United Nations | Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation

Enhancing the capacity of local and regional governments for delivering the SDGs through a Whole-of Government approach, smart cities, enhanced infrastructure asset management and resilience, monitoring & evaluation and innovative finance and partnerships

World Urban Forum Eleventh Session
30 June 2022

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1. Effective Governance for Sustainable Development

2. Linkages between National and Sub-national Levels

National Level

National plan and policies with implications for local governments

National SDG mechanisms that integrate local governments

Coordination

Coordinated SDG plans and policies

Local SDG plans and policies with potential for integration into national frameworks

Sub-national Level

Source: WPSR 2018

2. Multi-level Governance for SDG Implementation

Top-down approach

agreement

Global/Regional Institutions

instructions

National government

instructions

Subnational government

instructions

Local government

Real-time collaborative

Cooperation & support

Global/Regional Institutions

Cooperation & support

National government

Cooperation & support

Subnational government

Cooperation & support

Local government

Subsidiarity approach

subsidiarity

Global/Regional Institutions

subsidiarity

National government

subsidiarity

Subnational government

subsidiarity

Local government

See 2-page article

Source: Meuleman, L. (2021)

2. Multi-level Governance for SDG Implementation (Cont.)

Hierarchical(top-down) multi-level governance

E.g.: Rule of law, clear division of tasks

Realtime(Collaborative) multi-level governance

E.g.: collaboration, co-production

Subsidiary & empowered (bottom-up) multi-level governance

E.g.: Empowerment, incentives

Source: Meuleman, L. (2021)

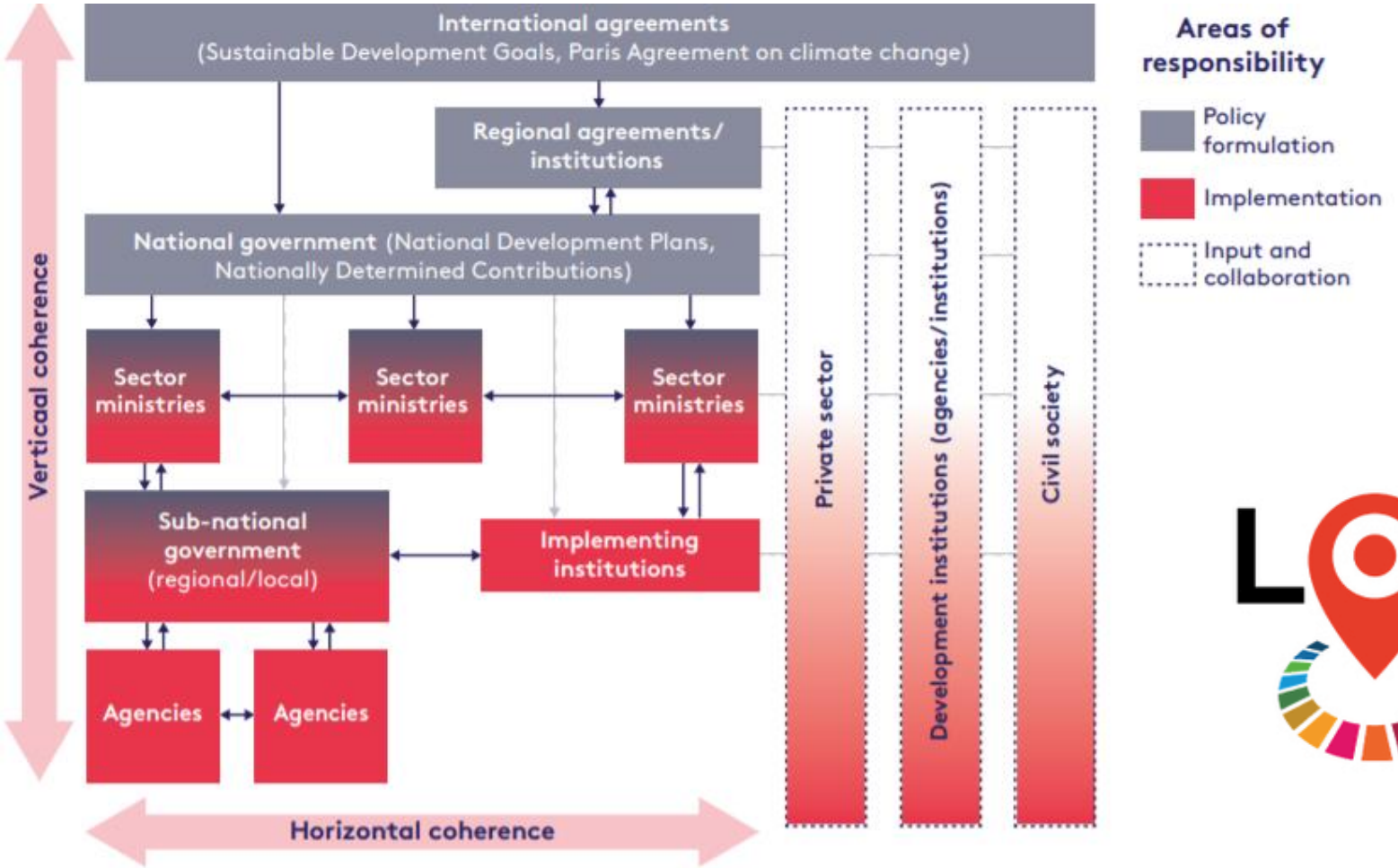
3. Vertical Integration for the 2030 Agenda

