

VLR of the City of Niš, Serbia



Webinar 6. Case studies of Voluntary Local Review (VLR) development in the UNECE region

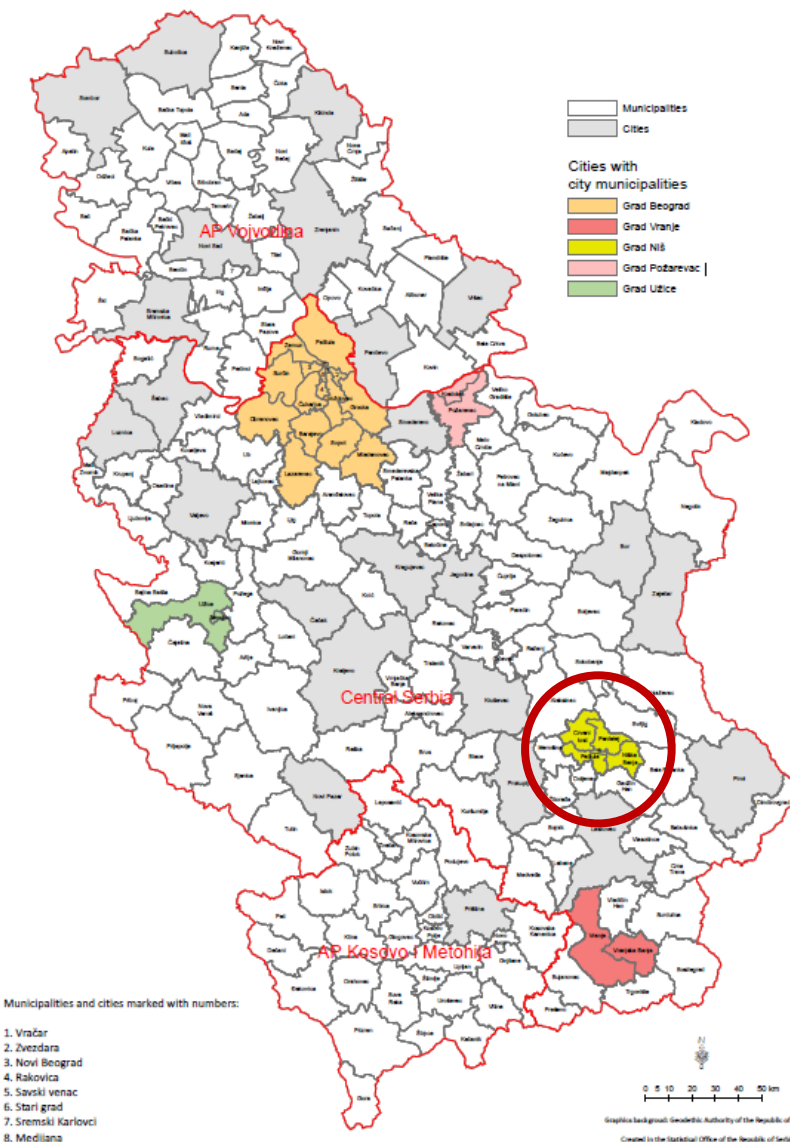
City of Niš

- Second-tier city in Serbia
- Regional hub of South-East Serbia and the administrative centre of Nišavski District

City of Niš Factsheet

Population	249,501 people
Area	596.78 km ²
Population density	418 inhabitants/km ²
Average age of the population	43.37 years
Average number of household members	2.5

Cities and municipalities in the Republic of Serbia
As of January 1st 2023



VNR of the Republic of Serbia

- Presented at the High-level Political Forum in New York in 2019
- Highlights the commitment of the society as a whole to the values and principles of 2030 Agenda, including the local level
- Reporting on SDGs at the national level
<https://sdg.indikatori.rs/en-US/o-ciljevima>
- Pivotal role of Niš in advancing sustainability efforts in Serbia

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



TOWARDS EQUALITY OF SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE
AND EVERYWHERE IN SERBIA THROUGH GROWING INTO SUSTAINABILITY

