SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS- VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW DRAFT REPORT- 2025

NGWENYA TOWN BOARD

Contents

List of Acronyms

DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EEA	Eswatini Environmental Authority
EIPA	Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority
ENTC	Eswatini National Trust Commission
EPTC	Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation
ERA	Eswatini Revenue Authority
ETA	Eswatini Tourism Authority
EWSC	Eswatini Water Services Corporation
EUDF	Eswatini Umbutfo Defence Force
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IWMP	Integrated Waste Management Plan
LED	Local Economic Development
MCIT	Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade
MHUD	Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
NDMA	National disaster Management Agency
PPP	Public Private Partnership

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND TOWN PROFILE

1.1   Introduction

Ngwenya, a border town which was declared as a town in 1985, this mark 40 years. The Town is known to be originally an iron ore mining area is located in the north-western part of the Kingdom of Eswatini, where it shares a boundary with the Republic of South Africa. This town is found in the Hhohho Region of Eswatini and was declared a town in 1985, and is a host to about 3000 residents, the now dormant iron ore mine, the Ngwenya Border Gate (one of the largest and busiest boarder gates in the Kingdom of Eswatini), part of the Malolotja Nature Conservation Area, an Industrial area, and a number of natural attractions.

Located in the North-Western part of Eswatini, Ngwenya Town is found along the   MR3 Highway that connects the country to the Republic of South Africa through the   Ngwenya Border Gate.

The developments of the town rest much on its stakeholders who are the main
drivers of the town developments. They are the drivers in many ways, they are the ones who decide who they want to represent them at Board level, and they do this through voting for four Councillors who remain in office for five years.

The current Board is working on a new IDP which was put in place in 2020-2025. The current vision of being **an ultimate destination of choice to work, live and invest.**

The town is still under one Ward, but in the near future it is believed that it will become a Town Council as there are developments taking place and that could merit the elevation.

There are currently five surrogated wards as below:

- Ngwenya Village
- Nkhungu
- Kadake
- New Skom
- Ngwenya Border

The map of the town
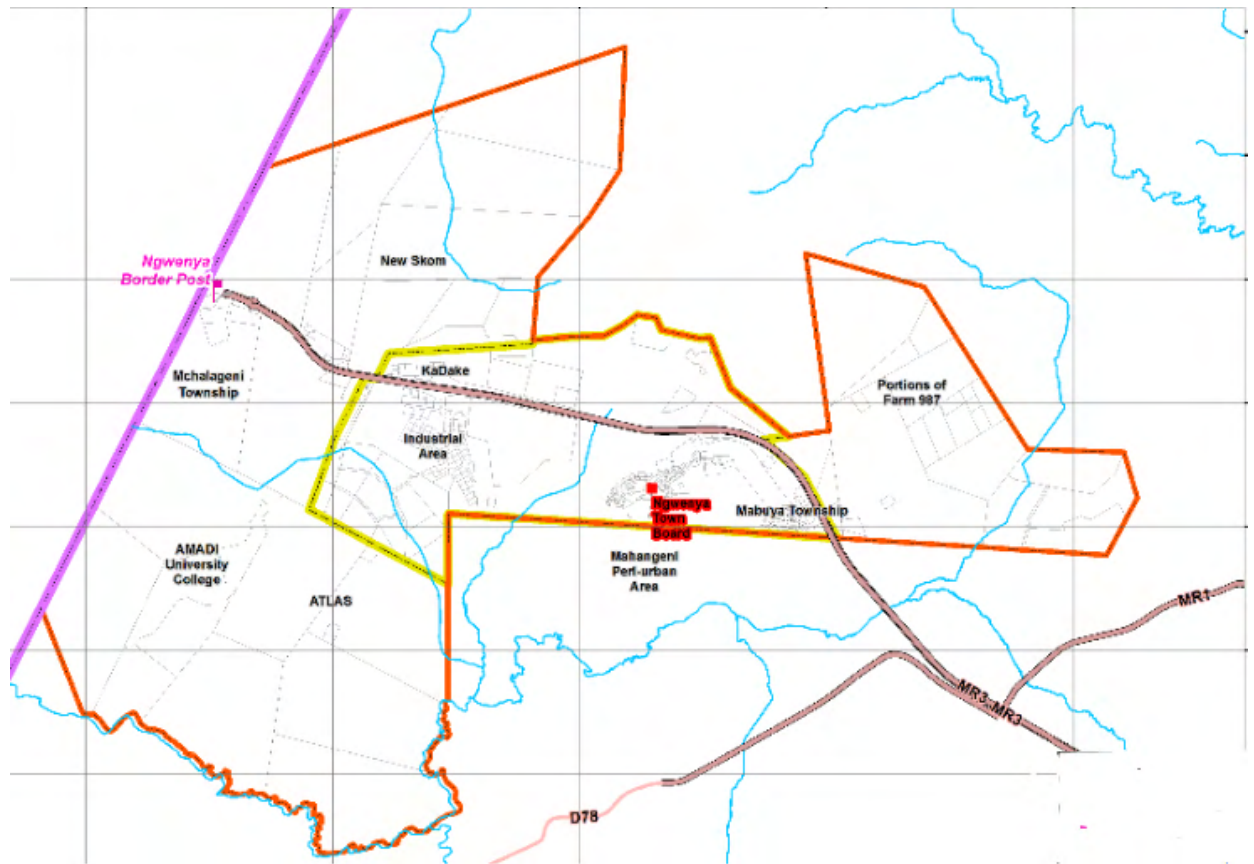
1.2 Demographic analysis

