Enhanced VLR Guidance Portal
for Supporting Sustainable, Greener and Resilient Recovery & Transitions at the Local Level

Module 1: Overview
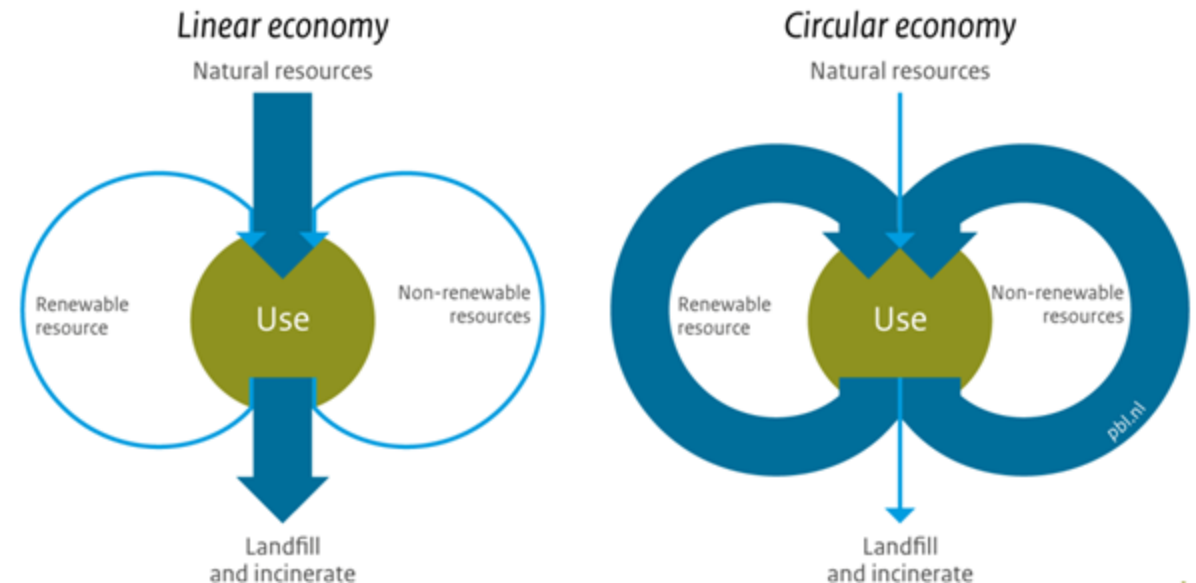
What imperatives motivate this guidance?

1. **Localizing** and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) at the local level

2. **Local recovery** from shocks and **local transitions** to sustainable local economies in a manner that is **green, circular and just**.

