

Development of SDG Voluntary Local Reviews in the UNECE region
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Overview of updates to “Guidelines for the
Development of SDG Voluntary Local Reviews in the
ECE region”

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HANDBOOK

FOR THE PREPARATION OF
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



<https://sdgs.un.org/>

Albania	Shkodra (2020, 2021)
Belgium	Ghent (2020, 2021, 2022, 2023); Wallonia (2017, 2019, 2020)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bijeljina (2023)
Canada	Thunder Bay (2022); Kelowna (2021); Winnipeg (2018, 2020, 2021)
Denmark	Gladsaxe (2021, 2022, 2023)
Finland	Helsinki (2019, 2020, 2021, 2023); Vantaa (2021, 2023); Tampere (2022); Turku (2020, 2022); Espoo (2020); Joensuu (2023)
France	Besançon (2018, 2019, 2020); Niort (2018, 2019, 2020); Normandie (2020); Occitanie (2020); Pays de la Loire (2020); Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (2021)
Germany	Kiel (2022); Dortmund (2022); Bonn (2020, 2022); Düsseldorf (2022); Stuttgart (2019; 2020, 2021, 2023); Hannover (2020); Frankfurt am Main (2020); Mannheim (2019), North Rhine-Westphalia (2016); Bad Köstritz (2023)
Greece	Skiathos (2020); Agios Dimitrios (2023)
Italy	Lombardy (2022); Rome (2022); Genova (2022); Reggio Calabria (2022); Lazio (2022); Bari (2022); Emilia-Romagna Region & Bologna (2022); Sardinia (2022); Liguria (2022); Abruzzo-, Marche-, Umbria Region (2022); Messina (2022); Florence (2021); Puglia Bari (2022)
Kazakhstan	Almaty (2024)
Netherlands	Utrecht (2023); Amsterdam (2022)
Norway	Bergen (2020, 2021, 2023); Oslo (2023); Asker (2021); Viken (2020, 2021); Romsdal (2021); Trondheim (2021)
Portugal	Mafra (2023); Matosinhos (2023); Cascais (2020, 2022); Braga (2019)
Spain	Madrid (2021, 2023); Basque Country (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023); Vitoria-Gasteiz (2022); Barcelona (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022); Córdoba (2020); Jaén (2019, 2020); Alhaurin De La Torre (2019); Malaga (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022); Valencia (2016, 2018); Castilla-La Mancha (2019); Catalonia (2018)
Sweden	Stockholm (2021); Uppsala (2021); Helsingborg (2021); Malmö (2021); Gothenburg (2019)
Türkiye	Fatih (2023); Marmara (2022); Avcilar (2022); Karatay (2021); Izmir (2021); Sultanbeyli (2021); Istanbul (2022)
Ukraine	Lviv (2023)
UK	Bristol (2019, 2022); London (2021); Scotland (2020, 2021); Liverpool (2020); Wales (2019); Canterbury (2019)
USA	Hawaii (2020, 2023); Los Angeles (2019, 2021); Orlando (2021); Pittsburgh (2020); New York (2018, 2019)

AVCILAR
2022

Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals
VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW

Mayor of Avcilar **Turan Haçerli** | Avcilar Municipality

AGENDA 2030

PITTSBURGH AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW OF PROGRESS

2020 EDITION

A BLUEPRINT FOR COLLABORATION, COMMUNICATION AND ACTION TO IMPROVE SERVICES TO RESIDENTS

Shtator, 2021

VLERËSIMI VULLNETAR LOKAL PËR BASHKINË SHKODËR

Shtator, 2021

MAFRA MORE SUSTAINABLE
Voluntary Local Review

AGENDA 2030

Voluntary Local Review of the Municipality of Bad Köstritz 2023

Implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level

VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW PER L'AGENDA METROPOLITANA 2030

CITTÀ METROPOLITANA DI FIRENZE | 2021

Status for Bergen Kommunes arbeid med bærekraftsmålene

Voluntary Local Review

Voluntary Local Review

Vitoria-Gasteiz 2030 2022

AGENDA 2030

AGENDA 2030

V20 G30

Apuruntarrento de Vitoria-Gasteiz Vitoria-Gasteizko Udala

GLAD SAXE

VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW FROM GLAD SAXE 2023

Voluntary Local Review 2020

ΔΗΜΟΣ ΣΚΙΑΘΟΥ
MUNICIPALITY OF SKIATHOS

Global depository: <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/voluntary-local-reviews>

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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



- UNECE Guidelines tailored to the ECE region
- At its 84th session, CUDHLM requested the UNECE Secretariat to update the Guidelines (Document ECE/HBP/219)
- More impactful and practical
- The Guidelines will be central in defining the VLR methodology to support cities
- Update in progress
- To be published in 2024

Why do cities want to develop VLRs?

