Training Toolkit on Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation
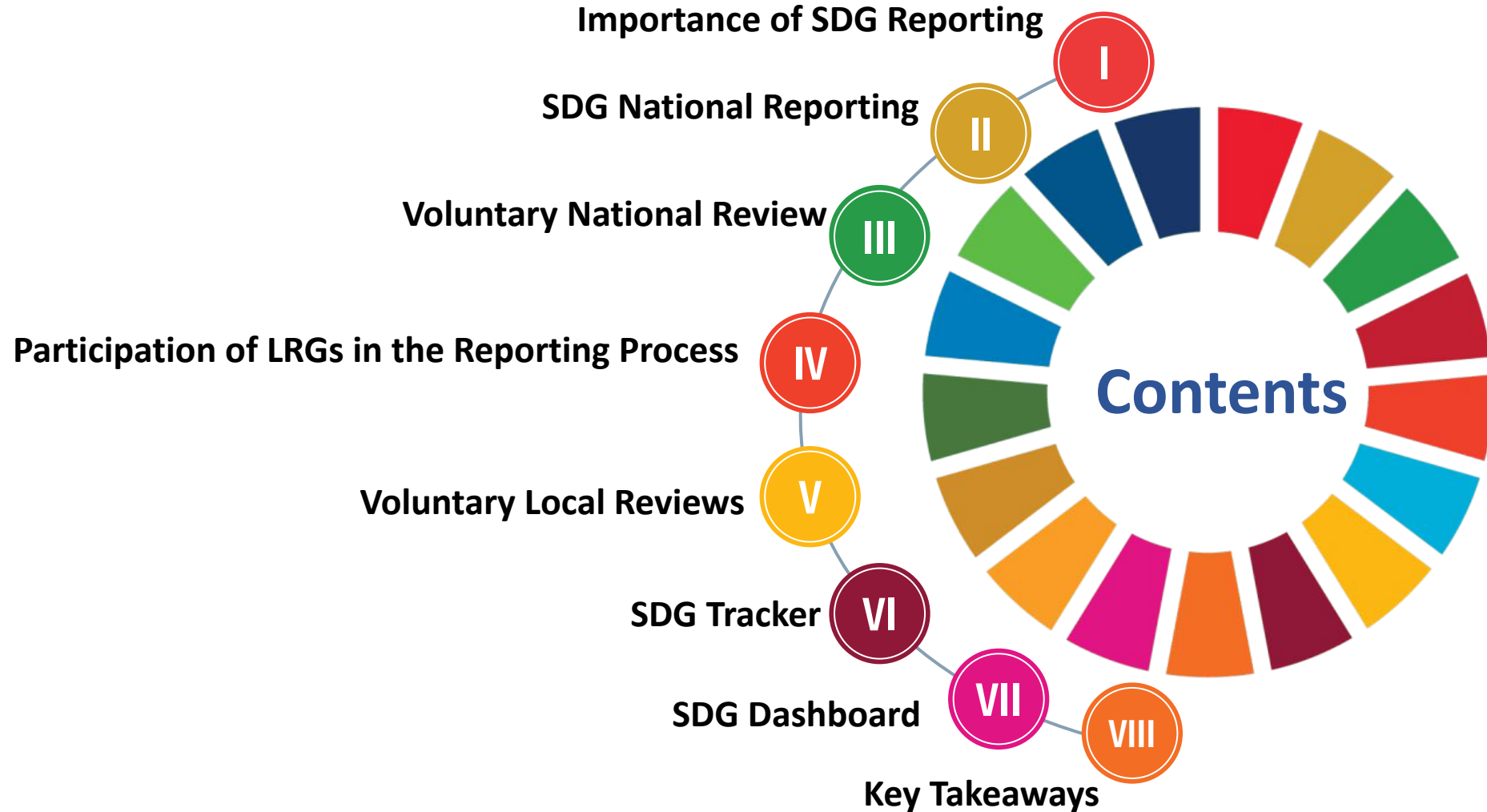
Reporting SDGs

Module 4.2

Contents

Importance of SDG Reporting — I

SDG National Reporting — II

Voluntary National Review — III

Participation of LRGs in the Reporting Process — IV

Voluntary Local Reviews — V

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SDG Dashboard — VII

Key Takeaways — VIII

Learning Outcomes

Learn and adapt approaches to National SDG reporting

Understand the elementary building blocks and the basic, practical information on the steps that countries may take when preparing VNRs

Provide a deeper analysis of the core principles that should underpin the VLR process, while also outlining different approaches and practical steps to undertake it

**Provides specific guidance to help LRGs prepare their VLR**

I. Importance of SDG Reporting

Serves as a way to be **more transparent and accountable**, both inwards and outwards.

Strengthen coordination between agencies and between national and sub-national tiers of government

How does reporting contribute to the SDGs?

It **provides key information, feedback and learning mechanisms** at every stage of implementation.

Public Policy Circle
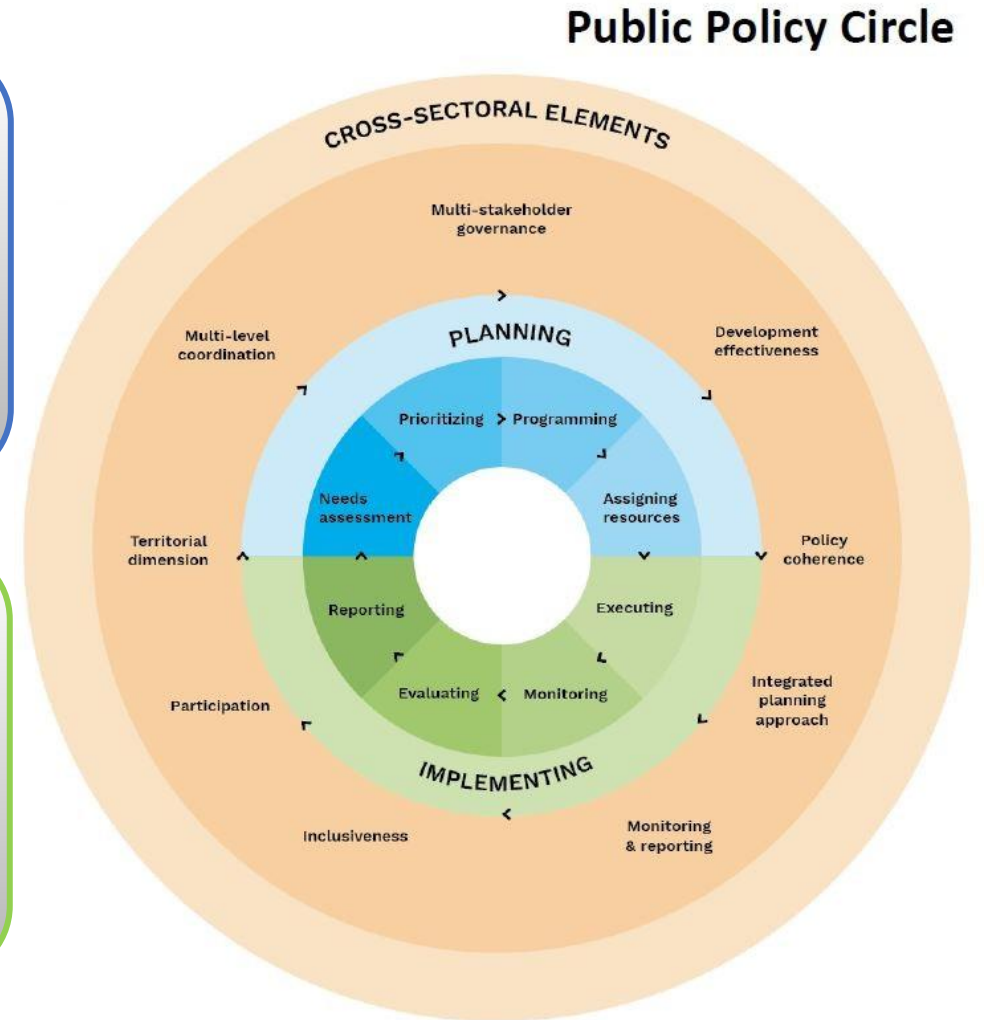
II. SDG National Reporting

