

Voluntary National Reviews: The 2030 Agenda Follow-up and Review Architecture



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Voluntary National Reviews concept

- Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are part of the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- The VNRs are intended to track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs and targets, in all countries, in a manner that respects their universal and integrated nature and all dimensions of sustainable development

VNR elements

Voluntary	encourage reporting and include developed and developing countries
Country-led	country-driven reviews of progress at national and sub-national levels
Rigorous and based on evidence	informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, reliable and disaggregated
Learning experience	facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, part of a process
National circumstances	reviews in accordance with national circumstances, policies and priorities, together with relevant partners
Open, Inclusive, Participatory	Including supporting reporting on progress by all relevant stakeholders

Structure of VNR Report

- ☐ Opening statement
- ☐ Highlights
- ☐ Introduction
- ☐ Methodology and process for the preparation of the review
- ☐ Policy and enabling environment
- ☐ Progress on Goals and targets
- ☐ Means of implementation
- ☐ Next steps
- ☐ Conclusions
- ☐ Annexes

VNR roadmap - 4 basic phases

- ❑ Phase 1: *Planning (including setting scope & structure) & institutionalizing*
- ❑ Phase 2: *Gathering inputs, data*
- ❑ Phase 3: *Writing & review*
- ❑ Phase 4: *Presentation & follow up*



☐ Data and indicators

Reliable and credible, relevant to the context (nationalization/localization needed); goals & target prioritisation;

☐ Policy coherence and integration

Incorporation of the SDGS into national frameworks - Integration of the 3 dimensions - Institutional mechanisms; structural issues/barriers - means of implementation;

☐ Stakeholder engagement and advocacy

to promote ownership and action, better understand drivers and solutions - internal SE to support institutionalization - external SE for participation and outreach;

☐ Leaving no one behind

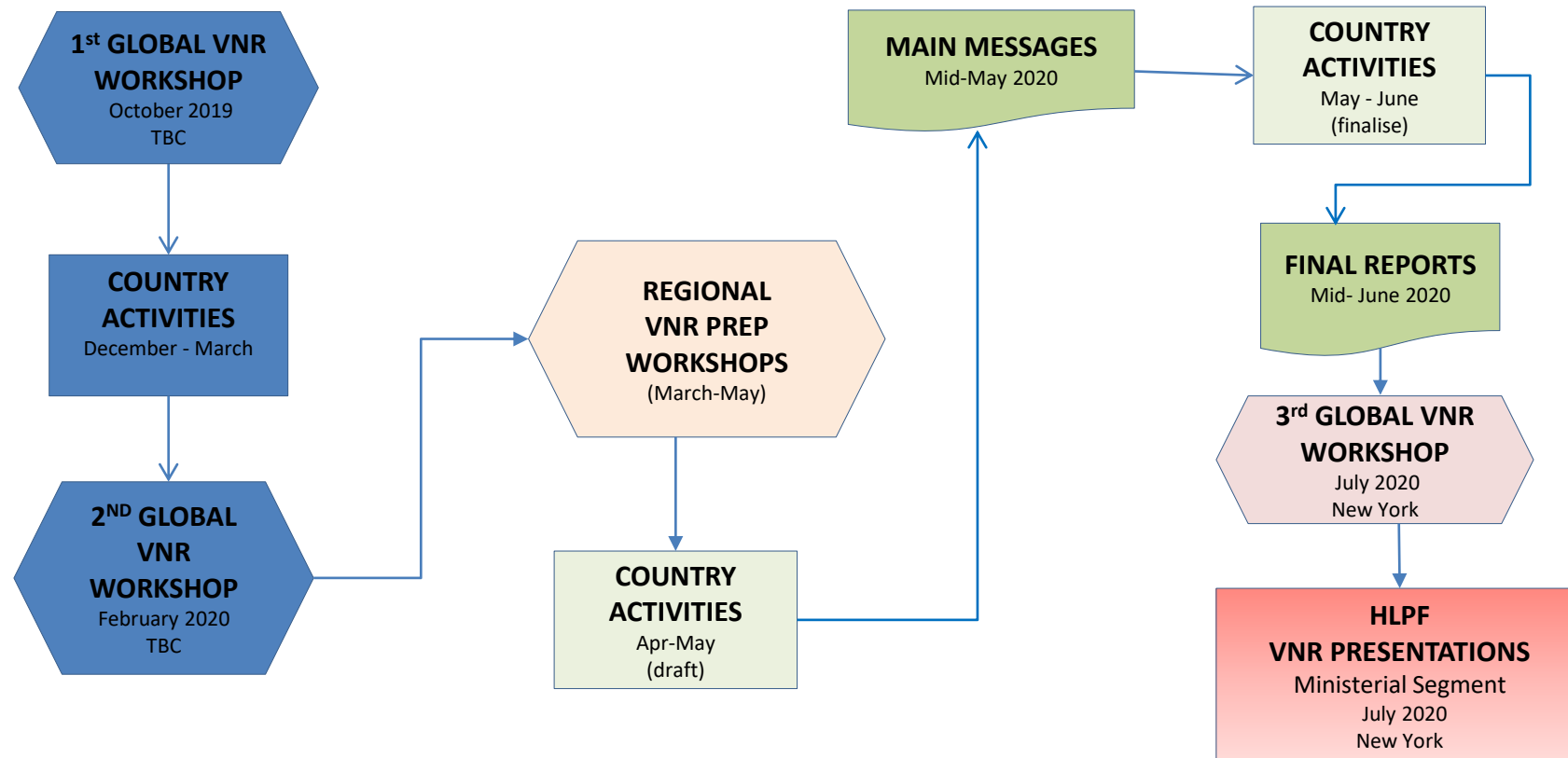
Support marginalized and vulnerable groups – throughout report.