SDG Goals and targets that involve sub-national authorities

Source: UN DESA 2018

3. Vertical Integration for the 2030 Agenda (Cont.)

Vertical integration and localization



LOCALIZING THE SDGs

Source: Curran et al., 2018

3. Vertical Integration for the 2030 Agenda (Cont.)

Potential benefits of vertical integration

- Promote a shared vision and commitment to sustainable development across levels
- Foster synergies and enhanced consistency across levels of government
- Critical complement to horizontal policy integration
- Reduce implementation risks
- Brings an opportunity for political dialogue

Potential challenges to vertical integration

- Gap between the abstract and universal nature of SDGs
- Local governments' lack of awareness of SDGs
- Differences (e.g., organizational culture, ideology, policy priorities) between national government and local governments
- Institutional weaknesses/ poor management mechanisms
- Local constraints in terms of resources
- Weak or perverse incentives for local governments
- Unequal distribution of costs and benefits across levels of governance

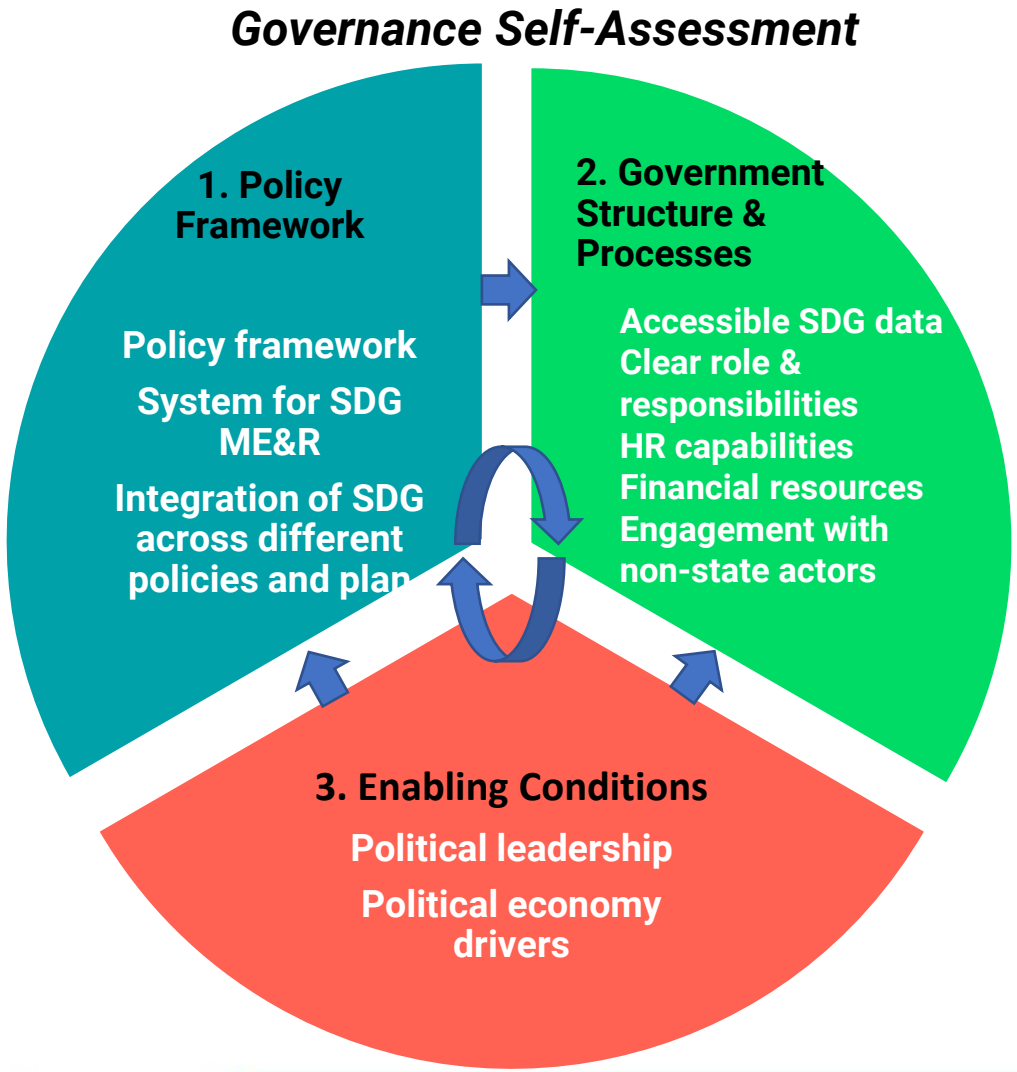
4. Mechanisms for Vertical Integration in SDG Implementation

	Leadership	Laws & regulations	Planning	Implementation	Monitoring