Population

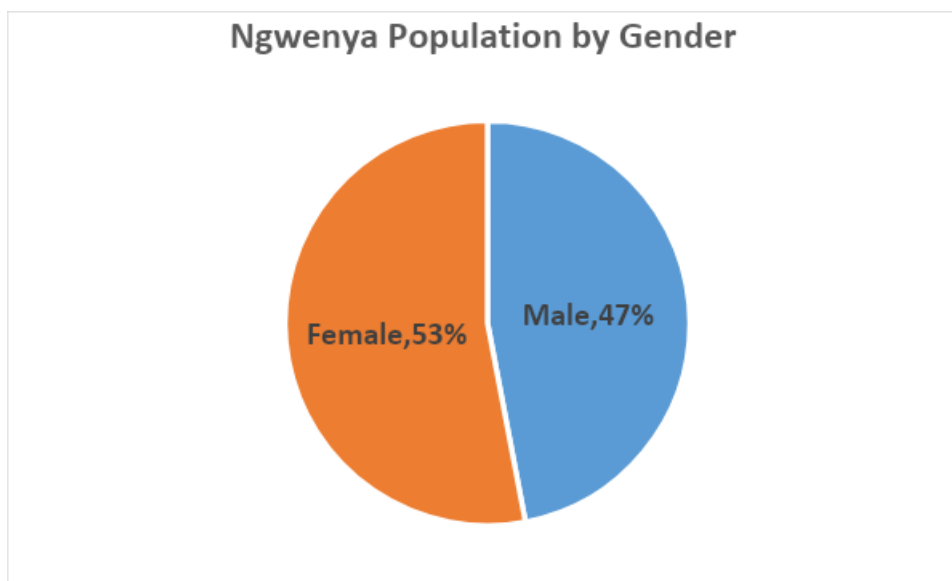The 2017 Eswatini Census by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) reflects that the town had 2524 people residing in it, 53% of which were females and 47% being males. An 8.8% growth (204 people) has been observed since the 2007 census by the CSO.

Source: Central Statistics Office, 2017, Eswatini.

Sibonelo Township has the highest population (933), followed by Nkhungu informal settlement with 473 people and Ngwenya Village with 460 people.

Ngwenya Enumeration Area	Homesteads	Households	Male	Female	Total Population
Mchalageni	99	210	320	392	712
Ka-Dake	33	47	72	62	134
Farms	85	122	173	195	368
New Skom	87	130	182	195	377
Village	79	124	206	254	460
Nkhungu	64	190	225	248	473
Total (2017)	**447**	**823**	**1 178**	**1 346**	**2 524**

1.3 Focus for the 2022 – 2030 Voluntary Local Review

Ngwenya Town Board has done some efforts towards implementation of the SDGs on the following:

a)   **Land for clinic**

The town engaged the National government for a plot for a clinic, this clinic will give more services which will include delivery wards, and also the will be houses for nurses. This is something that should have been started already, but due to financial constraints it has not yet began**.**

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b)   Land for high school

The town has plot for high school which is in response to the current IDP. This plot is enough for the high school and some teachers' quarters. This plot was shown the Minister of Education Honourable Owen Nxumalo and his officials from the ministry. The Board has a committee in place for the high school; these people are responsible to this of strategies towards the building of the high school.