SDG reporting refers to the **act of publishing and disseminating data and statistics on the SDG indicators for key stakeholders**, including UN custodian agencies, government policymakers, businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutions, and the general public.

SDG National Reporting Initiative, 2018

Why SDG Reporting Matters?

AN UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY
The data requirements for reporting on the SDGs represent an unprecedented opportunity for countries around the world to track and evaluate their progress. SDG reporting can be a tool to help countries achieve their goals.

REPORTING CHALLENGES
Despite the importance and benefits of SDG reporting, many countries have yet to provide benchmark data on the SDGs, and many are still grappling with how to report on their achievements.

DESA **Training Toolkit on Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation**

II. SDG National Reporting (Cont.)

Strategic Considerations for SDG Reporting

POLICY	DATA	TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
National alignment of SDGs Coordinating data across ministries & departments Privacy, security & legal	Availability of official data Disaggregation Timeliness Metadata & standards Openness Accuracy & reliability	**TECHNICAL OPTIONS** Open-source Proprietary Hybrid **FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITY** Data input & management Visualization & analysis

SUSTAINABILITY

Institutional framework | Partnerships | Long-term technical strategies

FINANCING & CAPACITY

Source: SDG National Reporting Initiative, 2018

II. SDG National Reporting (Cont.)

SDG Reporting Approaches

Adding an SDG module within an existing platform

Building a new platform dedicated to SDG reporting

Leveraging a regional platform

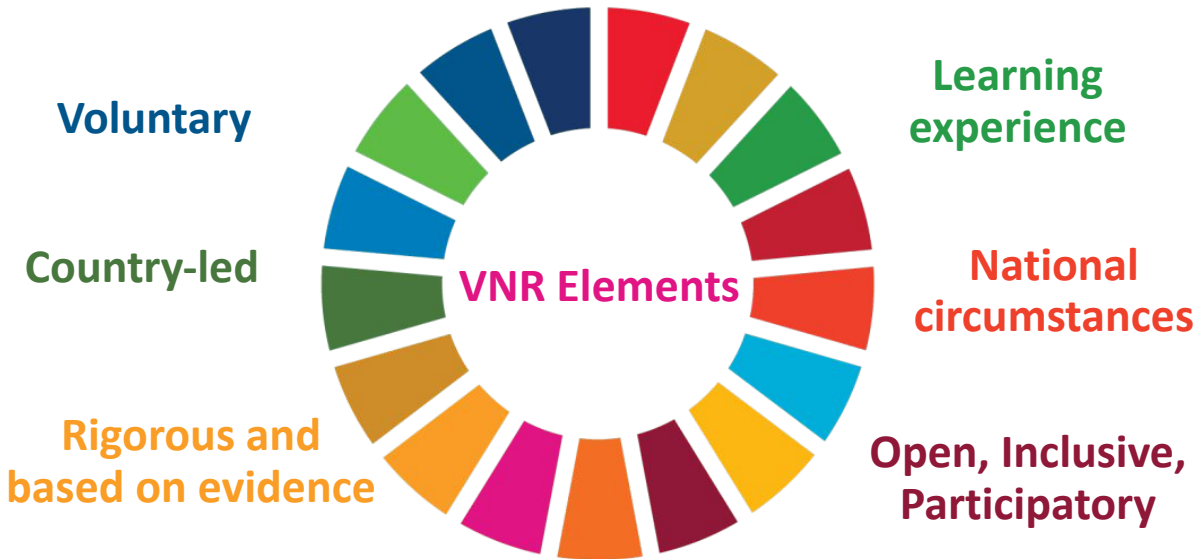Source: SDG National Reporting Initiative, 2018

III. Voluntary National Review

Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are part of the **follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

The VNRs are intended to **track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda**, including the SDGs and targets

VNR Elements

- Voluntary
- Country-led
- Rigorous and based on evidence
- Learning experience
- National circumstances
- Open, Inclusive, Participatory

Structure of VNR Report

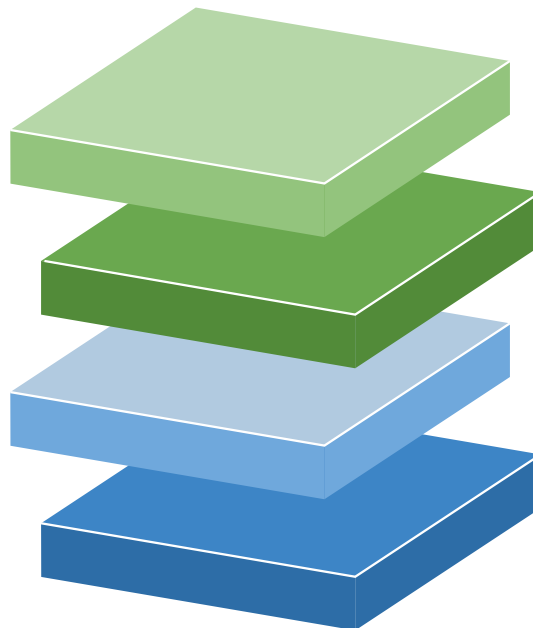| 1	Opening statement	6	Progress on Goals and targets
2	Highlights	7	Means of implementation
3	Introduction	8	Next steps
4	Methodology and process for the preparation of the review	9	Conclusion
5	Policy and enabling environment	10	Next steps

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

VNR Roadmap – 4 basic phases

- Planning (including setting scope & structure) and institutionalizing
- Gathering inputs, data
- Writing and review
- Presentation & follow-up