National	• Recognition of the importance of LGs and vertical integration • Outreach and awareness campaigns intended for LGs on SDGs	National laws or regulations that acknowledge, mandate or enable the participation of LGs in planning and implementation of the 2030 Agenda	• Guidelines or templates to support LGs' planning processes • Learning activities intended to share and incorporate inputs on SDGs from LGs (workshops, seminars, forums, dialogues, online activities) • Assessments of subnational alignment	• Financing/budget support for localization • Capacity building for localization • National policies (urban, climate, water, transportation, etc.) that mainstream SDGs across levels	• Sharing of experiences and good practices • Monitoring or reporting SDG implementation at subnational level • Building capacity for subnational monitoring • Auditing
Sub- National	• Declarations and high-level events that signal political commitment to implement SDGs • Outreach and awareness raising campaigns and events on SDGs for LGs, communities and their stakeholders	Subnational legislation to facilitate the adoption of SDGs in strategies, plans and policies	LGs adopt a SDG strategy or align their strategies and plans with the SDGs	• Alignment of LGs' financial plans with SDGs or national SDG policies • Training/capacity building in LGs • Policy tools (action plans, institutional, regulatory, etc.)	• Sharing of experiences and good practices • Alignment of LGs' indicators to SDGs' frameworks • LGs' mechanisms for reporting and data collection • Auditing