- **Localizing SDGs** and monitoring SDGs progress locally
- Understanding what needs to be done to **improve cities' position** for SDGs
- Raising the **profile of the location** nationally and internationally
- Building a **more holistic approach** and policy coherence
- **Visualising trade-offs** and tensions between different policies → leading to political decisions
- Creating an **advocacy tool** to achieve local strategies

Key takeaways

- Flexible tool that is tailored to local contexts and needs
- Not all data/indicators are available locally
- Targets and indicators can be adapted to local conditions

- Approach the work flexibly and creatively (not dogmatically)
- Keep it simple and avoid excessive technicality
- Use it as an opportunity to build capacity
- Some cities develop more in-depth “focus” areas in VLR updates

- Two main formats of VLRs: “follow SDGs” or “follow local priorities”

CONTENTS

List of figures	04
Foreword	05
Executive summary	07
Introduction	08
SDG 1: No poverty	11
SDG 2: Zero hunger	13
SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing	15
SDG 4: Quality education	18
SDG 5: Gender equality	20
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	22
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	23
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	25
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	27
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	29
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	31
SDG 12: Responsible production and consumption	33
SDG 13: Climate action	35
SDG 14: Life below water	37
SDG 15: Life on land	39
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	41
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals	43
Challenges and opportunities for local action	45
Chapter sources	49
Appendix 1: Methodology	53
Appendix 2: Data annex	54

SDG10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES

WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

Weekly wages for both women and men in Bristol have increased and the city's gender pay gap narrowed by 54% between 2016 and 2021. However, the gap in earnings between the highest- and lowest-paid 10% of workers has continued to widen for both men and women.

During the pandemic in 2020, weekly wages for the lowest-paid 10% of men and women declined compared to the previous year. At the same time, wages for the top 10% of earners continued to rise. While data for the top male earners is available, data for top earners of women is not statistically reliable. The city gender pay gap and council race pay gap decreased, however, the council gender pay gap grew.

Total numbers of hate crimes reported grew from 1830 to 2353 cases between 2016 and 2021. Last year, 2021, was the first year that rates of hate crime declined since 2015, falling back down to 2015 levels. While the city's economy grew according to most metrics (SDG 8), the number of people facing poverty rose (SDG 1) and the gap between the richest and the poorest widened (SDG 10). This shows that while Bristol has achieved economic success, that success has not benefitted everyone in the city and parts of Bristol are being left behind.

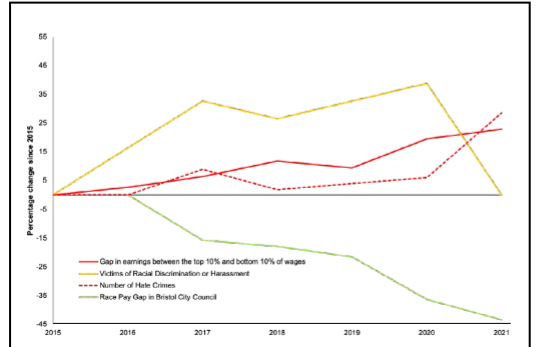


Figure 11 – Trends in income inequality and racial discrimination

WHAT BRISTOL IS DOING

While recent data is generally discouraging, numerous private, public and non-profit organisations are making serious efforts to reduce inequalities. The following is only a small snapshot of the wide range of activity occurring within Bristol.

As part of ongoing work with the Trotter Institute at Harvard University to create new pathways to employment for marginalised communities, Bristol City Council's City Office has been working to map the various city activities aiming to reduce inequalities. Gaining visibility of the totality of this work will enable improved partnership working and further develop the strategic ecosystem of inclusion support in the city.

The Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services is a partnership of six organisations, including Off the Record Bristol and Brandon Trust, which offers legal, psychological and physical support for victims of hate crimes and discrimination, as well as providing a reporting service. Project Zazi and Babbasa help young people from disadvantaged areas of Bristol achieve their full potential, providing training, professional mentoring, therapy and counselling. Babbasa is leading on the Our City 2030 initiative, a project working with partners across the city to provide median salary jobs for every household in the city centre.