Building blocks of VNR preparation
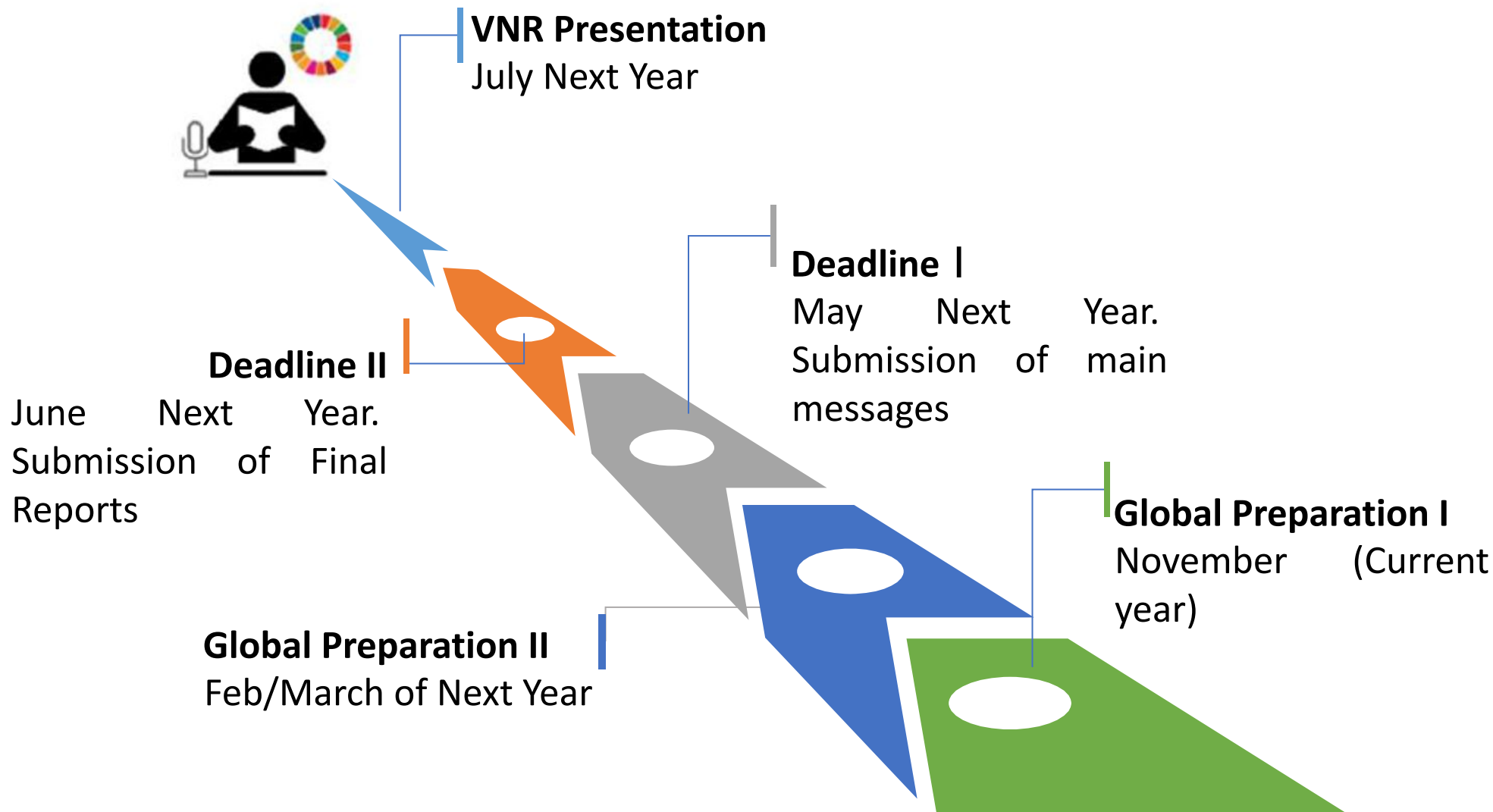
- Data and indicators
- Policy coherence and integration
- Stakeholder engagement and advocacy
- Leaving no one behind

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

General Timeline for VNRs

VNR Presentation
July Next Year

Deadline I
May Next Year. Submission of main messages

Deadline II
June Next Year. Submission of Final Reports

Global Preparation I
November (Current year)

Global Preparation II
Feb/March of Next Year

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

Why participate in VNR?

Creating multi-stakeholder partnership	Strengthening policy integration & coherence	Stakeholder buy in ownership & activation	Highlight country priorities
Awareness raising & advocacy	Enhanced M&E, reporting	Finalizing prioritizing investments, multiplying investors pool	Leaving no one behind