Voluntary Local Review of the City of Niš

- **First VLR in Serbia**, third in the region of Southeast Europe
- Within the project **Voluntary Local Reviews: Evidence for Greener, Resilient and Sustainable Urban Recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in Transition**

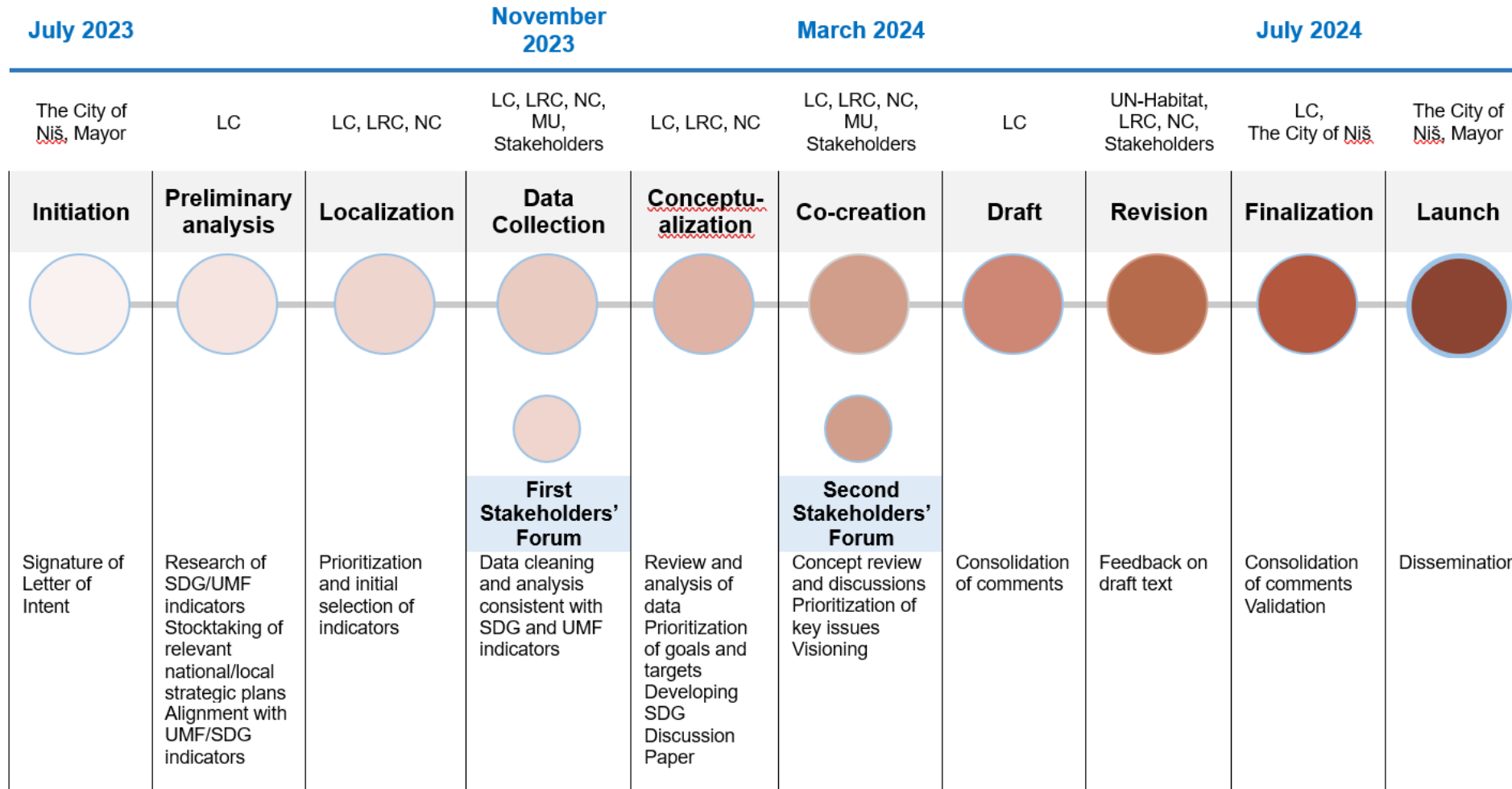
Cities: Tbilisi (Gruzija), Biškek (Kirgizstan), Niš (Srbija), Dušanbe (Tadžkistan)