In September 2020, following the toppling of the statue of Edward Colston, Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, set up the We Are Bristol History Commission. The commission comprises a wide range of professional historians and academics from different specialist areas, including philosophy, trade unions, arts and culture, and law. The purpose of the commission is to help Bristol better understand how it became the city it is today, work with citizens and community groups to ensure everyone in the city can share their views on Bristol's history, and build an improved, shared understanding of Bristol's story for future generations. The first report of the commission focused on the future of the Colston statue following a public consultation.



Foreword	5
Development of selected indicators.	11

SDG 1 – No Poverty

Indicator 1.1: Recipients of minimum social security benefits	14
Indicator 1.2: Poverty among children, adolescents and young adults, the elderly and single parents	15
Indicator 1.3: Net social expense ratio	18
Correlation with other SDGs	18

SDG 2 – Zero Hunger

Indicator 2.1: Children with overweight	22
Indicator 2.2: Organic farming	23
Indicator 2.3: Nitrogen surplus	24
Correlation with other SDGs	24

SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being

Indicator 3.1: Children with conspicuous screening of gross motor skills	28
Indicator 3.2: Level of organisation in sports	29
Indicator 3.3: Urban physical activity spaces	30
Indicator 3.4: Promotion of physical activity in nursery schools	31
Indicator 3.5: Premature mortality	32
Indicator 3.6: Suicide mortality	33
Indicator 3.7: Medical care	34
Indicator 3.8: Primary care close to home – Distance to the nearest general practitioner practice or pharmacy	35
Indicator 3.9: Places in nursing homes	36
Indicator 3.10: Air quality	37
Indicator 3.11: Noise pollution	38
Correlation with other SDGs	39

SDG 4 – Quality Education

Indicator 4.1: Transition from primary school	44
Indicator 4.2: Childcare	45
Indicator 4.3: Children with speech impediments	47
Indicator 4.4: School leavers by school-leaving qualifications	48
Indicator 4.5: All-day primary schools	50
Indicator 4.6: Educational programmes with ecological sustainability relevance	51
Indicator 4.7: Loans from the Library of Stuttgart	53
Indicator 4.8: Culture budget	54
Correlation with other SDGs	55

Germany’s SDG
Indicators for
municipalities
<https://sdg-portal.de/en/>

Source: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/vlrs/2024-04/stuttgart-a_livable_city_1.pdf

Contents

- Helsinki in a nutshell
- Sustainable Helsinki
- Third Voluntary Local Review
- Summary
- Strategic sustainability management
- Environment
- Climate
- Nature and biodiversity
- Water ecosystems
- People
- Health and welfare
- Learning
- Non-discrimination and gender equality
- Reducing inequalities and segregation
- Safety and risk management
- Participation
- Culture
- Art and culture
- Design
- Cultural heritage
- Economy
- Livelihood and employment
- Industry and innovation
- Housing and communities
- Sustainable urban structure
- Responsible procurement and circular economy
- Sustainable tourism, events and city marketing
- Appendices
- SDG indicators
- Review implementation

Climate



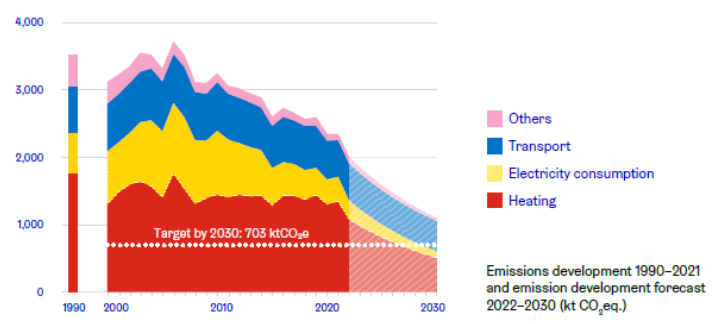
The City of Helsinki's carbon neutrality target was brought forward to 2030 in the City Strategy, and the Carbon Neutral Helsinki Action Plan was updated to reflect this. Due to the very limited timeframe, effectiveness has been put at the heart of the programme and efforts have been made to set effective measures that directly and rapidly reduce emissions. In Helsinki, the most significant sources of direct emissions are heating, transport and electricity. The action plan focuses in particular on emissions reductions in these sectors. Furthermore, indirect Scope 3 emissions are being taken into consideration in a more target-oriented manner. As for these indirect emissions, the focus is on construction emissions, based on impact and the City's strategy policies, as these are emissions that the City can also influence through its own actions.

