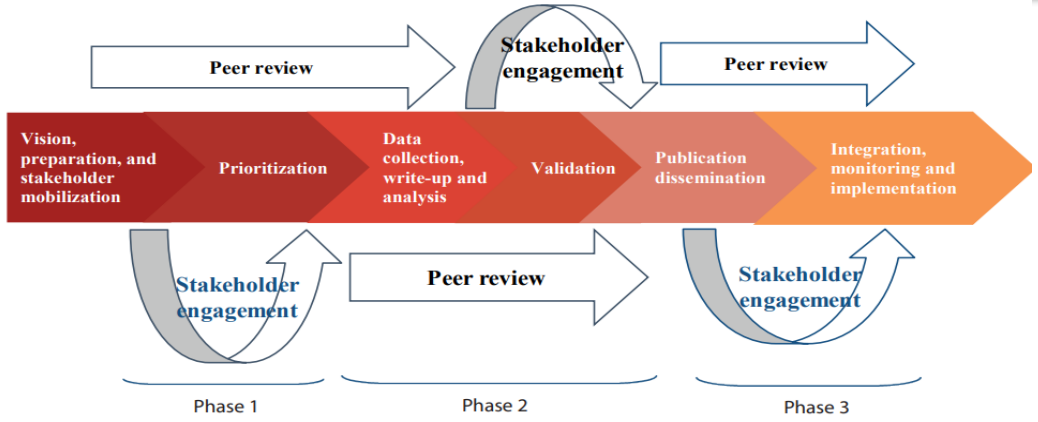


VLRs Support SDG Review and Implementation

- ❑ Reflect local level realities
- ❑ Enable awareness generation
- ❑ Allow engagement with multiple and key stakeholders key to the implementation process
- ❑ Reveal gaps in SDG planning, policies. coordination and implementation
- ❑ Enable honest reflection

Sample templates and guiding questions from the Africa VLR Guidelines

Guiding Questions

- ❑ Which SDGs and Agenda 2063 aspirations and goals did the subnational government focus on in the local review and why?
- ❑ In general, did the subnational government adapt any of the SDGs or Agenda 2063 goals to the local context to match jurisdictional boundaries?
- ❑ How has the VLR process influenced local development plans or processes?

Table 1: Sustainable Development Goal alignment

Sustainable Development Goals	Local sustainability policy	Other relevant local policies?	Local initiatives and projects
GOAL 1: No poverty – end poverty in all its forms everywhere			
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day.			
1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.			
1.3 Implement locally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.			

VLRs, SDGs & Agenda 2023 Implementation – Experiences

Ngora District, Uganda

Emmu Bernard, District Chairperson, Ngora District Local Government (2020)

Implementation of Sustainable Development Agenda (SDGs, Agenda 2020 and Agenda 2063) in Ngora district has been an **important aspect yet ignored.** This has been done on implementation of day to day activities even unknowingly…. This VLR report will therefore **act as tool to inform Ngora District Development Plan 2020/21 to 2024/25,** also guide in the allocation of scarce resources. The report also **highlights the level of effort that must be demonstrated** by all stakeholders to cause a positive change in especially sectors lagging behind in performance like Agriculture, Health and Roads.

Yaounde, Cameroon

Gilbert Tsimi Evouna, Government Delegate to the Yaoundé City

In 2020, the city is reviewing its Urban Master Plan, with the intention to reinforce its coherence with the city development strategy. The participation of Yaounde City in the **Voluntary Local Review (VLR) of the Sustainable Development Goals seeks to inform the review of this master plan**, but also to **inform revisions of the strategy** in order to place the city of Yaounde on the path to sustainability.

VLRs, SDGs & Agenda 2023 Implementation – Experiences

Accra, Ghana

Mohammed Adjei Sowah, Mayor of Accra (2020)

The Accra Metropolitan Assembly's Development Policy is underpinned by the SDGs and Africa Union's Agenda 2063. The Assembly's medium-term development plan and budgeting processes are all aligned to the two agendas. The VLR report provides an overview of the metropolis' steps and progress towards achieving the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063, as well as highlight the inclusivity in the planning process with the objective of bringing development closer to the people.

The VLR framework **have been recognized as an important tool for meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement and resource mobilization** to advance the implementation of the aforementioned agendas. This process has enabled Accra Metropolitan Assembly to **build capacity in monitoring and reporting of the SDGs and Agenda 2063**. The Assembly would further leverage on opportunities thereof to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

VLRs, SDGs & Agenda 2023 Implementation – Experiences

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Victoria Falls Town, Draft voluntary local report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 for Sustainable Development (Zimbabwe, 2020).

