2019 Voluntary National Review (VNR): Tonga Experience


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Outline of Presentation

- Methodology
- Creating Ownership
- Challenges
- Implementation
- Key Messages
“We remained true to the intent of the VNR process, to be country driven which allowed us to better assess our own progress, understand our challenges and better prepare for the future.”

Source: Kingdom of Tonga 2019 VNR
METHODOLOGY

• A country-led initiative where various national stakeholders took ownership to draft Tonga’s VNR report

• Dedicated and inclusive consultation and drafting workshops were convened between March and May 2019

• A similar approach was used for the drafting of Tonga’s final report, where:
  • a few weeks of extensive and inclusive report drafting was facilitated by the Prime Minister’s Office
  • with specific technical assistance provided by UNESCAP and UNDESA,
  • a drafting retreat was called where teams of sectoral stakeholders including CSOs prepared sections of Tonga’s VNR report.
Creating Ownership

- A number of consultative processes on national planning and SDGs took place since the adoption of the 2030 Development Agenda, and when the TSDF II, for the period 2015-2025 was being developed.

- Co-producing of the 2019 VNR started with open dialogues between government ministries and CSOs.

**Box 1: Government and CSOs engagement**

Government actively engages civil society organizations in Tonga through programs, projects, collective decision-making by way of public dialogue, consultation meetings, awareness raising programs, capacity building workshops, partnership and Government’s National Steering Committees and National Advisory Committees for various Government Ministries.

*Source: Kingdom of Tonga 2019 VNR*
Challenges

• Limited staff capacity and resources
• Need to strengthen collaboration across and within Government line ministries
• Having effective coordination
• Geographical diversity and remoteness
• Measurability of key indicators remain a challenge
A. Effective Government Resource Framework and Resource Mobilization: local, debt & aid funding policy support

B. Participatory Consultive Mechanism: Integrated at all levels

C. Integrated Planning and Budgeting:
   - TSDF
   - Sector & District Plans
   - Corporate Plans
   - Aid Programs
   - Budgets
   - Annual Management Plans
   - JDs & Staff Plans

D. Integrated Detailed Results:
   - Impact (+KPIs)
   - National Outcomes (+KPIs)
   - Organizational Outcome (+KPIs)
   - MDA Outputs (+KPIs)
   - Projects (+KPIs)
   - Budget Data

E. Integrated Plan, Budget, M&E and Reporting Document Formats:
   - all integrated and consistent

F. Effective Legislative Approval Audit and other Oversight

G. Accurate & Timely Information & Data:
   - MDAs, Stats, International

H. Planning, Budget and M&E Tracker Database:
   - covers all plans, budgets, projects, MDA performance
   - Plan Records detailed
   - Project & Aid Management Database
   - Financial Information Management System: budgets and accounts

I. Integrated Reports on Relationship & Progress:
   - integrated - what is planned/budgeted is what is reported on annual (quarterly, where relevant) for progress over all levels

J. Acceleration Framework:
   - robust analysis of gaps, consequences, reasons, solutions
   - for all levels of planning and results

Source: Kingdom of Tonga 2019 VNR
Key Messages

• Tonga has prioritized social protection and human rights with a focus on vulnerable groups.
• Tonga continues to honour its commitment to Universal Health Coverage - striving for nationwide coverage and access to quality healthcare services.
• Regulations are in place to make early childhood education inclusive for children with disabilities and children from other vulnerable groups.
• Tonga will continue to enhance accessibility to sustainable and energy efficiency services.
• To strengthen sustainable economic growth through use of relevant trade tools and employment opportunities for our people through structural reforms and further develop productive sectors.
• Tonga recognizes the need for equal opportunities for all, in particular vulnerable and marginalized groups including access to employment, political leadership and social services.
• Climate Change continues to pose serious threats to the environment and livelihood of the people of Tonga.
• Tonga remains committed to support the implementation of our development agenda through genuine and durable partnerships with development partners, donors and local stakeholders recognizing national priorities and systems are critical.
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