4. Mechanisms for Vertical Integration in SDG Implementation

	Leadership	Laws & regulations	Planning	Implementation	Monitoring
Multi-level	• Involvement of LGs in high-level events to signal commitment • Adoption of agreements with LGs for implementation	Elaboration of global and international guidelines and training materials to support local and regional government involvement in SDG delivery	• Involvement of LGs in national structures for coordination in formulation of national policies • Multi-level mechanisms for communication and/or coordination in national policy formulation • Non-institutionalized/ad-hoc multi-level communication and/or coordination processes • 2- way learning activities intended to give or receive inputs for/from LGs (workshops, seminars, forums, dialogues, online activities)	• Involvement of LGs in structures for coordination in implementation • Structures for multi-level coordination in implementation	• Workshops to share information and practices • Involving LGs in monitoring structures • Ensuring consistency of SDG indicators across levels • Coordinated auditing across levels of government • Multi-level accountability frameworks

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance



Objectives

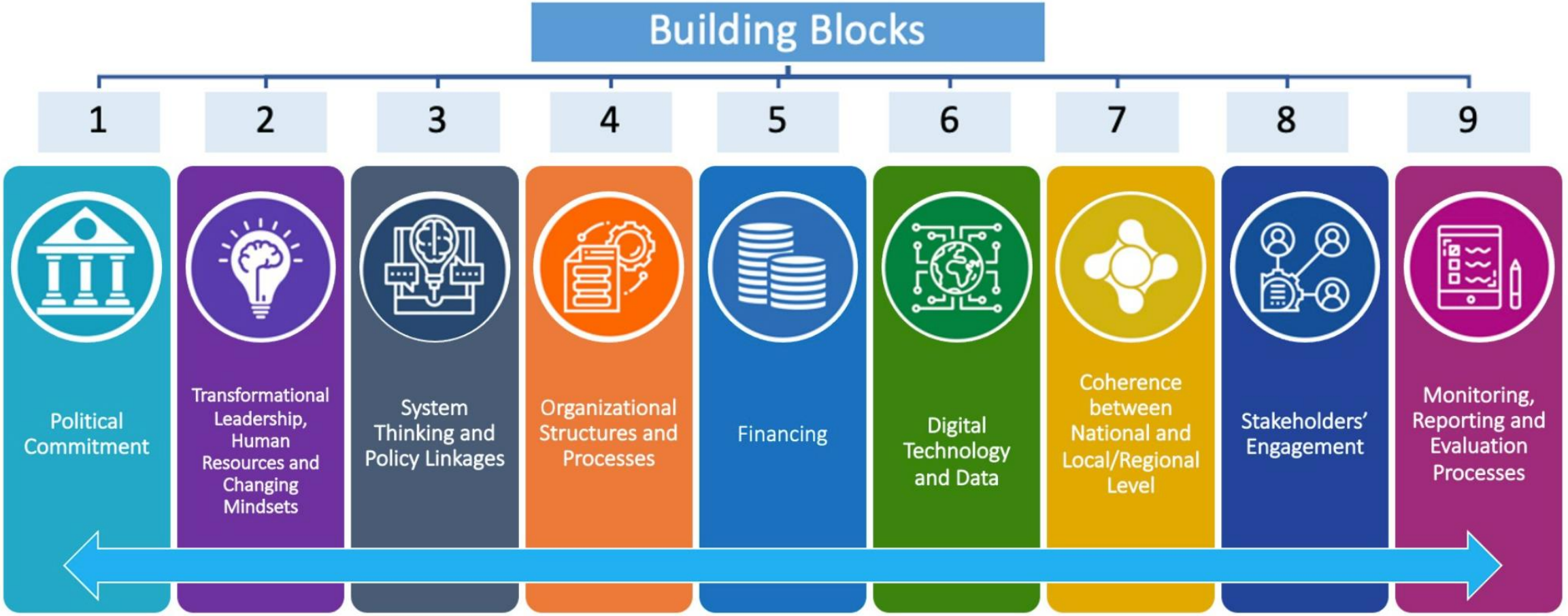
- To identify potential governance challenges and opportunities for effective SDGs implementation
- To develop priority or immediate actions that can be taken to address challenges or exploit opportunities
- To enable the government to track its governance parameters over time

Steps to carry out the self-assessment

1. Basic information
2. Describe the governance situation
3. Categorize governance dimensions
4. Decide on the relevant actions
5. Review and complete the dashboard