3. Strengthening resilience, through **local disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA)**.

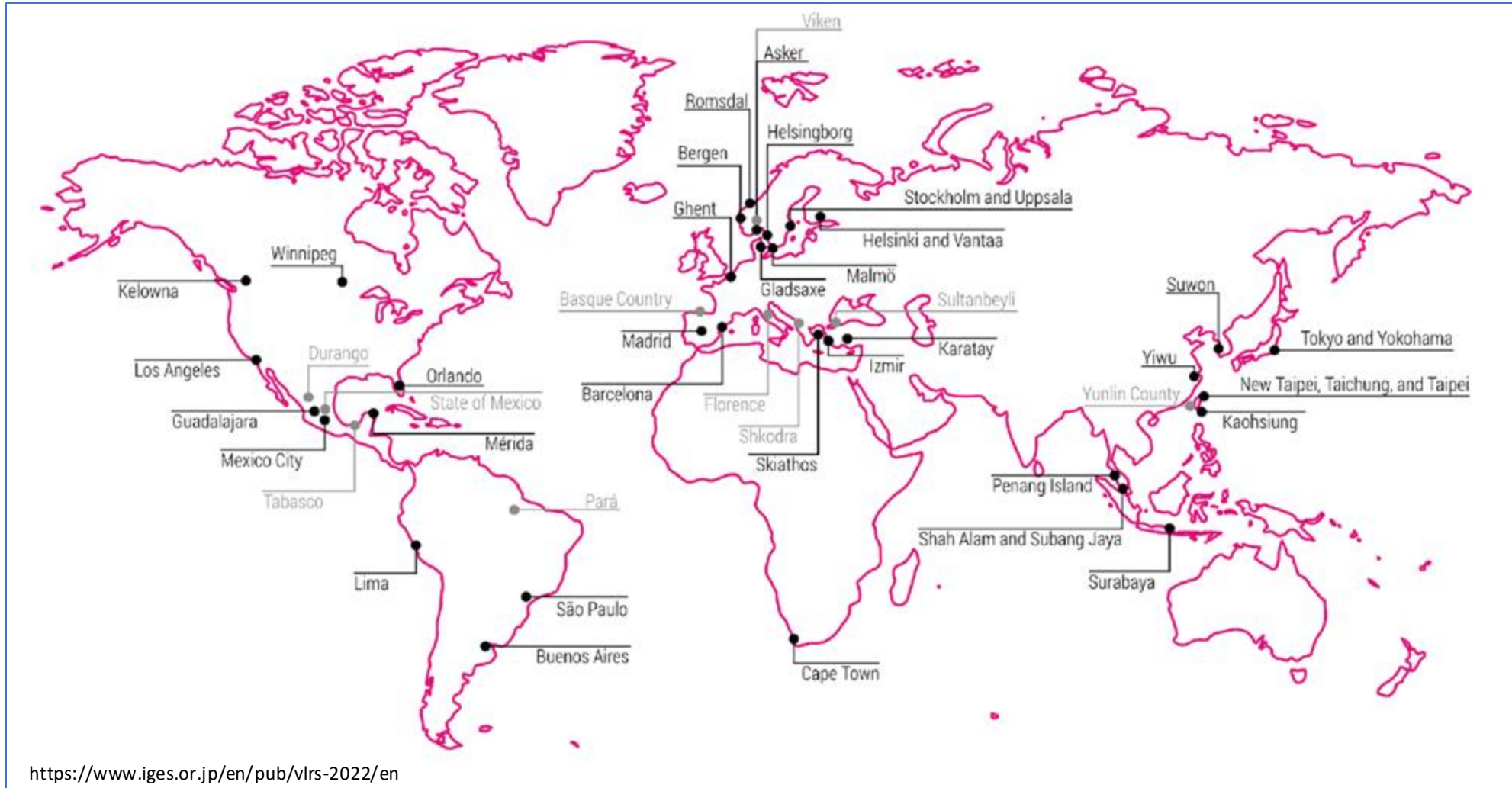https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/

https://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/downloads/pbl-2016-circular-economy-measuring-innovation-in-product-chains-2544.pdf

VLRs Around the World

Year	# of VLRs
2018	4
2019	25
2020	35
2021	49
2022	57
2023	48
TOTAL	**218**

Given the growth in VLRs as a practical reporting mechanism for local governments and organizations, the VLR represents a key leverage point for accelerating progress toward the SDGs and the transition toward green, sustainable, and resilient recover & transitions at the local level.

What is a Voluntary Local Review (VLR)?

➢ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented annually by countries to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on progress toward the SDGs

➢ Local and regional governments are increasingly engaging in their own subnational reviews…

➢ Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) have proven useful for cities and regions to localize SDGs and demonstrate the commitment and innovation of local government.

➢ A strong VLR process informs the VNR and local government planning, budget and reporting

➢ An enhanced VLR process supports green, sustainable, and resilient recovery & transition at the local level.

Proposed VLR Content for the UN ECE Region

o **Part I.** City vision and goal statement.

o **Part II.** Economic and social situation in the city, including legal, financial and institutional framework for city development.

o **Part III.** Assessment of city performance using KPIs for Smart Sustainable Cities, including progress towards achieving SDGs at the city level.

o **Part IV.** Recommendations from the assessment for achieving SDGs at the city level and proposals for programmes and projects to be developed and implemented to further progress towards SDGs and make cities smart and sustainable.

o **Part V.** Financial framework for supporting city efforts to achieve the SDGs and implement proposed programmes and projects, including SDG budgeting.

o **Part VI.** Conclusions and proposals for next steps.