Intended benefits of the VNRs

CATALYZER — 1

STOCKTAKING — 2

COORDINATION — 3

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH — 4

AREAS FOR SUPPORT — 5

COMMUNICATION TOOL — 6

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

**VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS
2020**

VNR Year	No. of Counters
2016	20
2017	43
2018	46
2019	47
2020	47

11 EUROPE

11 ASIA PACIFIC
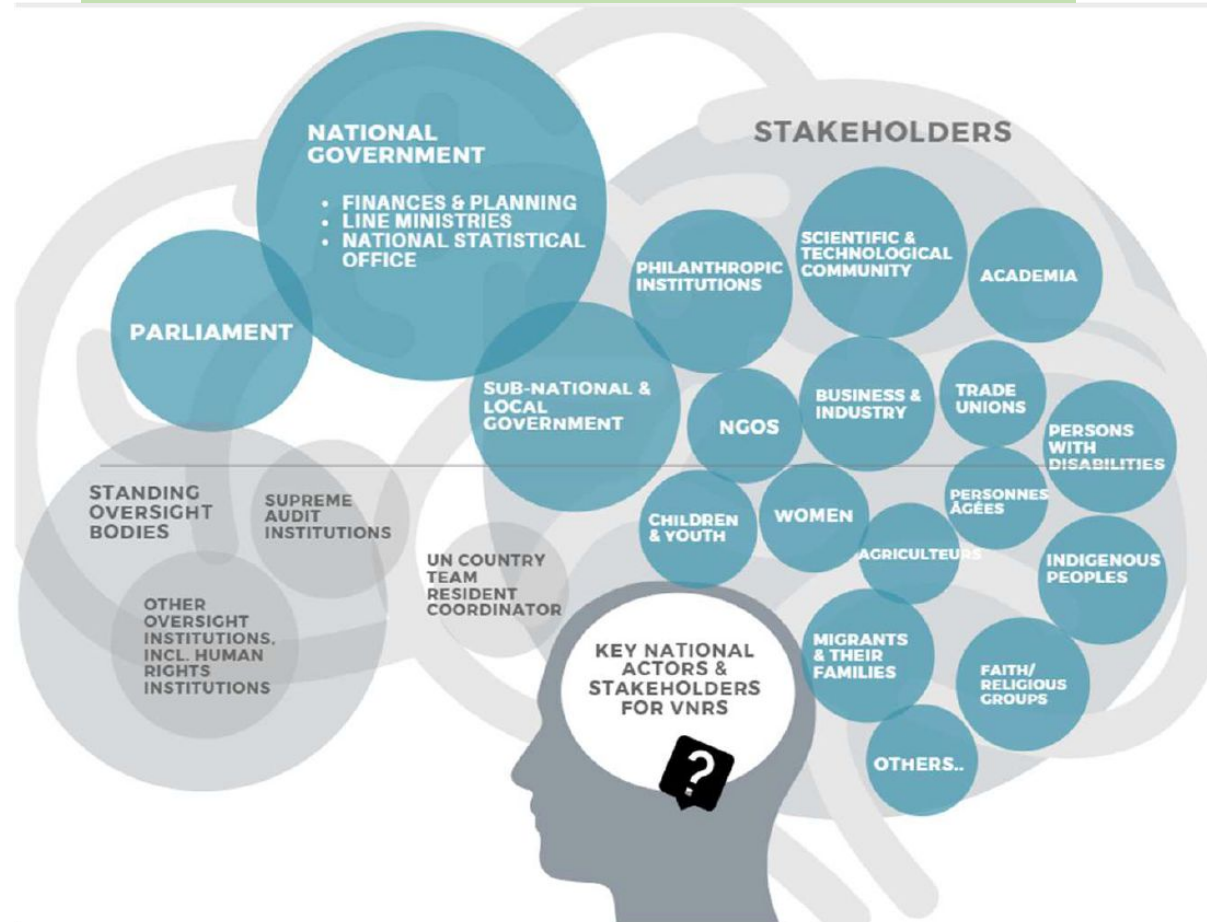
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN 9

16 AFRICA
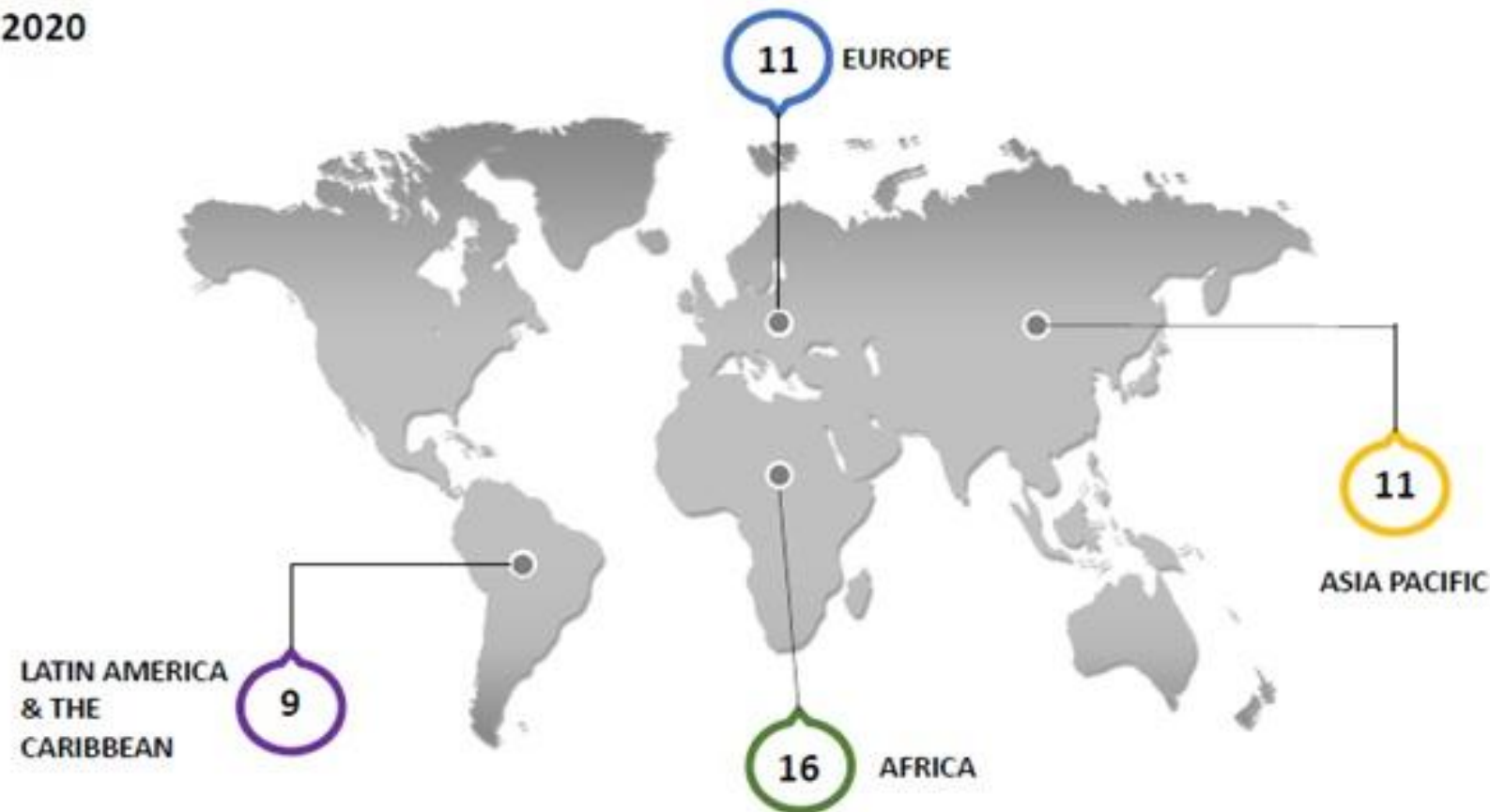
Who is in charge of leading the 2030 Agenda and its review in your country?

Source: United Nations

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

How is the consultation process organized?

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

Some key points from 2020 VNRs Synthesis Report
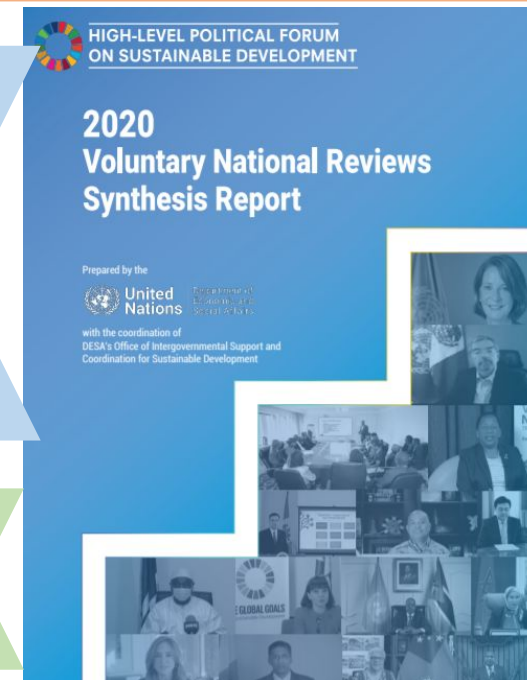
Bringing SDGs into the local context
- ❑ Countries referred to whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches
- ❑ For example, Ecuador adopted a decree declaring the 2030 Agenda public policy of the national government and assigning to national secretariat for planning responsibility for aligning planning instruments with the Agenda, in coordination with public administration and different levels of government.