c)   Land for small businesses

The town has plot for small businesses within the town, the idea is to allow Small Medium businesses to be operated within Ngwenya. This structure will afford different types of business which will include motor mechanic, panel beating and spray painting, sewing and others.

d)   Land for eateries

The town has a duty to develop different opportunities for many Swazis in the town and the country at large. There is a lot done on infrastructure development, its only financial constraints which limit the projects that could make the face of the town changing at a faster pace. The idea for the town is to have an Alzu concept along the freeway, this will allow motorist to off ramp and grab coffee on their way to South Africa and anyone else.

e)   Reclaimer Shelters

The town has since started to upgrade the current dumpsite to have a reclaimer shelter for the women who make a living out of waste. This is trying to make their environment more suitable and become able to separate waste. These will assist them to be on time to get their work packed separately and not to be exposed to rains.

f)   Plots for Nkhungu residents

The town is at the finalisation stage about the Nkhungu plots. There 56 homesteads at Nkhungu who got land from Mr. Mtoto Magagula, it is said that he had "authority" to give land to people which is not clear who gave him such an authority. He exercised his authority and overlooked that is government land. The town has worked on this issue which has been a thorn to the Nkhungu residents for more than 10 years. The town engaged relevant stakeholders like the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and went on site with both Controlling Officers from the two Ministries. This led to a resolution by the Cabinet that the Nkhungu residents should be allocated plots while following all necessary laws. The town has done almost everything and consultations have been ongoing with the residents for them to know progress and a survey was conducted to ascertain who are residing within the government plot.

Objectives of the Review

- To empower local government to assess and report their progress in implementation the 2030 Agenda
- Achievement of the Sustainable development goals at the local level

The Scope of the Review

The primary problem statement for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) centers on ensuring that these subnational reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are effectively implemented and contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda. While VLRs offer a valuable opportunity for local governments to engage with the SDGs, challenges remain in standardizing the process, ensuring consistent reporting, and effectively mainstreaming the SDGs into local policies and plans.

Ngwenya
Town
Board

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CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

2.1   Introduction

There is a lot that has been done by the local authority towards the sustainable Development Goals which could have been done without a particular methodology. There are improvement of human settlement and improvement of live hood within the town which is part of the SDGs. The local authority has made countless efforts so that the stakeholders within the town can experience a good stay in the town.

2.2 The VLR Process and methodology

The town invited its stakeholders to attend meetings on SDGs. They attended different meetings, and SDGs were discussed, it was discovered that some were aware of the SDGs whilst some only heard about them on the national radio. The opportunity to discuss with them made them aware that there is much on the ground that has been covered by the town. As one would certainly know that people have different views on any matter that is brought before them, some thought SDGs are not supposed to be a big deal at the local level before it could at the National level, some realised that SDGs are mainly there to improve the lives of everyone those in towns and those in rural areas.

2.3 Data Collection

The town collected information during the meetings with its stakeholders and formulated a questionnaire a tool to collect information during a survey. The responses from participants showed that indeed there is an understanding of "Intfutfuko lenkhonsako" this were due to what they see on the ground. They did say that there are still areas of improvement

2.4 Stakeholders Consultation

The town engaged its different stakeholders through meetings which were interactive on the SDGs and the Voluntary Local Review. Some of the stakeholders wanted to know the difference of the VLR as opposed to the seventeen SDGs which they said were known at higher level, it became easy to respond as by them indicating the SDGs were known at higher level. The stakeholders were informed that the Voluntary Local Review was mainly possible in order for them to be able to have an opportunity to understand the SDGs at their level, have an idea of all the processes that takes place at the National level through their participation at the local level. To administer the questionnaire became an easy part more especially for those who had participated during one of the meetings.

The consultations involved local businesses, vendors, parents,people living with disabilities and students. The intention was to leave no one behind and to get contributions from everyone.

2.5 Validation

Validation of data is still in progress. We are still yet to engage with our partners and stakeholders to validate the accuracy of the data collected during the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR).

2.6 Limitation of the VLR

In any research or survey, there is slightly an opportunity to discover limitations as some exercises are conducted. Some of the limitations of this report are outlined below:

1. **Data Gaps and Quality Issues**: The assessment of the SDGs indicators at local level is hindered by limited or unreliable data.
2. **Limited Scope and Scale**: VLRs typically focus on specific local contexts, which may not fully capture broader regional or national dynamics influencing SDGs. Some SDG targets may be challenging to measure at the municipal level due to their global or complex nature.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Lack of technical expertise, funding, or institutional capacity to conduct comprehensive reviews. This can result in superficial assessments or reliance on limited data sources.
4. **Limited Stakeholder Engagement**: Insufficient involvement of marginalized groups, civil society, or private sector can lead to incomplete or skewed assessments of SDGs progress. Without broad engagement, the review may miss critical perspectives.