From 1990 to 2021, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in Helsinki decreased by 33%. The main reasons for the reduction in emissions in the long term are the replacement of coal with natural gas in energy production, improved energy efficiency of the building stock and increased renewable energy. Helen Ltd will completely phase out the use of coal as part of its carbon neutrality target for 2030.

The use of coal will cease at the Hanasaari and Salmisaari power plants between 2023 and 2025, which will significantly reduce emissions from heating. In the future, heat will be produced by using heat pumps, waste heat, electric boilers and sustainable bioenergy. Energy storage also plays an important role. Electricity will mainly be produced by nuclear, wind and solar power. In transport, the target is to reduce emissions by 69% from the 2005 level by 2030. Transport emissions have decreased slowly, and it is predicted that the target will not be reached. For this reason, new measures for transport that would be required to meet the target have been identified and will be further prepared during 2023.

Helsinki has also begun to define the boundary conditions of a limited and changing world for the planning of a carbon-negative city. Achieving the carbon negativity target requires that the number of carbon sinks can be increased and emissions can be pushed down. In order to achieve this, changes are also required in the current way of planning the city because the carbon-negative city of the future is already being planned and some of the chains of influence will take time.

Emissions development by sector (kt CO₂ eq.)



Source: HSY

HSY is the primary operator that carries out consumption-related influencing and communication directed at residents, based on the City's strategic steering. Climate work is also visible in the subsidiaries. In accordance with the ownership strategies, most of the City's subsidiaries have prepared or are in the process of preparing carbon neutrality plans, through which they can contribute to the City's carbon neutrality objectives.

Towards a Helsinki prepared for extreme weather phenomena

Climate change requires adaptation to its effects. Helsinki strives to prepare for extreme weather phenomena and their indirect effects, which requires preparation for increased periods of heat and drought as well as heavy rainfall and even rising water levels in the coming decades. This means that preparedness must be taken into account in urban planning and new construction and renovation projects. To adapt to climate change, the City is adding more trees and greenery, meadows that can withstand scorching conditions and green structures that control stormwater, such as parks and green roofs. A well-functioning green structure enables stormwater management, the minimisation of flood risks and the reduction of the urban heat island effect. The ability of the most vulnerable population groups to adapt to climate change is ensured through the necessary measures, for example in hospitals, institutions and older people's housing services.

In recent years, adaptation measures have focused on the development and implementation of natural stormwater management methods, the strengthening of the green structure, the promotion of the use of the green factor in town planning and the development of the tool, the improvement of summer cooling in City-owned properties such as schools and nursing homes, as well as the improvement of climate-resilient renovation and climate change risk management. The adaptation work has been rather fragmented, which is why an overall plan will be drawn up for it. The first step is to draw up a plan for heavy rainfall, followed by a hot weather plan and the mitigation of the negative effects of crisis and risk situations. The adaptation work is particularly challenged by the speed of climate change, but also by the City's growth targets, which requires coordination of objectives and measures.

Successes:

- The carbon neutrality target was brought forward from 2035 to 2030.
- The effectiveness of climate work has been significantly increased.
- The Energy Renaissance Team has promoted the energy efficiency of housing companies.
- Hanasaari coal power plant was closed in 2023.

Areas for development:

- More solutions to replace fossil fuels are needed in energy production.
- New measures to reduce emissions must be introduced in transport.
- Climate change adaptation and city growth require reconciliation.

Programmes:

- [Carbon Neutral Helsinki Action Plan PDF >](#)
- [Supporting Strategy with Action Plans: Guide for the Preparation of an Emissions Reduction Action Plan PDF >](#)
- [Helsinki's Climate Change Adaptation Policies PDF >](#)
- [City of Helsinki Storm Water Management Program PDF >](#)

