

## **World's first VLR online platform available -All you need to know about locally-led transformation for SDGs-**

Today, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is pleased to announce the launch of VLR Lab, the world's first online platform offering comprehensive information about local government actions on the SDGs.

VLR (Voluntary Local Review) is an international initiative in which the local government voluntarily reviews the status of its efforts on the SDGs and publishes the results as a report comparable with other local governments.

Since the 2016 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) more than 100 governments, including Japan, have used Voluntary National Review (VNR) to report their national-level progress on the 2030 Agenda, including SDGs. In the process, these countries and local stakeholders recognised that it is necessary to take a more bottom-up and complementary approach to collecting lessons and learnings for achieving SDGs goals from local governments, because they are key players in connecting countries and companies, individuals and local areas.

In response, IGES and New York City respectively shared VLR reports for four cities – Kitakyushu City, Toyama City, Shimokawa Town and New York City – at the HLPF in July 2018. The international community welcomed this announcement as a new-era model of local government reporting, to realise a world where “no one is left behind”, and interest in VLR has been rapidly growing.

Local governments have already been proactive in collecting and sharing knowledge about SDG-related actions among themselves. Now, VLR Lab enhances their ability to disseminate information and findings globally, and to do so more smoothly. It does so by serving as an online centralized information hub for SDG reporting by sub-national and local governments, as they provide details such as location, size and important goals, in addition to actual cases and reports from the model local governments. In this way, local governments can use VLR Lab as an open space for peer-learning.

Dr. Bernadia Irawati Tjandradewi, Secretary General UCLG-ASPAC, says “The VLR demonstrates local government commitment to sustainable development. We hope the VLR Lab will inspire more local governments to take on this initiative and know more about VLR. UCLG-ASPAC looks forward to supporting IGES in enabling local governments to undertake the VLR.”

“The day to day work with local and regional governments shows us that offering safe spaces for peer-to-peer exchange and learning is a powerful tool for enhancing their ability to implement meaningful policies for people and the planet. Unleashing the full potential of local and regional governments for sustainability is a precondition for achieving the SDGs.” Says Maruxa Cardama, Secretary General, Partnership for Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) and Chair of the 68th UN Civil Society Conference on “Building Inclusive and Sustainable Communities,” who has dedicated the past 18 years to working directly with local and regional governments.

Dr. HO Chin Siong from the UTM-Low Carbon Asia Centre at the University of Technology in Malaysia also notes that “Most cities in Malaysia are embracing sustainable development practices in their development plans. Some of the bigger cities, namely Kuala Lumpur, and local authorities in Iskandar Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malacca and Seberang Perai, are also implementing climate action plans or low carbon society



blueprints that incorporate mitigation and adaptation initiatives. I strongly believe Kuala Lumpur and other major city councils are ready to embark on using this SDG reporting system with the help of local and international experts. The proposed VLR Lab for peer learning among city champions will provide an excellent platform for Malaysian cities, including Kuala Lumpur, to gain, contribute and share knowledge about SDG-related actions."

IGES plans to provide review guidelines, evaluation tools, and the training required for VLR implementation in the near future.

### **VLR Lab**

<https://www.iges.or.jp/en/sdgs/vlr/index.html>

### **About Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)**

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is a collaborative research and outreach organisation working to accelerate the transition to a sustainable, resilient, shared, and inclusive Asia-Pacific region, both across borders and within the world at large. Our strategic research and operations are defined by a mission-- to drive action on the world's most critical environmental and social challenges through the delivery of trusted expertise on sustainable development and resilience. IGES operates as an agent of change. Together with key international organisations, governments, academic institutes, business and civil society leaders we seek to foster a world where planetary boundaries are fully respected, a green economy is flexibly implemented, and the well-being of people is steadily improved. In so doing we emphasise workable and inspired approaches to cross-cutting global development issues ranging from climate change, natural resources and ecosystems management, and sustainable consumption and production, among many others. The Institute— established in 1998 with support from the Japanese government and Kanagawa Prefecture— maintains its international headquarters in Hayama, Japan. With offices and local centres in Tokyo, Kansai, Kitakyushu, Beijing, Bangkok, and New Delhi, IGES supports a regional and global network for ground breaking sustainable development research and practice.

<https://www.iges.or.jp/en/>

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