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CHAPTER 3 – PROGRESS ON THE SDG IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 An Introduction

Ngwenya's strategic direction on making stakeholders context includes the major pillars that guide the development of the integrated development plan, the town's vision and mission, as well as the broader strategic objectives of the town for the next five years. The context also outlines the alignment of the town's IDP Strategic Objectives with national legislative and policy frameworks, as well as international planning policies and frameworks. The context users in the actual strategies that the Town towards the attainment of its long-term vision.

3.2 Domestication & Prioritization of the SDGs

The preparation of the Ngwenya IDP 2020-2025 was based on the following strategic pillars:
1. Inculcating the culture of participation and collaboration
2. Due consideration to stakeholder input for strategic priorities
3. Dealing with infrastructure backlog to allow socio-economic development to thrive;
4. Using our local advantage to create a better future
5. Building and reliance on strategic linkages within the region to improve the social and economic landscape of the town.
6. Meeting immediate needs without compromising key futuristic development priorities of the town;
7. Alignment with national government policy and legal frameworks.

3.3 Alignment of the town activities with SDGs

The key IDP Strategic objectives align with key national and international planning principles and policies as outlined in the table below. Each of the IDP Strategies (Chapter 4 – 8) is also aligned to these policies and principles.

3.4 SDG-Specific Progress

1. **No Poverty**
The objective of Goal 1 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to eradicate poverty in all its forms worldwide by 2030. Currently, residents of Nkhungu are subjected to land tenure conditions that contribute to their impoverishment. However, the planned township upgrade aims to improve their living conditions and address these challenges, thus contributing to poverty alleviation.

2. **Good Health & Well-being**
Goal 3 of the SDGs aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. The development of Nkhungu Township will allocate approximately 4,400 square meters of land for the establishment of the Ngwenya Community Clinic. This facility is expected to enhance healthcare access and improve health outcomes for Nkhungu residents, the broader Ngwenya community, and all citizens, particularly those frequently utilizing the Ngwenya Border Gate, one of the kingdom's busiest border crossings.

3. **Quality Education**
Goal 4 seeks to ensure inclusive, equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. As part of the Nkhungu Township upgrade, the Ngwenya Town Board plans to provide land for an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Social Centre. Currently, orphaned and vulnerable preschool children from Nkhungu rely on the Ngwenya Village Social Centre, located approximately 3 km away. Establishing a local ECCD Centre will improve access to early childhood education and developmental services within Nkhungu.

4. **Gender Equality**
Goal 5 emphasizes the importance of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The development of Nkhungu Township aims to promote equitable access to serviced land, including for women-headed households. Facilitating land ownership and the issuance of title deeds to women are vital steps toward women's empowerment. The Ngwenya Town Board's initiative aligns with the objectives of SDG 5 by fostering gender equality through land tenure security.

5. **Clean Water & Sanitation**
Goal 6 focuses on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Currently, residents of Nkhungu rely on a combination of water sources: some have access to potable water via the Eswatini Water Service Corporation (ESWC) network, while others depend on nearby communal water sources that are poorly fenced and monitored, often leading to shared water use with livestock. The township upgrade will extend ESWC's water network closer to each plot, making water access more affordable and reliable for all residents, thereby promoting human rights to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

6. **Affordable and Clean Energy**
Goal 7 aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for everyone. Presently, residents who can afford to connect to the Eswatini Electricity Company's supply have done so, while others rely on traditional energy sources such as firewood, which is becoming increasingly scarce and labor-intensive to procure. The township upgrade will facilitate the extension of the electricity network to all plots, significantly improving access to reliable and sustainable energy sources for the community.

7. Reduced Inequality

Goal 10 seeks to reduce inequalities within and among countries, addressing disparities based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, and opportunity. Residents of Nkhungu are generally considered to be among the lower income groups due to their housing conditions; however, some can afford better housing but lack land ownership rights. Formalizing Nkhungu through township upgrading will elevate residents' social status by enabling them to build and improve their homes in line with urban standards, fostering self-esteem and social inclusion.