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Readiness Assessment on Institutional Arrangements for Policy Coherence to Implement the 2030 Agenda



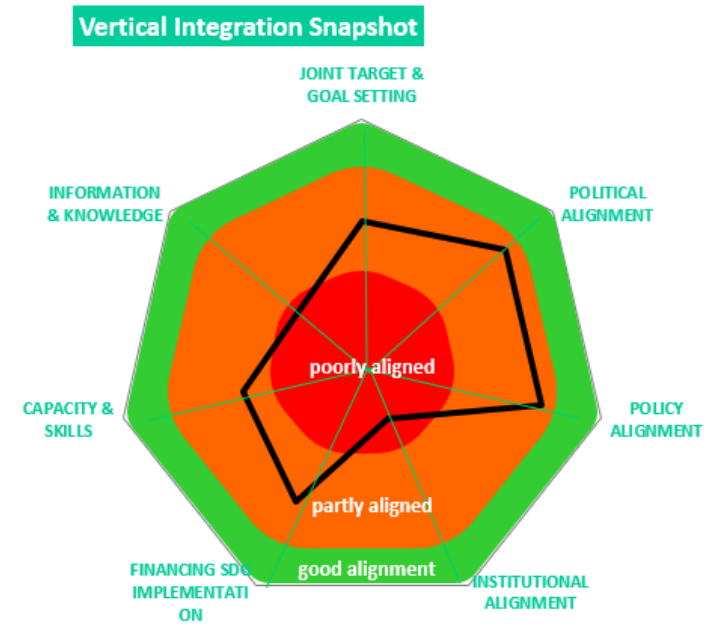
5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Strategic Cross-cutting analysis on Vertical Integration for SDG Implementation

Joint sustainable development target and goal setting	Political alignment	Policy alignment
Institutional alignment	Policy alignment	Financing SDG	Capacity and skills	Information & knowledge

CONTEXT: Analysis of local alignment with — Select an answer:

TABLE 1			USER COMMENTS (optional)
Questions	Answers	SCORE	
JOINT TARGET & GOAL SETTING		2	
1. Are there effective structures or processes in place for your local government to collaborate with State/National Government on setting local, regional or national SDG targets?	Structures / processes are new / emerging	2	
2. Has your local government participated in setting State/National Government SDG targets?	local didn't participate	1	
3. Has State/National Government participated in setting your local government targets?	State/National Government had a major influence	4	