Table of Content

—	Preface	5
①	Introduction	6
1.1	The 2030 Agenda and the International Voluntary Local Review Movement	8
1.2	Bonn—International Dialogue Hub for Sustainability	10
1.3	Context, Methodology and Structure of this Report	12
②	Steering: Municipal Sustainability Management	16
2.1	Introduction	18
2.2	Strategic and Organizational Approach for Sustainability	19
2.3	Sustainable Administration, Contracting and Procurement	21
2.4	Public Participation for Sustainability	22
2.5	Sustainable Finances	24
2.6	Innovation for Sustainability	26
③	Fields of Action for Municipal Sustainability	30
3.1	Climate Protection & Energy	32
3.2	Natural Resource Protection & Climate Adaptation	40
3.3	Sustainable Mobility	52
3.4	Lifelong Learning & Culture	60
3.5	Social Justice & Resilient Society	72
3.6	Housing & Sustainable Neighborhoods	86
3.7	Decent Work & Sustainable Economy	94
3.8	Sustainable Consumption & Public Health	104
3.9	Global Responsibility & One World	114
④	Overview: Allocation of the Contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and their Targets	122
⑤	Conclusion and Outlook	130
⑥	Appendix	134
6.1	Reference List	136
6.2	Photo Credits	137

SDG 10
SDG 11
SDG 12
SDG 13



General Introduction to the Field of Action

Neighborhoods, as places of living and social interaction, form people's everyday living and action space and are therefore of particular importance for sustainable development. Sustainable neighborhoods are characterized by the fact that they offer a high quality of life, promote participation in social coexistence, and consider environmental protection and resource conservation. Against the backdrop of population growth and rising rents, the provision of adequate housing in particular poses a significant challenge. Increasing segregation in German cities, for example, is manifesting itself in the spatial segregation of individual population groups across urban areas. In terms of sustainable development that promotes participation and integration, creating a heterogeneous population composition is an essential task of neighborhood development. Furthermore, the establishment of sufficient infrastructural facilities plays a vital role. In addition to access to local suppliers and green spaces, this also includes social and cultural infrastructures, which positively affect participation in neighborhood life and thus increase the individual quality of life.

3.6



Housing & Sustainable Neighborhoods

Qualitative Aspects

- Affordable housing
- Sustainable neighborhood development
- Participation in neighborhood development
- Noise protection
- Places for recreation and social contacts
- Avoidance of social segregation

Practical Example

- Neighborhood management

SDG indicators

- Rental prices
- Living space
- Local recreation area
- Basic services close to homesupermarkets

Add-on indicators (City of Bonn)

- Subsidized housing

11 Affordable housing

Bonn is a growing and prospering city with a population that has been rising continuously for years. Accordingly, the provision of sufficient affordable housing represents a significant challenge. The high number of households registered for placement in a publicly subsidized apartment and the comparatively low number of available apartments illustrate the insufficient supply of affordable housing in Bonn. Against this backdrop, the Citywide Housing Concept pursues the goal of a continuous provision of housing land to accommodate 1,000 housing units. In addition, for the period 2018 up to 2022, there is a target agreement to have at least 200 publicly subsidized flats built in Bonn every year. The Bonn building land model aims to ensure that more affordable housing is created citywide and that developers share in the follow-up costs of social infrastructure. At the heart of this is the quota for subsidized housing decided by the Council, which obliges every investor to build at least 40% subsidized housing (projects with eight or more residential units or with at least 850m² gross floor area of housing) or 50% (for projects with 20 or more residential units or at least 2100m² gross floor area of housing) subsidized housing when new planning law is created. In 2019, the city administration also established the Subsidized Housing in Bonn project group, which prepared a report on the prospects for publicly subsidized housing.

Further resolutions have been passed in recent years on the new regulation of hereditary building rights (municipal land is to be granted only within the framework of hereditary building rights, and at the same time the ground rent for municipal land is to be reduced to 1%) and on lower purchase prices for municipal land for publicly subsidized housing construction. To create more affordable housing for people with a housing entitlement certificate, NRW.BANK launched a development program in 2021 under which owners of rental apartments commit to a right of occupancy and receive a subsidy in return. Bonn is one of four cities participating in this model program.