8. Sustainable Cities & Communities

Goal 11 aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Upgrading Nkhungu into a formal township will support this goal by improving environmental management through proper waste collection and sewerage systems. It will also enhance social inclusion, as residents will gain full participation in community development and ownership through land tenure security. Additionally, formalization will stimulate economic growth by enabling residents to own land with titles, thereby encouraging investment and stability.

9. Climate Action

Goal 13 recognizes climate change as an urgent threat that requires immediate action. Many households in Nkhungu reside in old, temporary structures built in the 1960s, making them highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards such as storms, extreme cold, heavy rains, and fires. Formalizing the township will grant residents legal land ownership, allowing them to construct climate and disaster-resilient structures. Furthermore, the local authority plans to develop infrastructure that is resilient to climate impacts, thereby strengthening community adaptive capacity.

10. Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

Goal 16 promotes peaceful, just, and inclusive societies with accountable institutions. Informal settlements like Nkhungu often face injustices related to limited access to essential services such as water, sanitation, transportation, and social amenities. Upgrading Nkhungu into a formal township will improve social justice by ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. It will also foster social cohesion by integrating residents into the formal urban framework, promoting human rights, and enhancing community well-being. Provision of urban services—such as roads, water, electricity, sanitation, and waste management—will demonstrate government commitment to pro-poor policies, strengthening governance and community resilience.

In summary, the formalization and upgrade of Nkhungu Township will significantly contribute to the achievement of multiple SDGs by fostering equitable development, improving living standards, and promoting sustainable, resilient, and inclusive urban communities.

3.5 Challenges and Gaps in Progress towards SDGs

1. Limited Financial Resources and Budget Constraints

Like other local towns, Ngwenya Town Board face insufficient funding to adequately plan, develop, and maintain sustainable infrastructure and services necessary for SDG achievement. Budget limitations hinder the implementation of projects such as water supply, sanitation, healthcare, and urban development, resulting in slow progress and unmet targets.

2. Inadequate Institutional Capacity and Governance

Our town also lack the technical expertise, human resources, and institutional frameworks required to effectively plan, coordinate, and monitor SDG-related initiatives. Weak governance structures can lead to poor project management, inefficient resource allocation, and limited accountability.

3. Insufficient Data and Monitoring Systems

A significant challenge is the lack of reliable, disaggregated data to assess progress and inform decision-making. Without accurate data on issues like poverty levels, health, education, and environmental conditions, it becomes difficult to set priorities, measure impact, and adjust strategies accordingly.

4. Limited Community Engagement and Awareness

Low levels of awareness and participation among community members can impede SDG implementation. When residents are not informed about the benefits or do not actively participate in development plans, projects risk low uptake, resistance, or misalignment with local needs.

5. Land Tenure and Property Rights Issues

In informal settlements, insecure land tenure and unclear property rights hinder investment in sustainable housing, infrastructure, and services. This insecurity discourages residents from improving their dwellings or participating in formal development initiatives, thus impeding SDG progress.

6. Poverty and Socioeconomic Inequalities

High levels of poverty and inequality limit access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, education, and healthcare. These disparities create barriers to inclusive development, making it challenging to achieve SDGs that promote equality and social justice.

7. External Factors and Global Influences

External economic shocks, climate change impacts, and migration disrupt local development efforts. Limited capacity to adapt to these external pressures hampers progress toward sustainable development goals.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that strengthens local governance, mobilizes resources, enhances data collection, fosters community participation, and promotes integrated, inclusive planning aligned with SDG principles.

3.6 Lesson Learned

1. **Enhanced Data Collection and Quality:**
Conducting a VLR often reveals gaps in data, highlighting the need for improved data collection systems. This process underscores the importance of establishing robust, disaggregated, and timely data to monitor progress effectively.

2. **Alignment of Local and Global Goals:**
A VLR helps municipalities understand how local initiatives relate to global frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It emphasizes the importance of aligning local policies with international commitments for coherent progress.

3. **Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration:**
The review process fosters greater engagement with diverse stakeholders—including citizens, civil society, private sector, and neighbouring jurisdictions—highlighting the value of inclusive participation in sustainable development.

4. Capacity Building:

Conducting a VLR often reveals capacity constraints within local governments, emphasizing the need for training, resources, and institutional strengthening.

3.7 Best Practices

1. **Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement:**
Involve a broad range of stakeholders early in the process—local government departments, civil society, businesses, academia, and residents—to gather diverse perspectives and foster ownership.