Institutions for implementing the 2030 Agenda
- ❑ Multi-stakeholder engagement mechanisms
- ❑ Coordinating mechanisms at multiple levels of government,
- ❑ For example, Burundi undertook the SDG localization exercise by initiating the process of integrating the SDGs into municipal community development plans.
- ❑ In Austria, the States have put local SDG Focal Points in charge of coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Reporting challenges in making these arrangements as effective as possible
- ❑ For instance, for Nepal, localization of SDGs continues to present one of the prominent challenges.
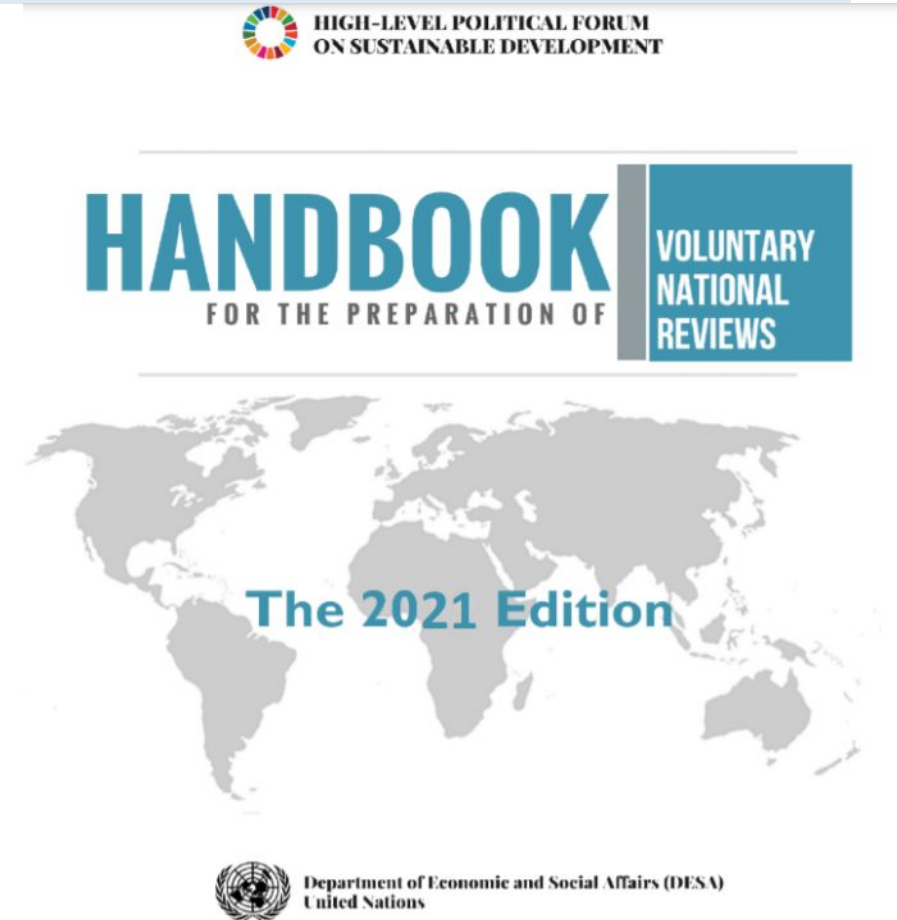
HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2020 **Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report**

Prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

with the coordination of DESA's Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development

III. Voluntary National Review (Cont.)

Refer to the following handbook in preparation of presenting voluntary national reviews (VNRs)

- Refer to the VNR Handbook (online or printed copies) pages 12-18 covering topics of stakeholder engagement and SDG ownership.

- Where would the participation of local and regional governments benefit the VNR process and SDG monitoring as a whole?

- How could this engagement with national to local government best take place?

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HANDBOOK FOR THE PREPARATION OF **VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS**

The 2021 Edition

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) United Nations

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27024Handbook_2021_EN.pdf

Your Roadmap to Reporting
Activity 2

Your role in the reporting process

IV. Participation of LRGs in the Reporting Process

Greater efforts are needed to involve LRGs in the VNRs and institutional mechanisms for coordination and follow-up.

New institutional frameworks for collaborative governance

LRG participation in the preparation of the VNRs 2016-2020

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		TOTAL	
Total countries reporting (per year)	22	100%	43	100%	46	100%	47	100%	47	100%	205	100%
Mid/high consultation of LRGs	10	45%	17	40%	21	46%	18	38%	26	55%	92	45%
Weak consultation of LRGs	6	27%	10	23%	7	15%	11	23%	5	11%	39	19%
No consultation of LRGs	6	27%	14	33%	13	28%	10	21%	5	11%	48	23%
No elected LRGs (2)			2	5%	4	9%	5	11%	8	17%	19	9%
No information available (3)					1	2%	3	6%	3	6%	7	3%

Source: Towards The Localization of the SDGs, 2020

IV. Participation of LRGs in the Reporting Process (Cont.)

Key points when working with authorities in charge of the VNR

Reaching out to national focal points at the highest political level

Maintaining permanent contact with national focal points at the technical level

Clarifying modalities and procedures of participation for LRGs in the VNRs

Co-organizing a conference on event presenting the national consultation strategy

Fostering the localization of the SDGs and its mechanisms

Fostering a bottom-up approach

Building alliances with local, national and international stakeholders

CSOs and the private sector are often contributing and can share strategies towards the SDGs with local governments
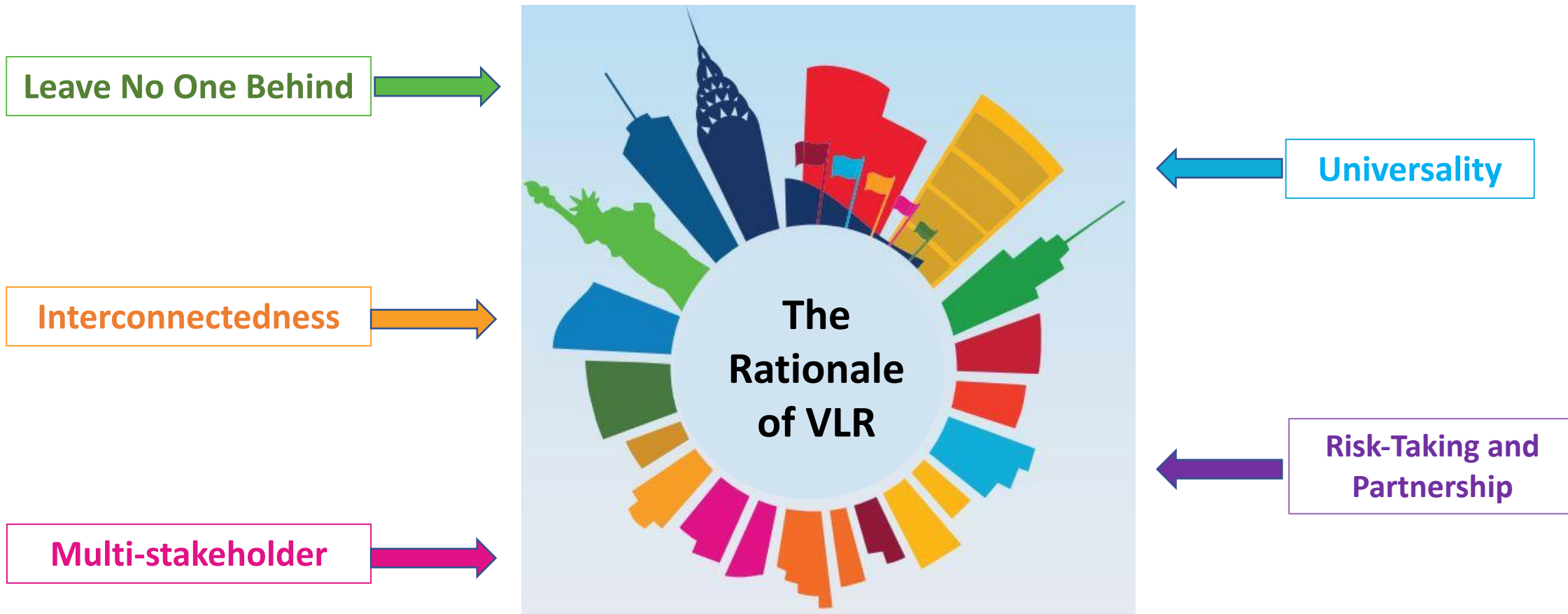
Academia, experts and research center can support the reporting process by providing geographically disaggregated data and information

Many **international organizations and networks** have considerable experience working with LRGs and are strongly committed to the localization of SDGs

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR)

An emerging process by which sub-national governments can report on their progress on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Leave No One Behind

Interconnectedness

Multi-stakeholder

Universality

Risk-Taking and Partnership

The Rationale of VLR

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

"Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a process in which local and regional governments (LRGs) initiate voluntarily an assessment of their progress of implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. This makes it possible for LRGs to share experiences, challenges, and lessons learnt as well as to open their door for new partnerships, filling the gap of means of implementation for their local vision."