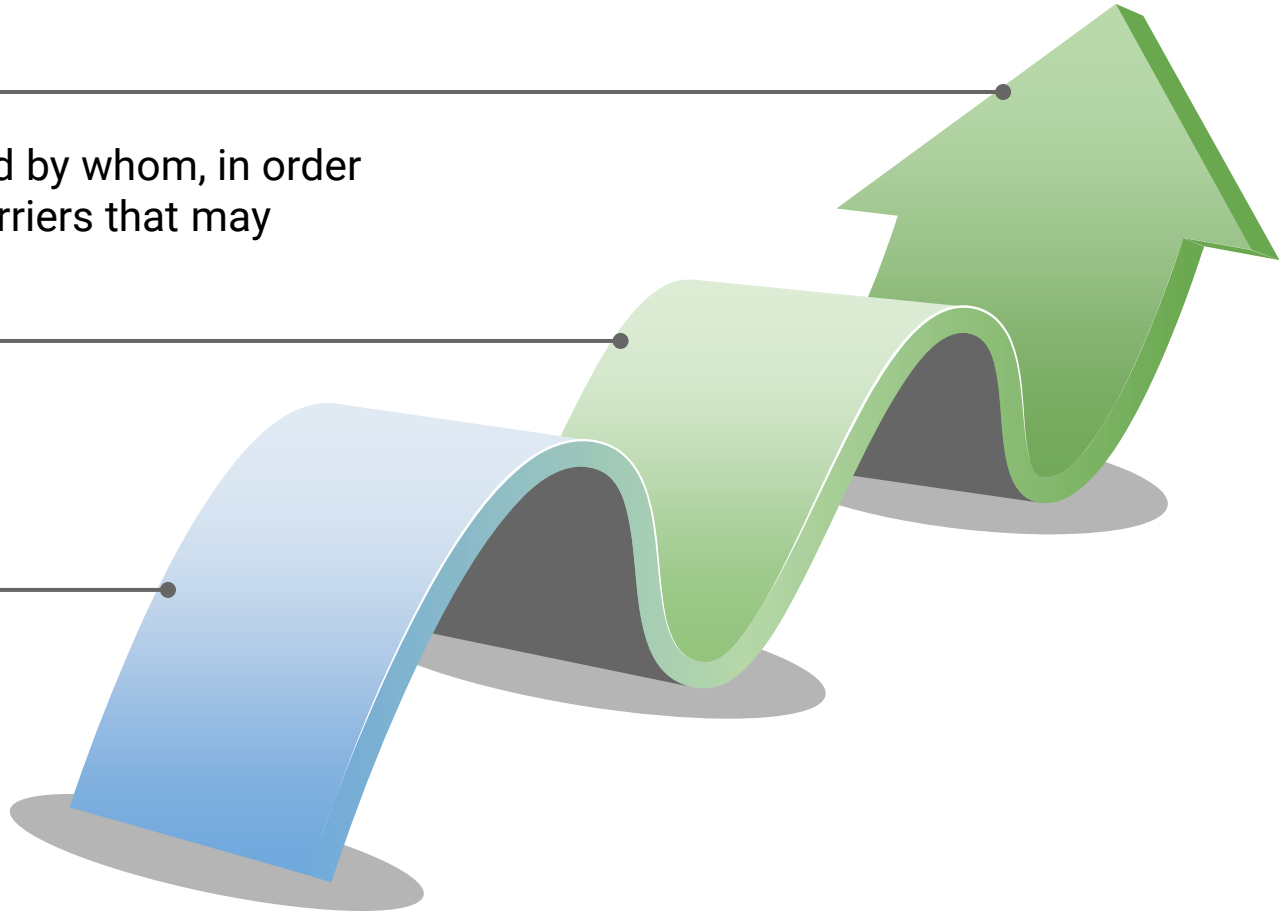
5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Vertical Integration Response Strategy (Action Plan)

3. Defining what needs to be done, by when and by whom, in order to address the priority vertical integration barriers that may negatively impact SDG implementation.

2. How these vertical integration barriers could/should be addressed?

1. What and how important the various vertical integration barriers are in the context of the city being enabled to implement its SDG effectively?