Information and training on how to prepare a VLR

Information on VLRs: https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews

Online training on how to prepare a VLR: https://learningwith.uclg.org/p/voluntary-local-reviews
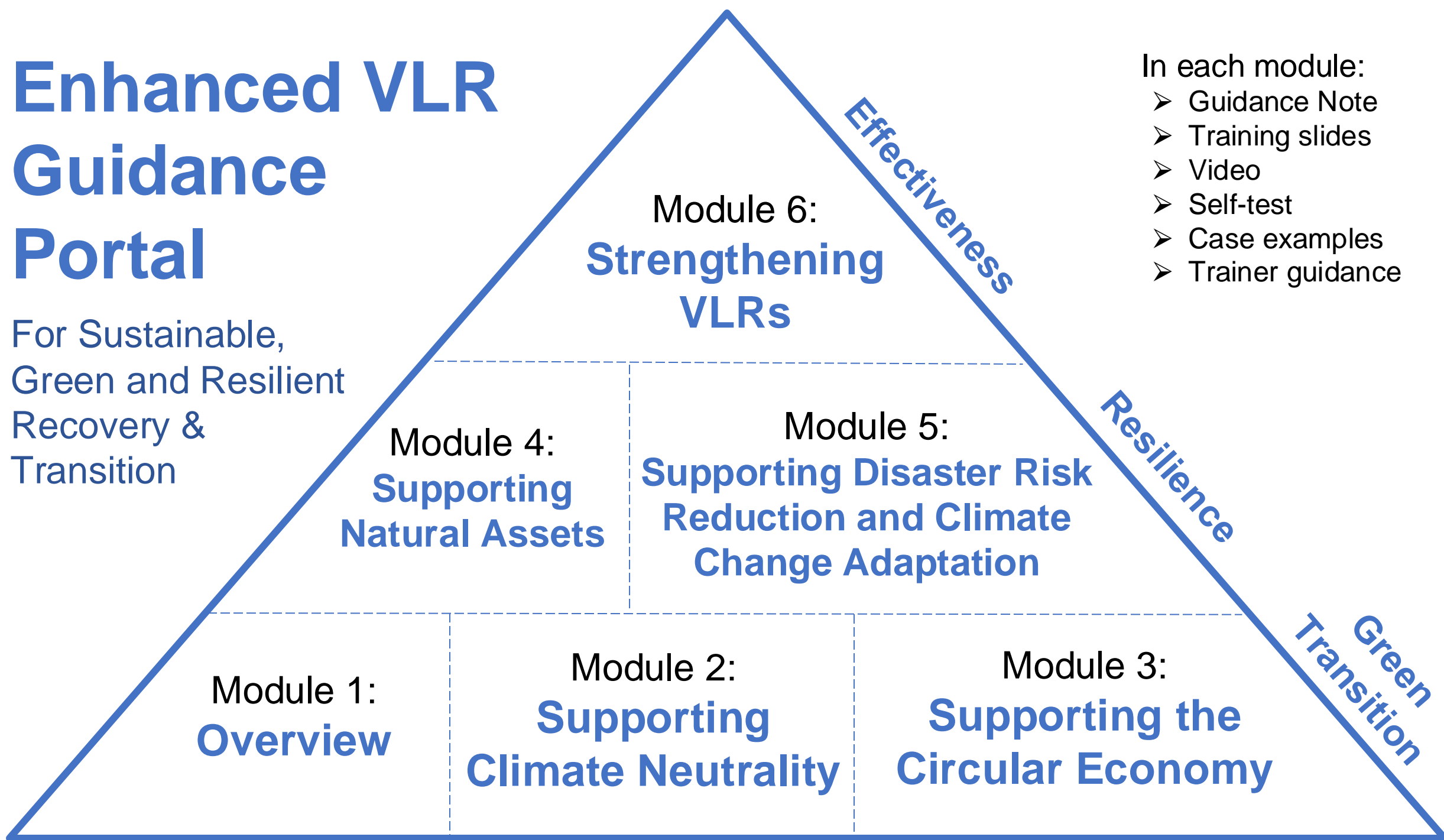
For information and guidance on how to prepare a Voluntary Subnational Review (VSR):
https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/guidelines_en.pdf

Enhanced VLR Guidance Portal

For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

In each module:
➢ Guidance Note
➢ Training slides
➢ Video
➢ Self-test
➢ Case examples
➢ Trainer guidance

Effectiveness

Resilience

Green Transition

Module 6: **Strengthening VLRs**

Module 4: **Supporting Natural Assets**

Module 5: **Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation**

Module 1: **Overview**

Module 2: **Supporting the Climate Neutrality**

Module 3: **Supporting the Circular Economy**

Who is this guide for?