(Institute for Global Environmental Strategies)

Influence

1 Political

2 Social

3 Planning
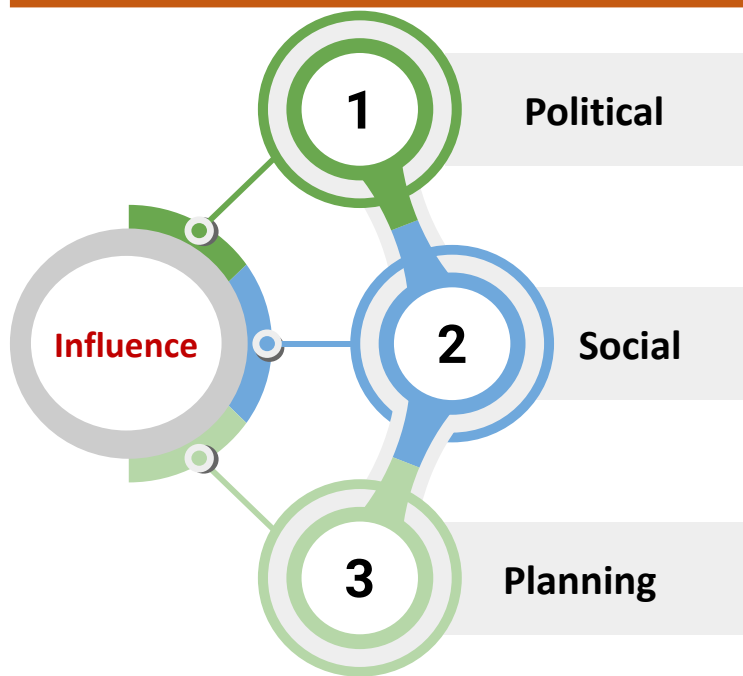
3 key criteria included in the concept of VLR

Make a clear reference to the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda

Implementation agency and responsibility have to be local

Include elements of locally-based reviewing and monitoring of the implementation processes

Four core variables around which the analysis is structured

Agency 01
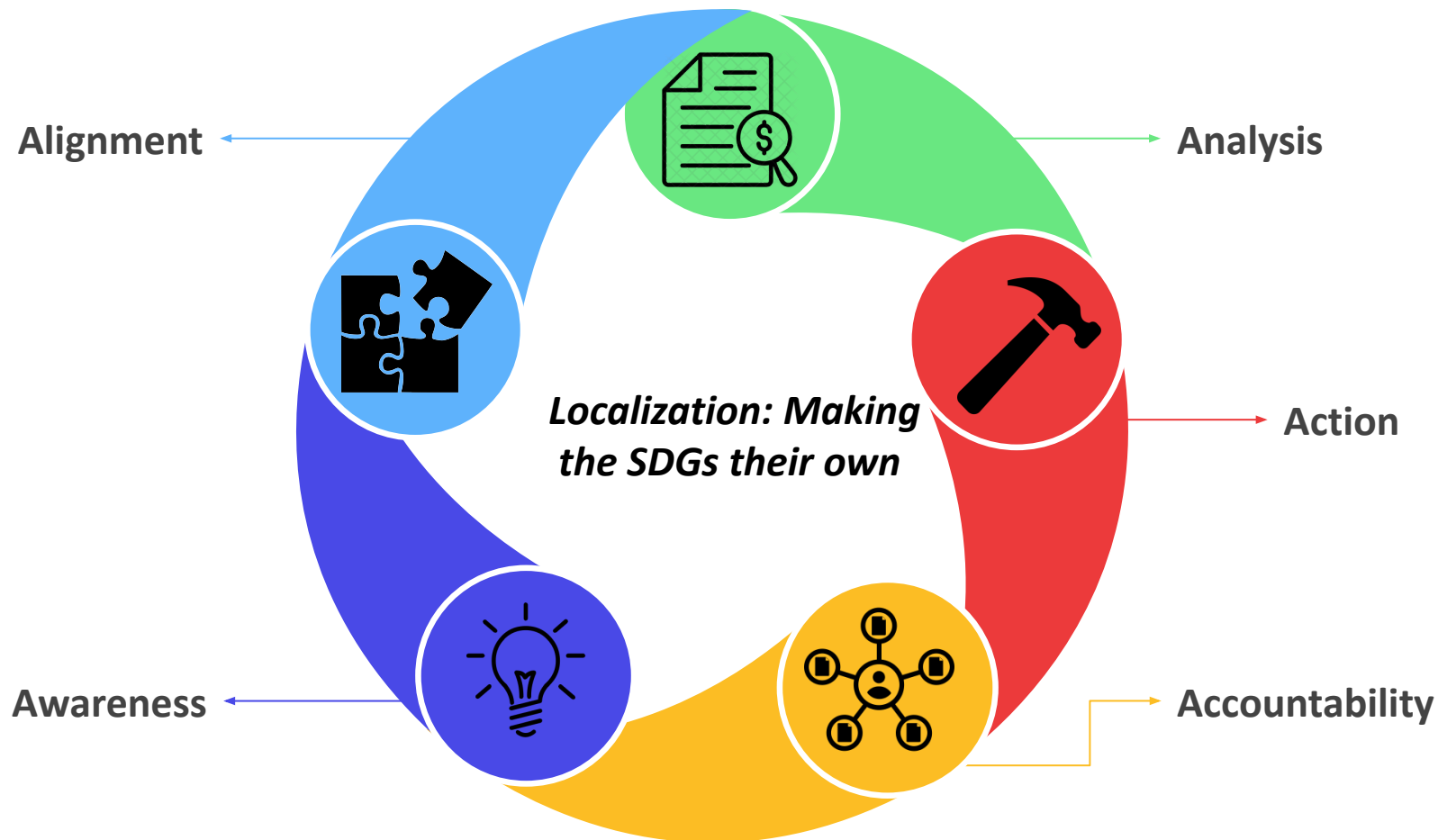
Institutional locus 02

Technical content 03

Data and indicators 04

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

Alignment

Analysis

Action

Accountability

Awareness

Localization: Making the SDGs their own

Source: Pipa, A. F., & Bouchet, M. (2020). Next Generation Urban Planning: Enabling Sustainable Development at the Local Level Through Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