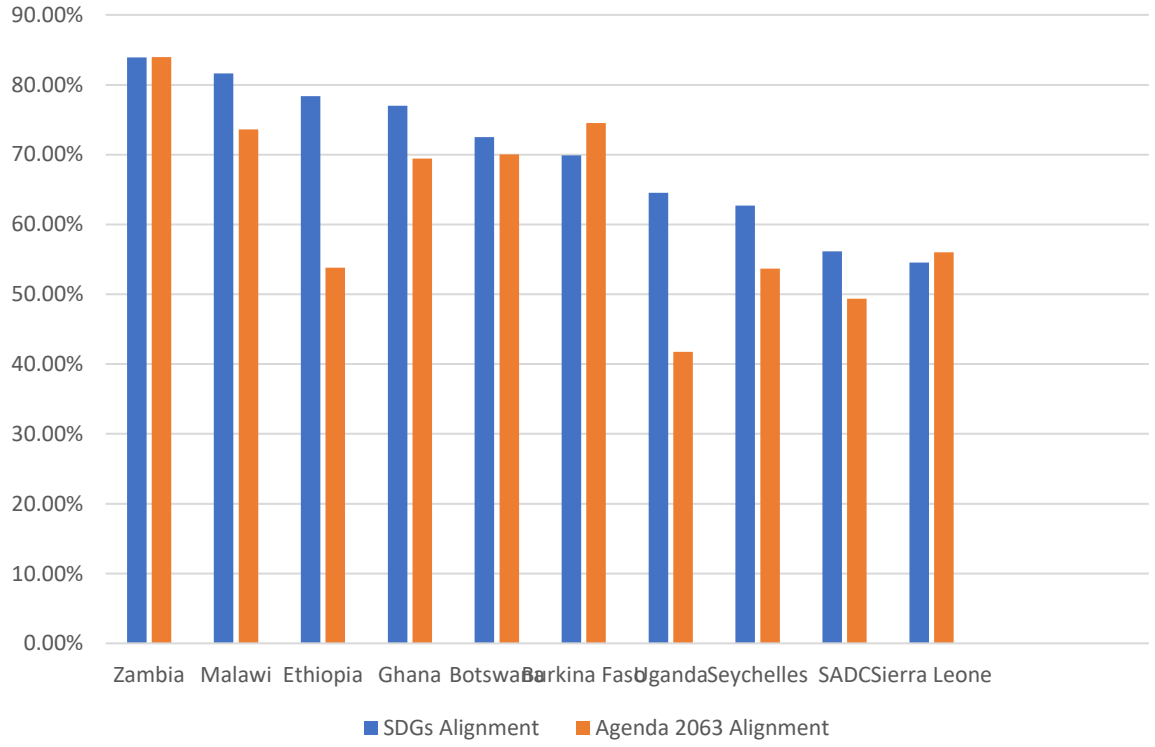
Victoria Falls Municipality has mainstreamed the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 into its five-year 2018–2022 strategic development plan. The plan is currently being implemented through planned projects, policies, programmes and procedures … More than 75 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goals are reflected in the strategic plan.

Horizontal inter-agency coordination and communication mechanisms between the national level and Victoria Falls Municipality have been made possible through a **national steering committee for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and local subcommittees established for mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals into the plan and attaining them.**