➢ Officials of local governments & organizations who are in the process of preparing a Voluntary Local Review (or considering it).

➢ UN or other experts who are assisting local governments & organizations in the preparation of a VLR.

➢ While this guide focuses on VLRs with a local perspective, the information provided is generally applicable for Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) prepared by regional governments.

What will and won't you find in this guide?

➢ You will learn how to enhance VLRs to support Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery and Transitions, informed by existing guidance from across the UN system.

➢ This is not a detailed guide on how to prepare a VLR; such guidance is already available.

Enhanced VLR Guidance Portal

For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

Effectiveness

Resilience

Green Transition

Module 1: Overview
✓The Imperatives
✓Basic VLR Steps
✓Principles and leverage points for enhancing VLRs

Enhanced VLR Guidance Portal

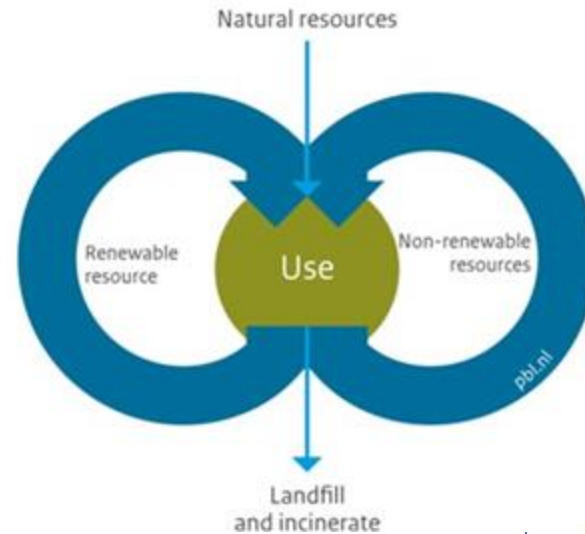For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

Effectiveness

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Module 2: Supporting Climate Neutrality
✓ Clean energy
✓ Green buildings
✓ Sustainable transportation and connectivity
✓ Nature-based solutions

Enhanced VLR Guidance Portal

For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

Effectiveness

Resilience

Green Transition

Natural resources

Renewable resource

Use

Non-renewable resources

pbl.nl

Landfill and incinerate

Module 3: Supporting the Circular Economy

✓ The Circular Cities Action Framework
✓ Advancing the 10Rs
✓ Integrated Solid Waste Management
✓ Sustainable Consumption and Production

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For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

Module 4:
Supporting Natural Assets
✓ Taking inventory of natural assets, conditions and risks
✓ Managing natural assets and nature-based solutions