VLRs: The value proposition

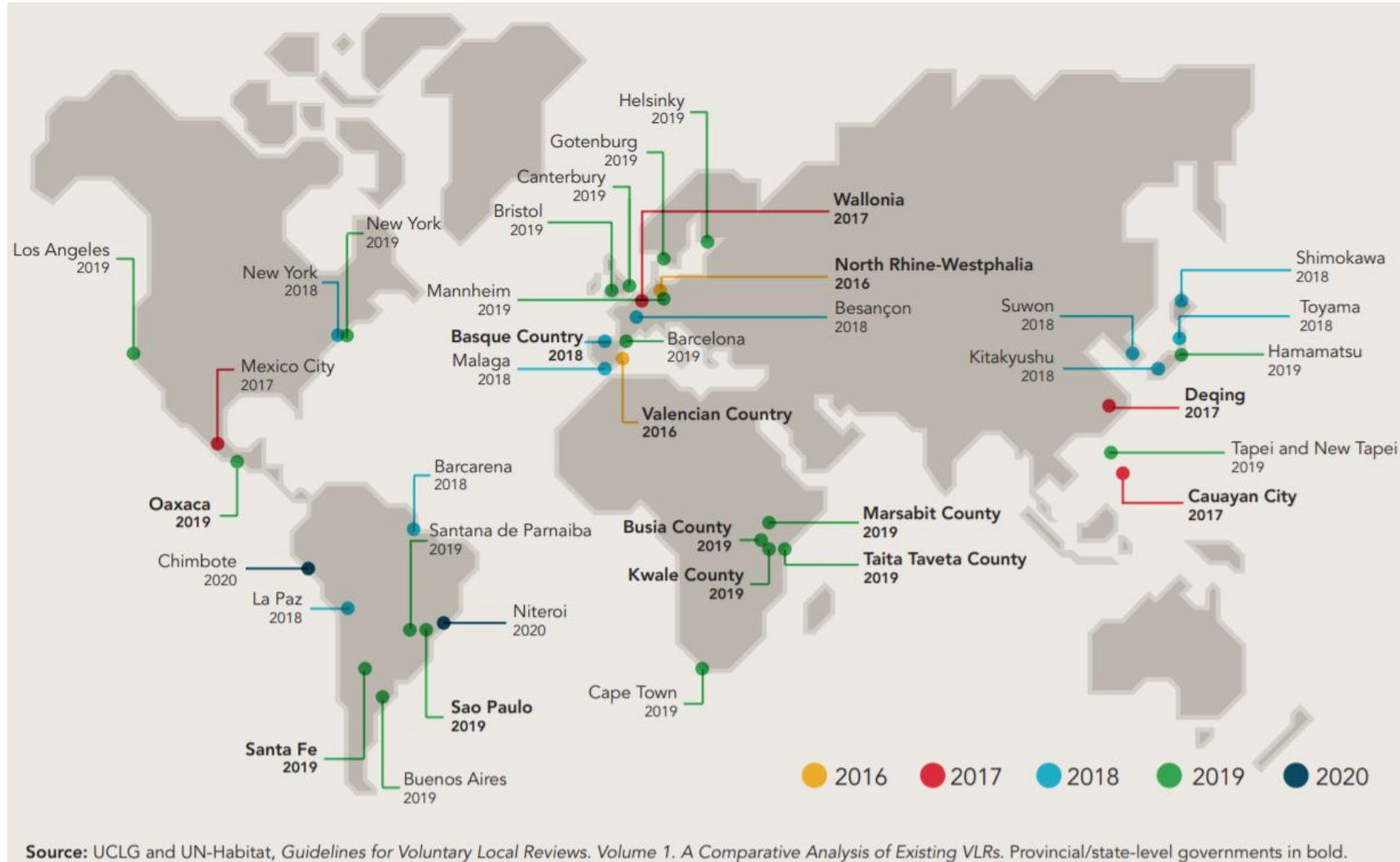| A tool for better policy and organizing	A tool to communicate vision, progress, and accountability
Encourage internal coordination and policy coherence	Articulate a comprehensive vision for sustainable development
Set concrete, time-bound targets for progress	Enable local accountability
Apply data to solutions	Articulate global challenges for a local audience
Engage stakeholders	Increase international visibility
Catalyze new models of governance	Enable peer networks and exchange
Institutionalize and sustain long-term development efforts	Increase influence in global policy
	Align with other levels of government

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR)

Map of currently available VLRs

Source: UCLG and UN-Habitat, *Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews. Volume 1. A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs.* Provincial/state-level governments in bold.

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) Cont.)

Who is involved in VLR?

| City hall departments and specialized offices | Citizens' associations, civil society initiatives, fora of local stakeholders | Academia |

Institutional actors, process and 'enabling' environment of currently available VLRs			
Local Government	**Blueprint**	**Institution in charge**	**Refers to VNR/national SD strategy**
Busia, Kenya	Spontaneous report	Officials and resources from County offices	The VLR is prepared within an institutional 'agreement' or consensus that includes the national institutions that collect most of the relevant data
Bristol, England	UNDESA Guidelines	Prepared by university institutions, backed by City Hall plus support of a ad hoc alliance of stakeholders (Bristol SDG Alliance)	No real mention of the overarching strategy. VLR comes later than VNR. Delegation to the UN. Spearheading a municipal movement approaching reporting. Strong self-awareness and direct link to opportunities and shortcomings of the UN system
Cauayan City, Philippines	Spontaneous report	City Hall	No mention of the Philippines' strategy or the VNR/ monitoring process as such

Source: Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews 2020

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

Where is the VLR process located within the larger institutional and policy scheme?

- **Vertically, most VLRs do not link directly with national strategies, but some do and are a substantial part of the national monitoring process**

The city of Helsinki, for example, developed its VLR as a purely local and municipal effort. They build on the trailblazing example of New York's review and engage several city-hall offices in the process of producing the document.

- **de-siloing' local administration and policy-making**

Barcelona's strategic planning to take on "the challenge of sustaining in the long-term decent living for all the citizens" acknowledges explicitly the need for an "organic arrangement" of city hall institutions when approaching the SDGs.

- **Improve local governments' global relations**

Source: Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews 2020

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

What is the content of the VLR?

There is no official template and no VLR design, idea or concept should be discarded. **Participation with any means is essential**

Diversity is key: the community of local and regional governments is approaching VLRs with the resources they have available, and this translates into long and short reviews, more or fewer SDGs analyzed, a focus on policy or a focus on strategy

Many kinds of leadership: academic institutions can help systematize or standardize information; proactive city hall departments can coordinate with other offices and local stakeholders; global LRG networks can offer guidance and coordinate among various partners

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

How is the VLR made?

