

About the Nordic VSR – voluntary sub-national review 2024

Together with the Associations of Local and Regional Governments (LRGAs) in the Nordics, Nordregio is producing a **first ever Nordic Voluntary Sub-National Review** to present progress, learnings, and remaining challenges in the efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level. The report builds on a fresh survey to all Nordic municipalities and regions and will be presented to a global audience at HLPF 2024.

Why: With the Nordic VSR we will tout the horn for the vital role of sub-national governments to make progress towards a more sustainable world. The 17 SDGs concern all aspects of their work, and they engage directly with citizens, businesses, and civil society. We know *at least 105 of the 169 targets of the SDGs will not be reached without local and regional action*. We also know that the Nordic countries have a long tradition of strong local governance. Hence, great potential to be global leaders in SDG localization.

Secondly, the Nordic VSR aims to inspire more local action worldwide by sharing and showcasing some of the things our local and regional authorities have learned on the way towards more inclusive and sustainable communities. We will make their best efforts and methods available online in a “Nordic Toolbox”. But also acknowledge shortcomings in resources and competencies, political leadership, cross-sector collaboration, stakeholder engagement and public procurement – and discuss how to improve.

Challenges certainly remain, when it comes to certain SDGs, how to integrate the entire Agenda 2030 into existing municipal budgets and strategies – and monitor progress. This is also why global and Nordic peer-to-peer learning adds value. To facilitate that is a third aim of the VSR.

What: The Nordic VSR report is a bottom-up initiative by the five Nordic LRGAs (several of which already submitted national VSRs, see links below), facilitated by Nordregio. The report builds on a **survey** sent to all Nordic municipalities and regions in 2023, asking them about their work to localize Agenda 2030. How they integrate the SDGs in steering documents and translate them to the local context, their priorities and progress, obstacles, and resources. Survey results will be harmonized and visualized in the report with support from *Nordregio’s GIS team*.

The report also elaborates on strengths and weaknesses in the enabling environment, the roles of the Local and regional government associations, and local-national collaboration. As an important addition, we will release an online map with a selection of local cases using inspiring practices: [The Nordic Toolbox](#)

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For whom: Target groups are municipalities and regions plus national governments across the globe that want to learn from pro-active Nordic regions and municipalities: Their experiences and learnings, tested methods, and how to overcome remaining challenges. Secondary target group are Nordic local and regional authorities who could also get inspired by the examples put forward in the Nordic Toolbox.

Youth engagement: *Nordic Youth for Sustainability Network* (coordinated by LNU, Norway) will be part of the VSR process and write a chapter with recommendations for local policymakers on how to engage youth in issues that concern them – as part of Agenda 2030. (See Iceland VNR 2023 youth chapter + Nordregio's policy brief: Youth as partners in the green transition.)

Additional stakeholder engagement: Nordic municipalities and other relevant local-level actors will be invited to a webinar in April 2023 to discuss a draft version of the VSR, especially recommendations and conclusions for decisionmakers.

When: The Nordic VSR will be launched at the annual High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) for SDGs in New York in July 2024. Plans for one or more side events will be developed and submitted to the organizers in collaboration with:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sweden, responsible for Sweden's delegation to HLPF and chairing the Nordic Council of Ministers 2024.
- UCLG, responsible for the Localization Days' and potential VSR Action platform.

Nordic national youth delegates to HLPF and other relevant Nordic stakeholders will be invited to contribute to the events.

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BUDGET

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The Nordic Expert Group is also the **project steering group**, chaired by Sweden 2024:

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Further reading

Iceland VNR 2023:

<https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2023/VNR%202023%20Iceland%20Report.pdf>

Sweden VSR 2022: <https://skr.se/download/18.2f6c078f1840e44be6f3da86/1667212674584/7585-965-1.pdf>

Norway VSR 2021: <https://www.ks.no/contentassets/do1c61089c294915bc1c4be4d73ae1ff/Rapport-Voluntary-Subnational-Review-Final.pdf>

Nordic Agenda 2030 knowledge hub: <https://nordregioprojects.org/agenda2030local/#>

Nordregio policy brief : Youth as partners in the green transition: <https://pub.nordregio.org/pb-2024-4-youth-as-partners-in-the-green-transition/>

"Our Vision 2030" was signed by all Nordic Prime Ministers in 2019. It aims to make the Nordic region *the most integrated and sustainable in the world by 2030*, in line with Agenda 2030.