2. **Clear Framework and Indicators:**
Use established frameworks such as the SDGs or other relevant global/local indicators. Define clear, measurable targets aligned with local priorities.

3. **Robust Data Management Systems:**
Invest in data infrastructure for accurate, disaggregated, and up-to-date information. Use innovative technologies and data sources to enhance monitoring.

4. **Transparent Communication:**
Share findings openly with the public and stakeholders through accessible reports and community forums to promote awareness and collective action.

5. **Regular Review Cycles:**
Make VLRs a recurring process—biennially or triennially—to track progress, reassess priorities, and adapt strategies accordingly.

6. **Capacity Development:**
Provide training and resources to local officials and stakeholders to improve understanding of sustainable development.

7. **Learning and Knowledge Sharing:**
Connect with other municipalities conducting VLRs to exchange experiences, challenges, and solutions, fostering peer learning.

CHAPTER 4 – POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND ENABLING

4.1 Policy Recommendations and Action Plan

SDG 1: No Poverty
Policies:
- Expand social safety nets, such as targeted cash transfer programs.
- Support job creation through local enterprise development.
Action Plan: Implement a municipal microfinance initiative to support small local businesses and entrepreneurs from vulnerable communities.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger
Policies:
- Promote urban agriculture and community gardens.
- Partner with local farmers to supply affordable, nutritious food.
Action Plan: Establish a city-run farmers' market that sources produce from local sustainable farms, ensuring food access for low-income residents.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
Policies:
- Increase access to primary healthcare clinics.
- Develop pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to promote physical activity.
Action Plan: Create a network of safe walking and cycling paths connecting residential areas with parks and healthcare facilities.

SDG 4: Quality Education
Policies:
- Invest in local schools and digital literacy programs.
- Provide vocational training aligned with local economic needs.
Action Plan: Launch a city-sponsored coding bootcamp for youth, partnering with tech companies to enhance digital skills.

SDG 5: Gender Equality
Policies:
- Promote women's leadership in local governance.
- Implement anti-discrimination policies and gender-sensitive budgeting.
Action Plan: Establish a women's leadership council to advice on city planning and service delivery.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
Policies:
- Support installation of solar panels on public buildings.
- Promote energy-efficient building codes.
Action Plan: Offer subsidies or rebates for residents installing home solar systems.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
Policies:
- Encourage green entrepreneurship and local startups.

- Facilitate workforce training in sustainable industries.
Action Plan: Create a business incubator focusing on renewable energy and sustainable technologies.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
Policies:
- Invest in smart city infrastructure.
- Support innovation hubs and research centres.
Action Plan: Develop a digital platform for urban planning and citizen feedback to foster participatory governance.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
Policies:
- Expand green spaces and urban parks.
- Improve public transportation accessibility.
Action Plan: Create a network of interconnected parks, public parking for public transport.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
Policies:
- Promote recycling, composting, and circular economy practices.
- Support local, sustainable procurement policies for city operations.
Action Plan: Implement a city-wide composting program and buy from local sustainable vendors for municipal supplies.

SDG 13: Climate Action
Policies:
- Develop climate resilience and adaptation plans.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy policies.
Action Plan: Implement a city-wide initiative to retrofit buildings for energy efficiency and renewable energy use.

SDG 15: Life on Land
Policies:
- Support urban reforestation and biodiversity projects.
- Prevent deforestation and promote green corridors.
Action Plan: Create a tree-planting campaign and establish protected natural reserves within city limits.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
Policies:
- Enhance transparency and community participation.
- Strengthen local legal and institutional frameworks.
Action Plan: Develop a digital platform for public reporting of issues and participatory budgeting.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
Policies:
- Foster collaborations with NGOs, private sector, and neighbouring municipalities.
- Leverage external funding and technical assistance.
Action Plan: Partner with universities for research projects on urban sustainability and apply for national or international grants.

4.2 Conclusion
The successful completion of this Voluntary Local Review demonstrates our town's commitment to advancing sustainable development through collaborative, transparent, and data-driven efforts. By aligning

our policies with the Sustainable Development Goals, we have identified key priorities and actionable strategies to foster social inclusion, economic resilience, environmental stewardship, and good governance. Moving forward, we are dedicated to implementing these policies with active participation from all stakeholders, continuously monitoring our progress, and adapting our approaches to ensure a sustainable, resilient, and thriving community for current and future generations. This VLR serves not only as a reflection of our achievements but also as a roadmap for ongoing efforts toward a more equitable and sustainable future.