11 Sustainable neighborhood development

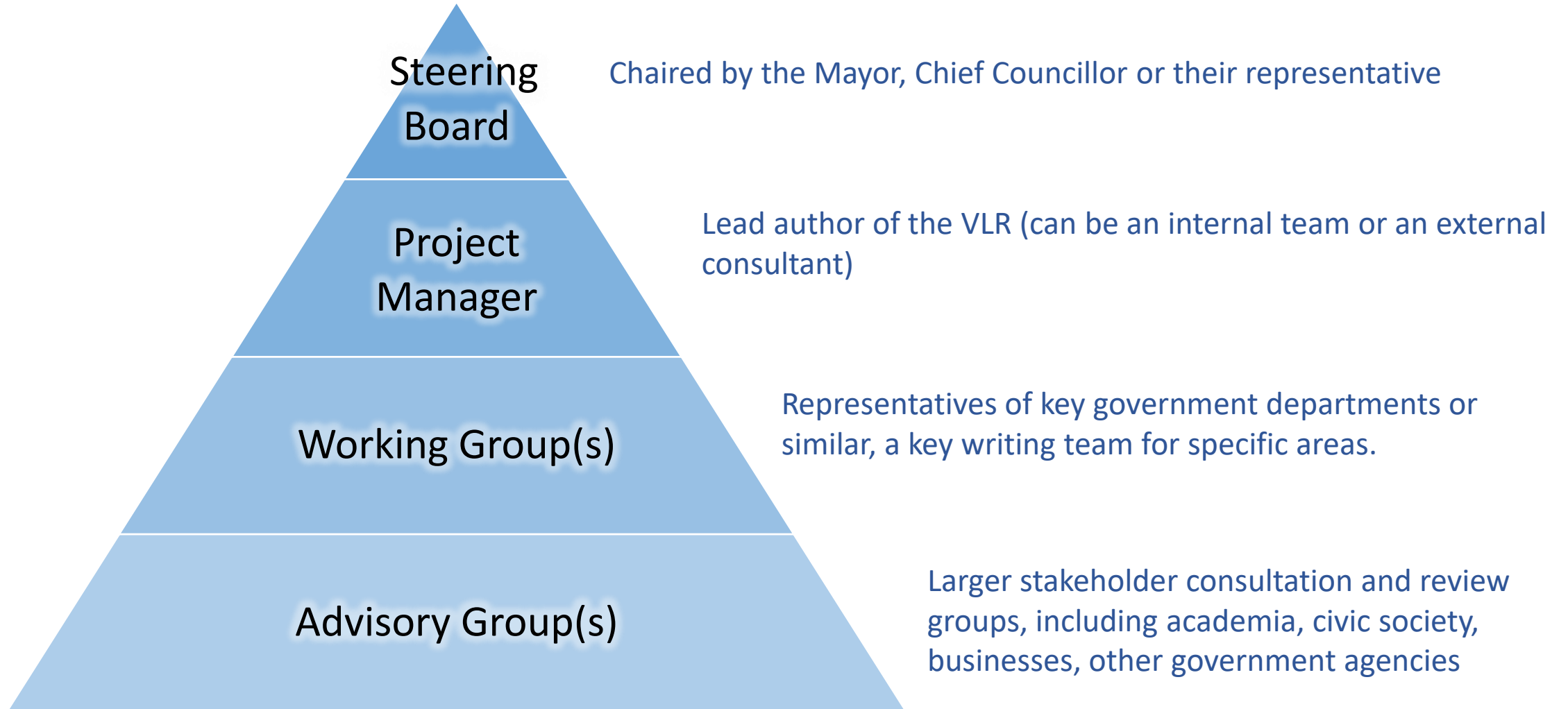
Bonn's Sustainability Strategy stipulates reducing the proportion of settlement and transport land. In the existing stock, efficient use of existing housing taking into account demographic trends and change of use of areas that can be used as housings should be made. To this end, a demographically oriented potential analysis of the housing stock is to be carried out in ten neighborhoods in the city of Bonn. In the selected neighborhoods, the relationships between their respective demographic conditions and their housing stock will be determined in terms of building age, house and apartment types, amenities and open space. A transferable methodology is currently being developed for this purpose.

Systematic neighborhood management has been established in Bonn for several years (see practical example.) Concerning energy-related renovations, reference can be made to the Integrated Urban Development Concept (ISEK) Beuel-Ost (2020), which was developed in cooperation with the Bonn Energy Agency and includes measures to improve energy efficiency throughout the neighborhood. The Rhein-Dampfer daycare center, which opened in 2019, is an example of the consideration of sustainability criteria in new construction. The center was built according to the "Bonn Model" in compliance with the "KfW Efficiency House 55" standard and a building block module.