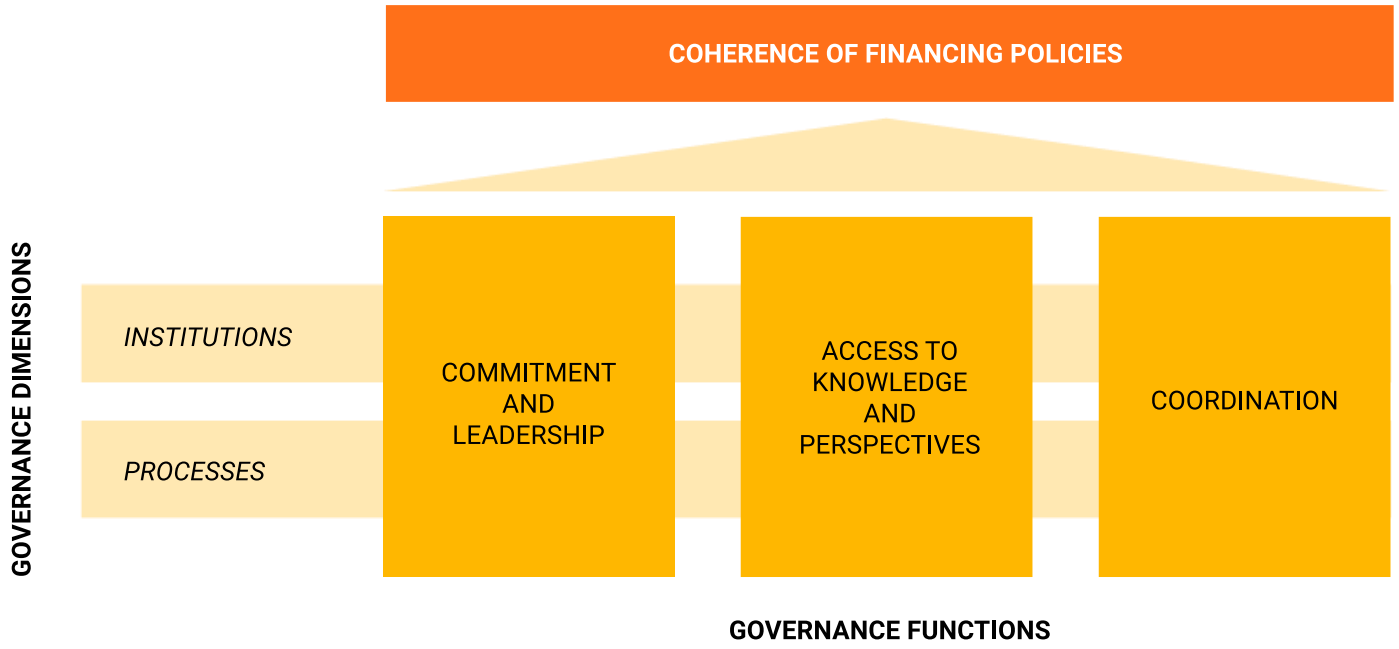
5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Setting Up a Stakeholder Engagement Plan

1. Setting Up a Vision for Stakeholder Engagement
2. Justification for Stakeholder Engagement: Who Stands to Gain What?
3. Who Should Be Engaged?
4. How Should They Be Engaged?
5. What Challenges are Envisaged and How Might These Be Overcome?
6. What are the planned outcomes, outputs and activities?
7. What resources are needed?
8. Timeline
9. Registering the process
10. Evaluating the process

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Governance and coordination for SDG financing at the local level



Source: UN DESA 2021

Step-by-step guidance

Step 1 **Identify & assess existing governance arrangements**

What institutions and processes exist to guide, enable and support (coherent) financing policy making?

Step 2 **Enhance coherence of existing governance arrangements, close gaps if needed**

How can existing institutions and processes be further strengthened to better guide, enable, support coherent financing policy making?

How can typical challenges be overcome?

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Monitoring SDGs at the National and Local Level

Step 1

Secure commitment and buy-in from relevant stakeholders on the monitoring system/mechanism

- Identify outcomes, indicators, and other performance criteria.

Step 2

Develop a system or mechanism for continuous monitoring (for example, electronic/ internet-based)

- Develop data collection procedures;
- Develop multilevel coordination mechanisms amongst different government departments;
- Identify reporting frequencies and channels of reporting;
- Determine analytical and reporting formats; and
- Assign responsibilities for maintaining the system.

Step 3

Administer the monitoring system/mechanism so that whenever feedback is received, it can be followed up accordingly.

- Monitor and modify as appropriate
- Present/report the monitored data in meaningful ways to relevant stakeholders and decision makers

Ways for Sharing Monitoring Data

- **Regular expert and stakeholder meetings**
- **Official communication channels of government**
- **Periodic participatory citizen gatherings**
- **Electronic platforms**

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Four steps of evaluation development and design

Step A. Identify the overall objective of the evaluation

Consider the evaluation's main use by consulting and engaging with different stakeholder groups

Step B. Prepare for an SDG evaluation

Design participatory processes	Define the scope and focus of the evaluation	Identify policies and plans to be evaluated

Step C. Use the 2030 Agenda principles to inform criteria and questions

Ensure the principles inform the evaluative criteria and use the principles to develop the evaluation questions