Partners: UN-Habitat, UNECE, UNDESA, UCLG

- **VLR team Niš:** Local Consultant, Local-Regional Coordinator, National Coordinator, Monitoring Unit

Monitoring Unit is a newly established department of the city, dedicated to enhance the VLR process, and beyond

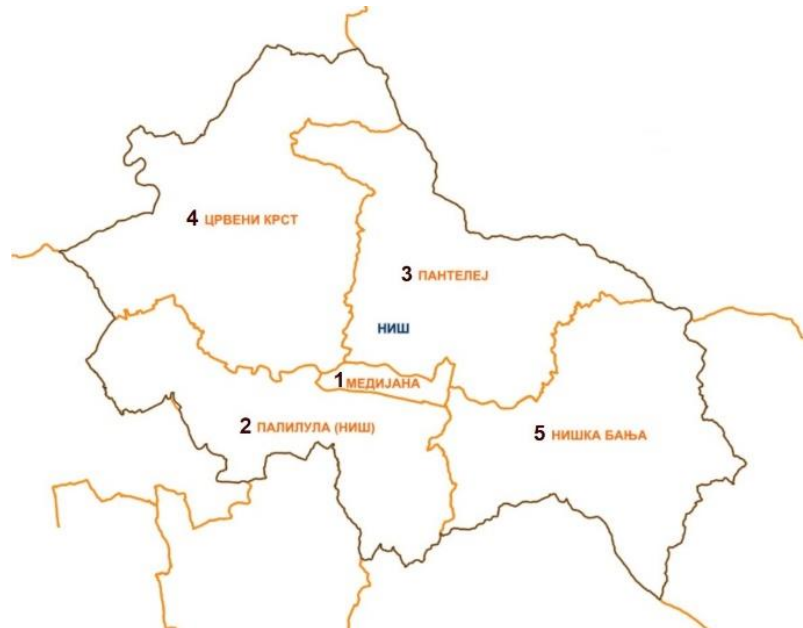
Methodology of the VLR process in Niš



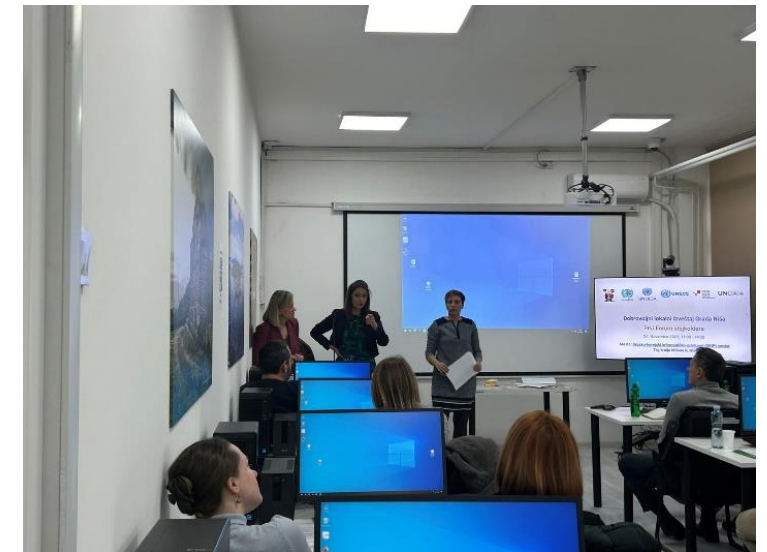
Timeline
Actors
Key activities

Voluntary Local Review of the City of Niš

- Context-specific
- Area of the City of Niš as an LSG Unit
- Participative process



- City of Niš border
- City Municipality border
- 1 Medijana
- 2 Palilula
- 3 Pantelej
- 4 Crveni Krst
- 5 Niška Banja



Voluntary Local Review of the City of Niš

Data sources:

- 1) Data that is publicly available (open data)
- 2) Publicly available documents and documents provided by city administrations (*public policies, strategic planning documents at the national/local level, urban planning documents, action plans, programmes, reports, assessments, etc.*)
- 3) In discussions with city delegates at the stakeholders' forums and during visits to city institutions
- 4) Completed questionnaires related to particular SDGs at the stakeholders' forums