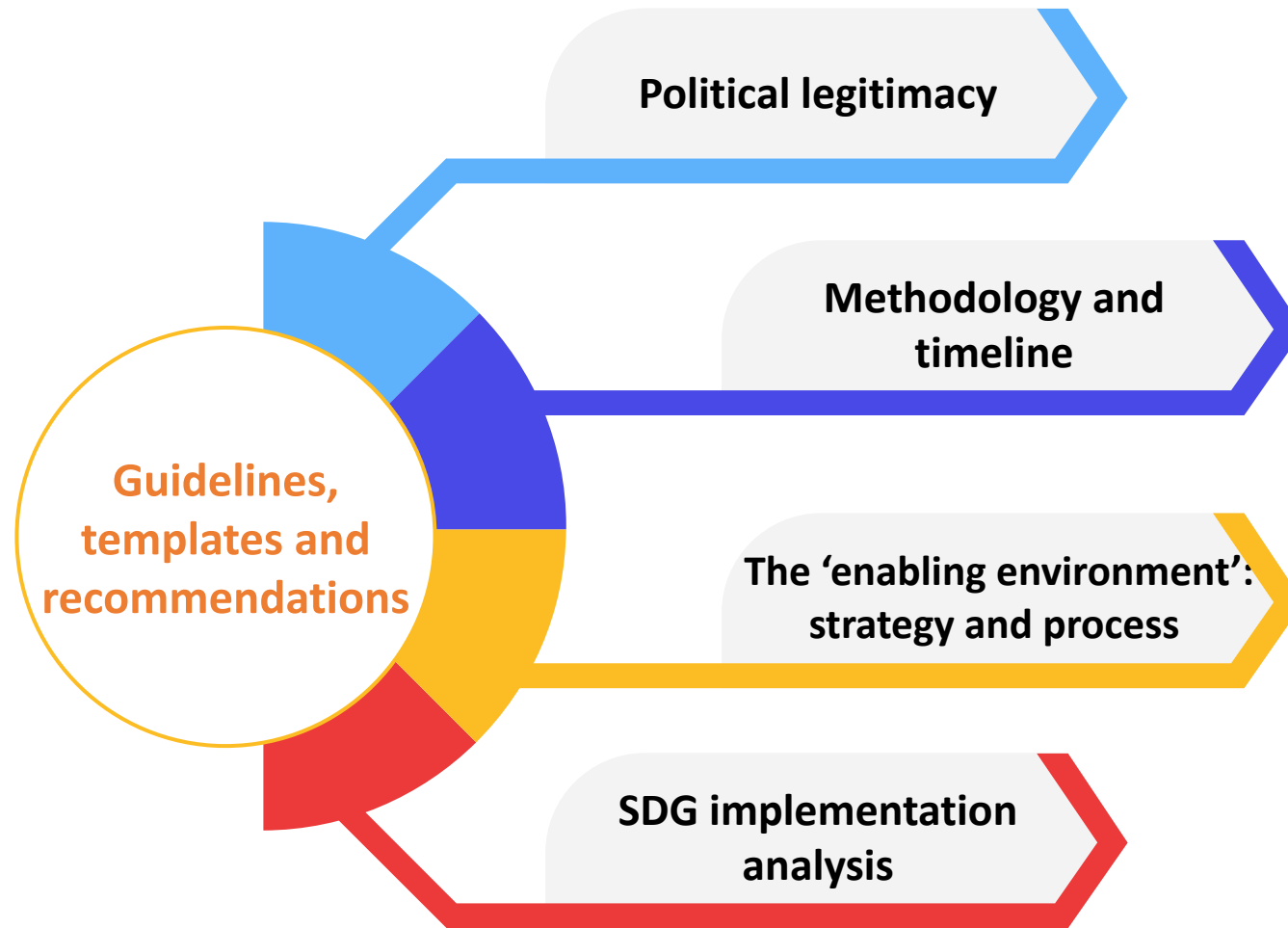| Disaggregation problems, data unavailability and the technical and financial cost	several, diverse ways to approach data and indicators locally	International community to bridge the gaps

Currently available VLRs and their use of indicators, data and civil society involvement in information management

LG	Use of indicators	Local data	Civil Society
Suwon, Rep. of Korea	While limited to SDG 11, each target revision is based on the official indicators	Data is adapted to locally-sourced information and figures, and accompanied by policy outcomes and achievements	ICLEI is a co-author, and a city-wide research council has been involved. There is no methodological note, and it is not possible to retrace the components, authors and contributors of the report. Civil society is not mentioned throughout the report as part of the implementation process except for 11.3.2
Deqing China	Extremely effective work on data collection in accordance with the UN baseline indicators for each SDG. Mix of geospatially-derived and statistical	On the one hand, several local institutions have participated in the data collection process. On the other hand, several indicators were addressed via geospatial technology which, in a sense, being a reading of the territory's reality, is the 'most' local data	Academia is a substantial contributor to this study, although it is hardly the driver or catalyst

Source: Guidelines for Voluntary Local Reviews 2020

V. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLR) (Cont.)

Guidelines, templates and recommendations

- Political legitimacy
- Methodology and timeline
- The 'enabling environment': strategy and process
- SDG implementation analysis

VI. SDG Tracker

Engagement with the SDGs requires us to tell stories; we need interactive and engaging data.

https://sdg-tracker.org/

- SDG-Tracker is the first project to **track the latest data across all of the 17 SDGs** in a user-friendly way.
- It provides an **interactive hub where users can explore and track progress** across all of the SDG indicators for which there is data available.
- It is **essential that people understand how the world stands today** and the progress we must make to achieve the SDGs.

DESA | **Training Toolkit on Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation**

VI. SDG Tracker

www.sdg.gov.bd

Under-5 mortality rate

(Per 1000 live births)

Objectives

- Create a **data repository for monitoring** the implementation of the SDGs and other national development goals

- Facilitate the **tracking of progress** against each goal and target;

- **Improve situation analysis** and performance monitoring;

- **Enable predictive analysis** for achieving the goals within the set time-frame.

Main features

- Data from any **geographical location**
- Can be **customized** for any language
- Target **setting** and progress **tracking**
- Data to **policy making**
- Multiple **visualization and reporting** schemes
- **Correlation** among multiple SDG indicators
- **Dashboard** for the Ministries/Directorates

VII. SDG Dashboard

VII. SDG Dashboard

SDG Index & Monitoring

VII. SDG Dashboard

SDG India

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/

Other Useful Sources

- UN Statistics Division https://unstats.un.org/capacity-development/meetings/National_Platforms_for_SDGs
- SDG Report Platform www.sdgreports.org
- Data Dashboard for 80 SDG Indicators https://w3.unece.org/SDG/
- UN Women Data Hub https://data.unwomen.org/
- Africa SDG Index and Dashboards https://africasdgindex.org/
- Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway – ESCAP https://data.unescap.org/

Your Roadmap to Reporting
Activity 3

Involving Stakeholders

- To facilitate the discussion, participants would be provided with a handout to aid the discussion.
- Encourage them to create their own mind maps based on the following question:
- Which stakeholders should be involved in the process in your territory: private sector, academia, CSOs, foundations, international organizations (think of some specific stakeholders)?

Include on your mind map:
1. A list of all the stakeholders (including specific institutions and providing names).
2. Choose five main stakeholders
3. The Pros & Cons of each of the five stakeholders
4. Ideas about how to engage them (specific actions)
5. Share key lessons/good practices for engaging the stakeholders in your countries

Example of the mind map

List of Stakeholders	Pros	Cons	How to engage them

VIII. Key Takeaways

01 There is **no one-size-fits-all approach to SDG reporting.**

02 Tools and best practices related to SDG reporting are not limited to national governments.

03 SDG national reporting platforms (NRPs) are valuable only when they serve the needs of end users.

04 Strengthen LRG voices in voluntary national reporting to achieve a qualitative leap in SDG implementation

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- UN DESA (2020). Handbook - Sustainable Development Goals. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/25245Handbook_2020_EN.pdf

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- UCLG (2019). Towards the localization of SDGs. https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/towards_the_localization_of_the_sdgs_0.pdf

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- UNHABITAT (2020). Guidance for Voluntary Local Reviews Vol.1: A Comparative Analysis of Existing VLRs. https://unhabitat.org/guidance-for-voluntary-local-reviews-vol1-a-comparative-analysis-of-existing-vlrs

- https://sdg-tracker.org/

- www.sdg.gov.bd

- https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/

Thank you

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