



Voluntary Local Reviews in Zimbabwe

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Introduction

- Voluntary Local Review is a process in which local authorities voluntarily review progress and follow-up on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- A vehicle for sharing experiences, challenges and lessons learnt.
- Open avenues for new partnerships.
- VLRs enables local authorities to engage communities thereby strengthening accountability and inclusiveness of policymaking process.



- The purpose of VLRs is to monitor progress in SDG implementation as well as to share experiences, successes, challenges and possible solutions, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- VLRs leverage on resources availability at community level and showcasing how communities are contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.
- They provide a platform for localizing SDGs, an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to development and enable sharing of experiences and best practices
- Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) entails integrating them in the design, implementation and monitoring of sub-national plans and putting sub-national governments at the centre of the SDGs



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Progress on VLRs



- 2 pilot Voluntary Local Reviews were conducted for Harare City and Victoria Falls Town in 2020.
- In 2023, 4 VLRs were undertaken for Bulawayo City, Zvishavane Town, Bikita Rural and Mutasa Rural.
- Plans are underway to cascade VLRs to all local authorities.



Progress on VLRs



- The VLR process is being led by the Ministry of Public service, Labour and Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.
- VLRs are being conducted with support from the United Nations system, particularly UNDESA, UNRCO, UNDP, ECA, IOM among others.



Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs



- Local authorities have integrated the 2030 Agenda in their Strategic Plans.
- Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, remarkable progress had been made at local level mainly in SDGs 3, 4, 6, 9 and 11:
- Various initiatives to include the marginalized /disadvantaged communities in development planning and implementation.
- Prioritization of SDGs (SDG 2 End hunger, SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing, SDG 4 Quality education, SD 6 Clean water and sanitation and SDG 5 Gender equality).



Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs



- Institutions to coordinate SDGs implementation were put in place.
- Collaboration with development partners especially in areas of health, education, the environment and civil protection.
- Local leadership plays a key role in coordinating SDGs and national development plans. For RDCs - village development committees and ward development committees.



Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs



- **Facilitated peer-to-peer learning among local authorities**
- **Promote accountability to citizens.**
- **Reflected initiatives being implemented to foster development at local levels while considering the three aspects of sustainable development that are social, economic, and environmental**
- **Provided a knowledge repository and a framework that can be used to cascade the VLRs to other local authorities.**



Lessons learnt from the Pilot VLRs



- **VLRs increases public awareness, knowledge and perceptions of SDGs and empower local communities and citizens to take action in their own local communities.**
- **The Devolution agenda will accelerate sustainable development and enables communities to directly benefit from resource endowments within their local communities.**



BENEFITS OF VLRS



- VLRS provides a clear roadmap for more balanced and equitable development.
- VLRS provides a platform for localizing SDGs.
- Provides an opportunity for stakeholders (private sector, civil society, academia, residents, etc) to contribute to national development.
- Enables sharing of experiences and best practices.
- Enhance awareness of SDGs and national development plans at local level.



Benefits of VLRs



- Enables people centered decision making that is more relevant to address problems being faced at the local level.
- Vehicle to initiate local action, and people action that is required for the acceleration of SDGs implementation.
- VLRs reflect real progress being made in attaining SDGs since they are done at local level.
- Can be utilized by policy makers to inform evidence-based development plans and interventions.



KEY MESSAGES FROM VLRS



1. **Financing** – Various financing mechanisms (Strengthening domestic resource mobilization is key).
2. **Institutional and Policy Reforms** - Creation and institutionalization of inter-agency steering committees on sustainable development supports the coordination of efforts toward the implementation, monitoring, and reporting on sustainable development progress.
3. **Capacity Building** - Capacity building of local authorities should be prioritized.
4. **Multi-Level Partnerships** - Horizontal and vertical partnerships for sustainable development initiatives. The local authorities need to establish mechanisms for SDGs peer-review to strengthen the learning around best practices on SDGs implementation, monitoring, and reporting.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



- ❖ **Lack of disaggregated localized data** - Local authorities are facing limitations on data availability.
- ❖ **Domestic Resource Mobilisation** - CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders are major players in resource mobilization for capital and humanitarian projects.
- ❖ **Alignment of M&E Systems** - Alignment and synchronization of the local monitoring and evaluation systems with SDG targets and indicators as central to tracking progress and reporting on SDGs implementation.
- ❖ **Awareness Raising** - Raising public awareness of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 should be supported.



- ❖ The SDGs must be fully integrated and mainstreamed into local authorities' development plans and strategies.
- ❖ Climate change is affecting food production. Accelerated uptake of climate proofing agriculture should be considered.
- ❖ PPPs should be supported.
- ❖ Elaborate framework on how VLRs will be integrated into Voluntary National Reviews.



Thank you