Effectiveness

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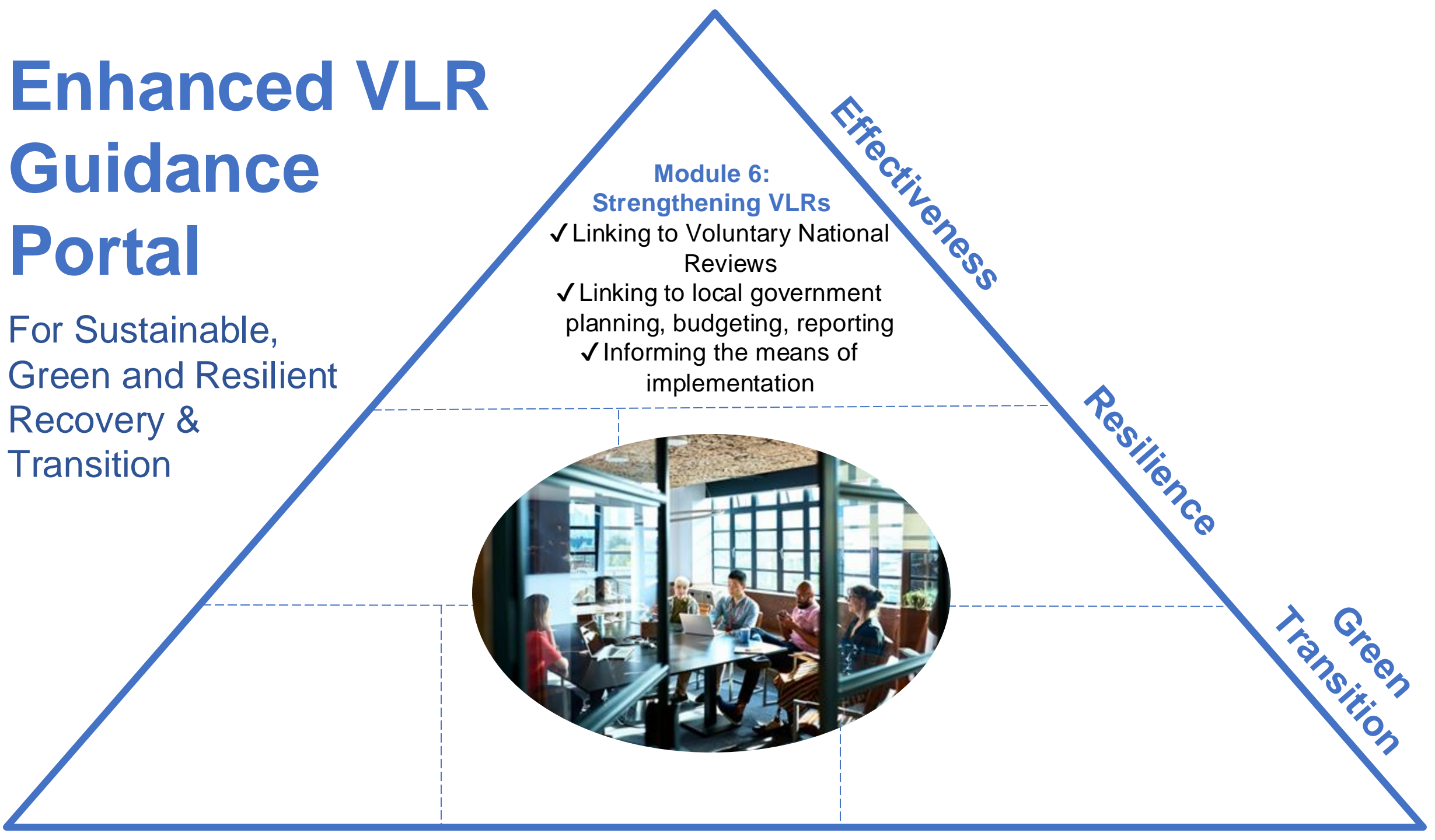
Effectiveness

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Module 5: Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation
✓ Understanding disaster risk
✓ Strengthening DRR and CCA governance
✓ Investing in DRR and CCA
✓ Enhancing disaster preparedness
✓ Using Nature-based Solutions

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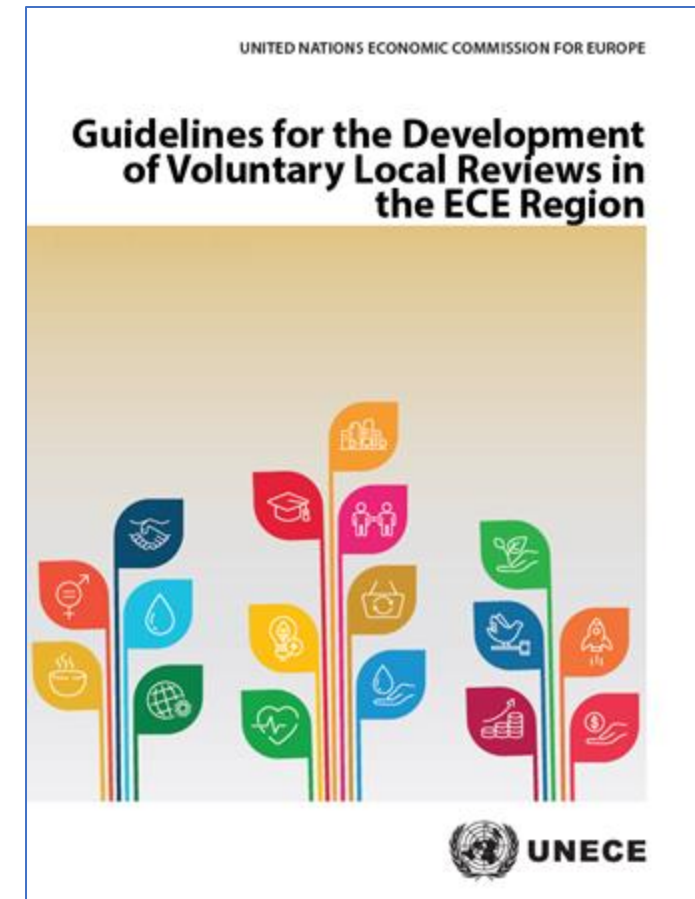
Module 6:
Strengthening VLRs
✓ Linking to Voluntary National Reviews
✓ Linking to local government planning, budgeting, reporting
✓ Informing the means of implementation