Step D. Frame the evaluation

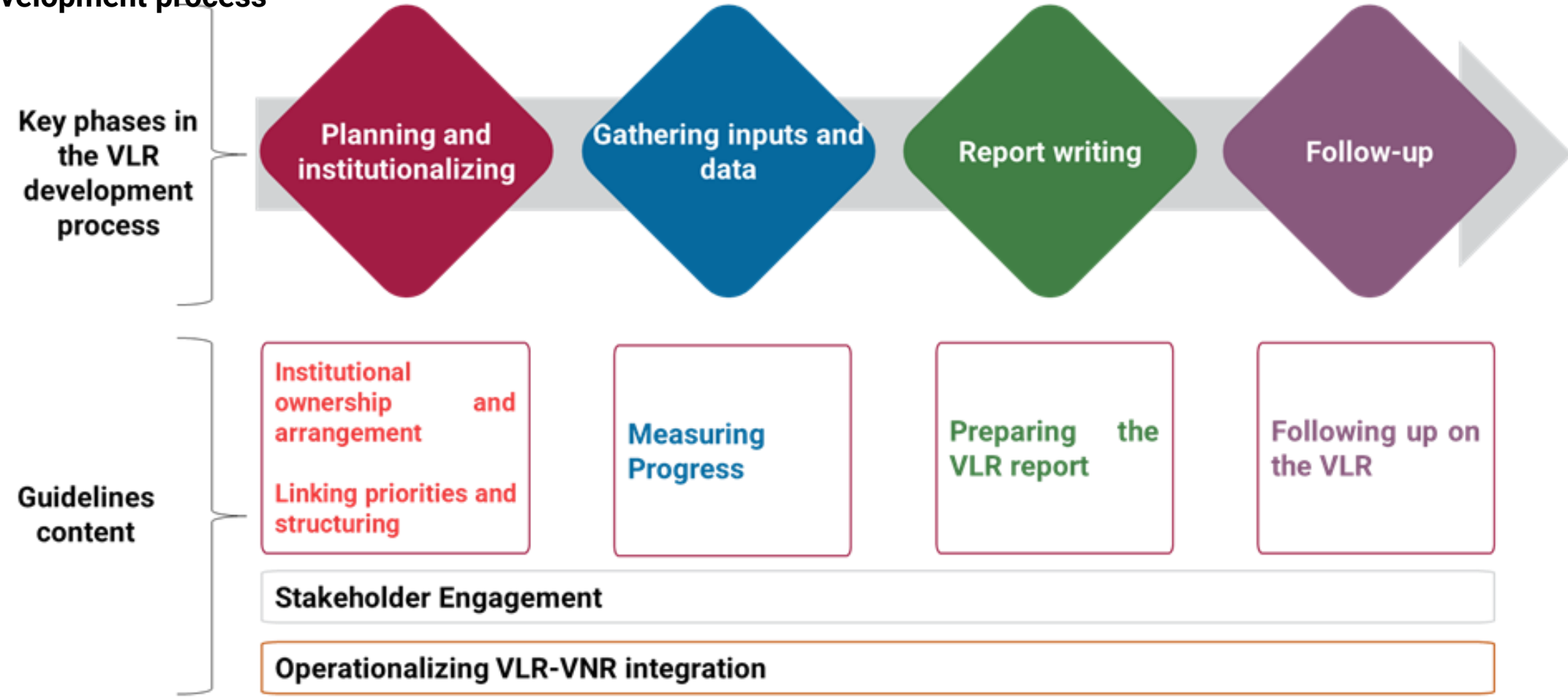
Reconstruct the logic underpinning national policies	Develop and cost a communication plan

Stakeholder engagement

Source: IIED, 2020

5. Tools for Effective National to Local Public Governance

Conducting a Voluntary Local Review: **Location of guidelines content and relevance with different phases of the VLR development process**



Source: United Nations (2020). Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines on Voluntary Local Reviews

6. Toolkit on Effective National to Local Public Governance for SDG Implementation

https://unpan.un.org/capacity-development/curriculum-on-governance-for-the-SDGs

For details on UN DESA/DPIDG's Toolkit, please contact: unpan@un.org.

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Thank you!

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