VLRs, SDGs & Agenda 2063 Implementation

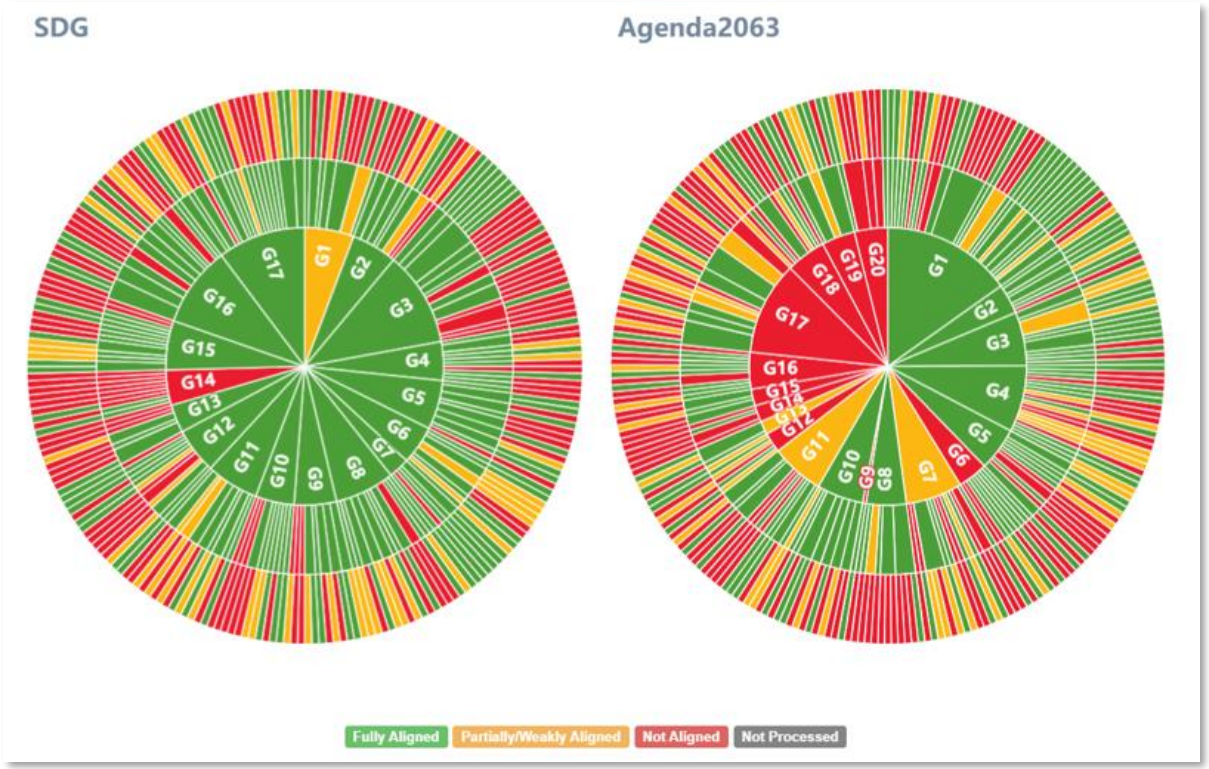
Generally, we find countries' development plans tend to be more aligned with the SDGs than Agenda 2063, necessitating more awareness generation for Agenda 2063

Figure 1: Development Plan Alignment with SDGs and Agenda 2063 for Studied Countries and SADC



Source: (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2023)

Figure 2: Development Plan Alignment with SDGs and Agenda 2063 for Ethipia



Source: (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2023)

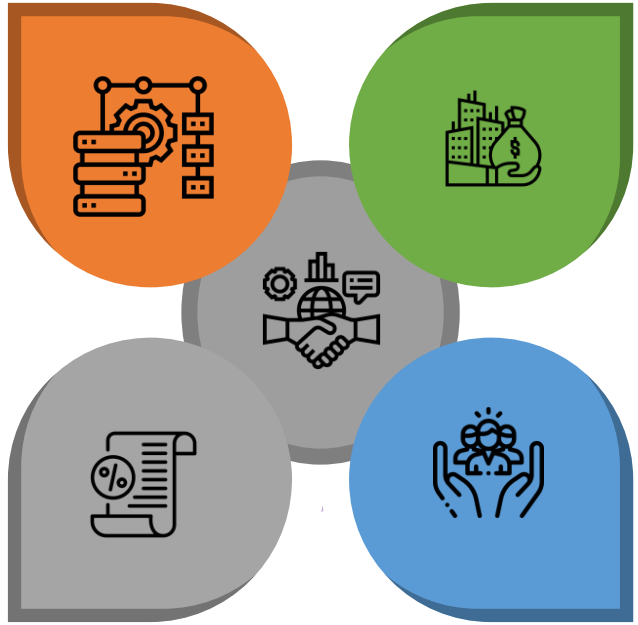
Looking Forward: Local and Regional Governments can be strengthened to be effective contributors to SDGs and Agenda 2063 Coordination, Implementation and Reviews

Promote a national enabling environment for subnational reporting by:

i. Including adaptation to local contexts as a substantive dimension in national development strategues;
ii. Mainstreaming SDGs and Agenda 2063 into national local processes – including monitoring;
iii. Developing a multilevel collaborative culture of governance

Strengthen voluntary local reviews and their environment by:

i. Creating local mechanisms for structural and periodic monitoring and review;
ii. Promoting inclusive participation;
iii. Strenghtening the data environment at the local level; and
iv. Encouraging the capacities of local government associations



Enhance the connection between local and national reviews by:

i. Mobiliizing adequate support and resources to strengthen local reporting capaicities; and
ii. Facilitating collaborative and multilevel data environments.

Create an international environment to support subnational reporting by:

i. Supporting the participation of local governments in regional and global international processes;
ii. Continuing to develop, refine and disseminate local review guidelines; and
iii. Leverage existing UN frameworks like the UNECA's IPRT that supports multipurpose agenda alignment, review and reporting.

Source: Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews, vol. 2: Towards a New Generation of VLRs: Exploring the local-national link (Nairobi, UN-Habitat and UCLG-Africa, 2021)

THANK YOU!

Ideas to Action