Effectiveness

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Understanding the VLR Process

A. Undertake broad-based consultation
B. Establish a coordination mechanism for the VLR preparation
C. Data collection
D. Preparation of the VLR
E. Validation of the VLR (via a stakeholder workshop)
F. Identifying innovative financing mechanisms for covering funding gaps and mainstreaming VLR recommendations

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region

UNECE

To support sustainable, green, and resilient recovery & transitions, VLRs should: …

Generally,

✓ create shared socio-economic and ecological value for local communities and vulnerable groups;

✓ promote participatory and inclusive approaches and leaves no one behind;

✓ be supported by evidence;

✓ be forward-looking, flexible, and adaptive for green transitions as well as recovery and resilience from disasters and shocks; and

✓ explore innovative financing sources and instruments.

To support sustainable, green, and resilient recovery & transitions, VLRs should: …

Specifically,

✔ set a course for local green recovery and transitions,

- aimed at long-term structural reforms and a transformative shifts towards sustainability, biodiversity protection, and climate neutrality; and

✔ strengthen local resilience,

- aimed at climate change adaptation for resilient infrastructure and communities
- mainstreaming disaster risk reduction for reducing hazards, exposure, and vulnerability to other, non-weather related hazards,
- including the use of nature-based solutions.

To support sustainable, green, and resilient recovery & transitions, VLRs should: ...

Practically,

✓ **link to the Voluntary National Review and Voluntary Sub-national Review,**
- aimed at creating links to the content and process for a VNR or VSR;

✓ **be practical and action-oriented for use by local government,**
- aimed at using the VLR to help inform local government planning, budgeting, and reporting; and

✓ **support the means of implementation,**
- aimed at using the VLR to assess and inform financing sources and instruments, technology development and transfer, local trade and markets, and measuring local SDG progress using high-quality, timely, reliable, relevant, and disaggregated data.
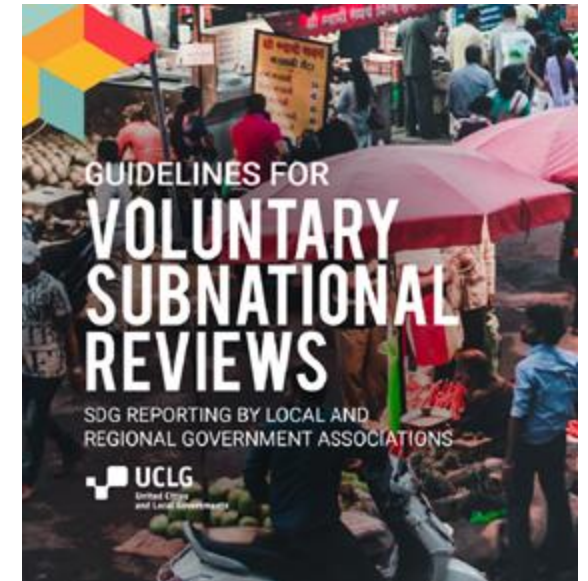
VNR: https://hlpf.un.org/vnrs
VSR: https://gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/guidelines_en.pdf

Implementing partners and authors

The implementing partners and authors of the Guidance Portal for Enhanced VLRs are:

➢ the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA),

➢ in cooperation with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat),

➢ the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE), and

➢ the World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

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For Sustainable, Green and Resilient Recovery & Transition

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- Guidance Note
- Training slides
- Video recording
- Polls and self-test
- Case examples
- Trainer guidance

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