14 Participation in neighborhood development

Various neighborhood-related participation processes are undertaken in Bonn, including interviews, surveys, neighborhood inspections, and neighborhood conferences. In addition, there are contact points in the neighborhoods for contacting the city administration. There are various approaches for involving citizens and recording their concerns and ideas, including a discussion forum, neighborhood and property owners' forums, a youth forum, a newsletter, and district conferences at which a balance sheet is produced and an outlook on future projects and measures is presented. In addition,

Project Management



Workflow

Initial analysis: deciding on the scope and format

Indicators and data

- Quantitative (available statistics, indicators)
- Proxy data (substitute for indicators)
- Qualitative (e.g. narratives, policy descriptions, interviews)

Baseline and trend analysis

Strategic evaluation and action plan

Consultations and publication of the VLR

Dissemination and ongoing monitoring

Continuation platforms

Summary of the SDGs

The SDGs are strongly interlinked, and it is challenging to make completely unambiguous interpretations between the SDGs and the City's themes. The table below summarises Helsinki's key indicators, goals to the different SDGs.

Explanation of icons

- The indicator has developed in a positive direction
- No significant change in the development of the indicator
- The meter has developed in a negative direction
- SDG achieved or close to being achieved
- Challenges in achieving the SDG
- Significant challenges in achieving the SDG

SDG-Goals	Key indicators	Relevant notes and goals for Helsinki	Assessment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people with low income (%) Share of people receiving social assistance (%) Number of homeless people Amount of household debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helsinki aims to end homelessness by 2025. Helsinki is investing in affordable housing and has developed a set of indicators for this purpose. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helsinki has increased cooperation to develop food aid activities and invested in nutrition counselling. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived quality of life: Share of people who feel that their quality of life is good on average (%) Perceived health: Share of people who feel that their health is average or below average (%) Mental wellbeing (entire population and children) Share of people achieving the physical activity recommendations (%) Body mass index: Percentage of overweight children Body mass index: Percentage of overweight adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City of Helsinki Welfare Plan 2022–2025 has six priorities for promoting wellbeing and health: mental wellbeing, hobbies and leisure, physical activity, healthy lifestyles, good community relations and a safe and beautiful city. The majority of the adult population are happy and feel that their quality of life and health are good, but there are nevertheless differences in their experiences of quality of life, health and happiness depending on factors such as perceived income adequacy. The mental wellbeing of children and young people, especially girls, has deteriorated according to various indicators. The excess weight of residents is a concern, and measures have been taken in Helsinki to increase physical activity and nutrition counselling. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share of people with a higher education degree (%) Share of early leavers from upper secondary education (%) Share of children in early childhood education (%) Share of foreign-language speakers among general upper secondary school graduates (%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning outcomes have deteriorated in Finland, and there is particular concern about the learning of boys with foreign backgrounds. The Education Division has a sustainable future learning path. It enables learners of all ages to interact with sustainable development themes in their daycare and school life and upper secondary studies. The labour shortage challenges the Education Division. 	

Recommended VLR structure

- Opening sections
- Introductory sections
- Methodology and approach
- Review of SDG targets and/or policy domains
 - An evaluation of the city's progress towards the SDGs and targets reviewed.
 - A summary of local and national policies of relevance to the SDGs under review.
 - Good practices and case studies.
 - Challenges remaining and action-oriented solutions.
- Conclusions and next steps
- Technical annexes

Presentation	4	SDG 12: Responsible production and consumption	102
1. Introduction	5	SDG 13: Climate action	110
1.1. An agenda that moves forward amidst crisis	5	SDG 14: Life below water	116
1.2. Logic and contents of the 2022 report	6	SDG 15: Life on land	122
2. Status of the SDGs in Barcelona	9	SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	128
SDG 1: End poverty in all of its forms everywhere	10	SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals	136
SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	18	3. Proposals for a prioritisation model for Barcelona's 2030 Agenda targets	145
SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	24	3.1 Justification and scope of the work	146
SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all	36	3.2 Methodology	146
SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	44	3.2.1 Analysis of the distance (with respect to the 2030 target)	147
SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	50	3.2.2 Impact capacity analysis	147
SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	58	3.2.3 Integration of the "distance to the 2030 target" and "impact capacity" criteria: Analysis of results and conclusions	151
SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	64	4. Conclusions and perspectives	155
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	74	4.1 On the results of the monitoring indicators	156
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	80	4.2 On the construction and development of Barcelona's 2030 Agenda	156
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	90	Appendix: Report on promotion and communication actions	159
		4.3 Barcelona 2030 Agenda Awards (1st edition)	162

Source: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/vlrs/2023-04/barcelona_anual_monitoring_report_2030_agenda_vlr_2022_eng.pdf

Thank you!

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