Proxies: in cases of no available data, or the requested information not aligned with the particular SDG/UMF indicator

Selected SDGs for the VLR of the City of Niš



12 SDGs
26 Indicators

Indicator 1.4.1. Indicator 11.1.1.
Indicator 1.4.2. Indicator 11.2.1.
Indicator 2.4.1. Indicator 11.4.1.
Indicator 3.6.1. Indicator 11.6.1.
Indicator 3.9.1. Indicator 11.6.2.
Indicator 4.1.2. Indicator 11.7.1.
Indicator 5.5.1.b. Indicator 11.b.2.
Indicator 6.1.1. Indicator 13.1.1.
Indicator 6.2.1.a. Indicator 15.1.1.
Indicator 6.3.1. Indicator 15.1.2.
Indicator 7.2.1. Indicator 15.3.1.
Indicator 8.5.2. Indicator 15.5.1.
Indicator 16.3.1.
Indicator 16.6.1.

Voluntary Local Review of the City of Niš

Challenges:

- Missing and inconsistent data
- Lack of stakeholders' motivation
- Multitude of data and many guiding documents
- No monitoring of development indicators established in local Plan
- Comprehensive process, overwhelming for local capacities and one consultant

Strengths:

- Body of national and local policy documents across various sectors
- Support of the City of Niš - newly created Monitoring Unit
- Support of Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
- National Coordinator (ASPU), Local-Regional Coordinator (MCTI)

Voluntary Local Review of the City of Niš

- Over the past decade, Niš has piloted several innovative sustainability solutions and prepared a significant body of public policy and strategic documents that are incorporating principles of the 2030 Agenda
- Barriers are identified in the areas of urban planning, transport and communal infrastructure, environmental pollution, climate action and local self-government capacities
- Action-oriented recommendations developed to address the challenges and guide the sustainable development of Niš, with the proposed actions and project focussed on accelerating SDG progress

Strategic, action-oriented and useful VLR Niš

- VLR harmonized with the standing strategic planning documents
 - *Development Plan of the City of Niš 2021-2027*

Aligned VLR priorities with development directions and priority goals and measures established in the Plan

- *Spatial Plan of the City of Niš Administrative Area 2021*

Aligned VLR priorities with Priority planning solutions and projects

- Linked to the Voluntary National Review and the reporting of indicators at the national level

Strategic, action-oriented and useful VLR Niš

- Use VLR as an information base to integrate SDG targets when developing new strategic plans for the City of Niš
 - *Spatial Plan of the City of Niš Administrative Area*
 - *General Urban Plan of Niš*
- Incorporate VLR findings and recommendations into local policies and programs
- Connect decision-making and resource allocation with VLR findings
- Prioritize recommendations identified in the VLR

Contribution of the VLR Niš

- Raised awareness among local authorities and stakeholders about the importance of SDGs and their advancement prospects
- Highlighted role of monitoring and evaluation process, setting the context for evidence-based planning and decision-making
- Shifted local perspective of collecting, exchanging and providing information towards creating an overarching and unique database
- Showcased development potentials of Niš to attract investments
- As a pioneer process in Serbia, the VLR of Niš can be scaled up into a nationwide process

Lessons learned from Niš VLR experience

- Invite stakeholders from a diverse range of backgrounds and inform all local bodies of VLR
- Combine strategies and approaches to raise awareness on the SDGs with the stakeholders and local authorities
- Establish the link with the national level, connect local and national reporting and promote collaboration and networking among local governments
- Use VLR guidance documents
- Build on the experience of other cities that have undergone the VLR process
- Form partnerships with international organizations such as the United Nations

Thank you

Dr Milena Dinić Branković, Local Consultant
University of Niš – Faculty of Civil engineering and Architecture, Assoc. Prof.
milena_dinic@yahoo.com

Copyright May 2024, Milena Dinić Branković, all rights reserved.
For reproduction permission and all other inquiries, please contact milena_dinic@yahoo.com