Building blocks for VNR preparation



VNR timeline

Timeline for 2020 VNRs



VNR countries at the 2020 HLPF (June 2019)

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

- 24 countries presenting for the first time:
- Austria, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, DPRK, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Kyrgyz Republic, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Micronesia, Mozambique, North Macedonia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Zambia
- 22 countries presenting for the second time:
- Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belize, Colombia (3rd), Costa Rica, Finland, Georgia, Honduras, India, Jordan, Monaco, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Panama, Peru, Qatar (3rd), Samoa, Slovenia, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

16 ESCAP VNR countries at the 2020 HLPF

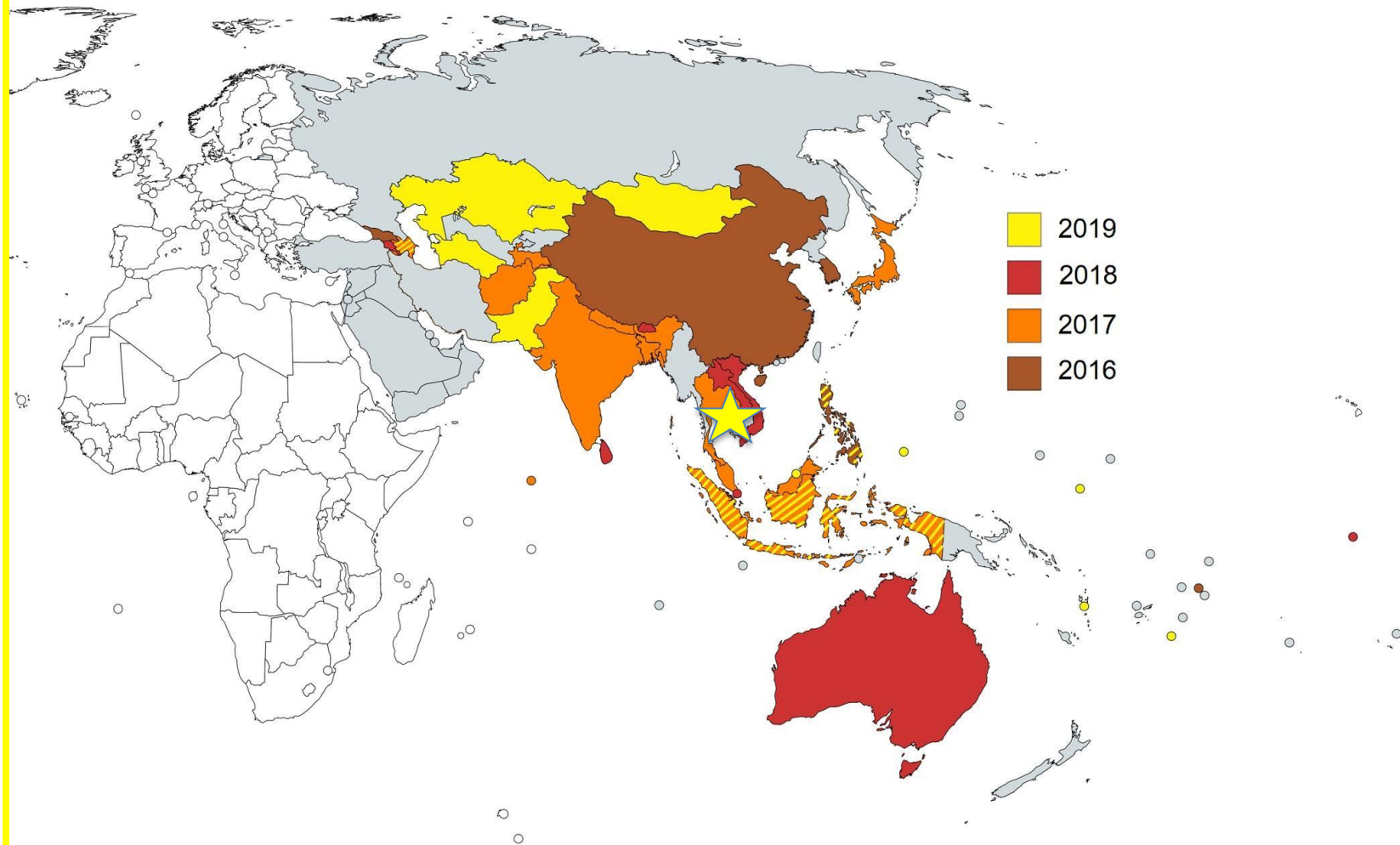
- 8 countries presenting for the first time:

1. Brunei Darussalam
2. DPRK
3. Kyrgyz Republic
4. Micronesia
5. Papua New Guinea
6. Russian Federation
7. Solomon Islands
8. Uzbekistan

- 6 countries presenting for the second time:

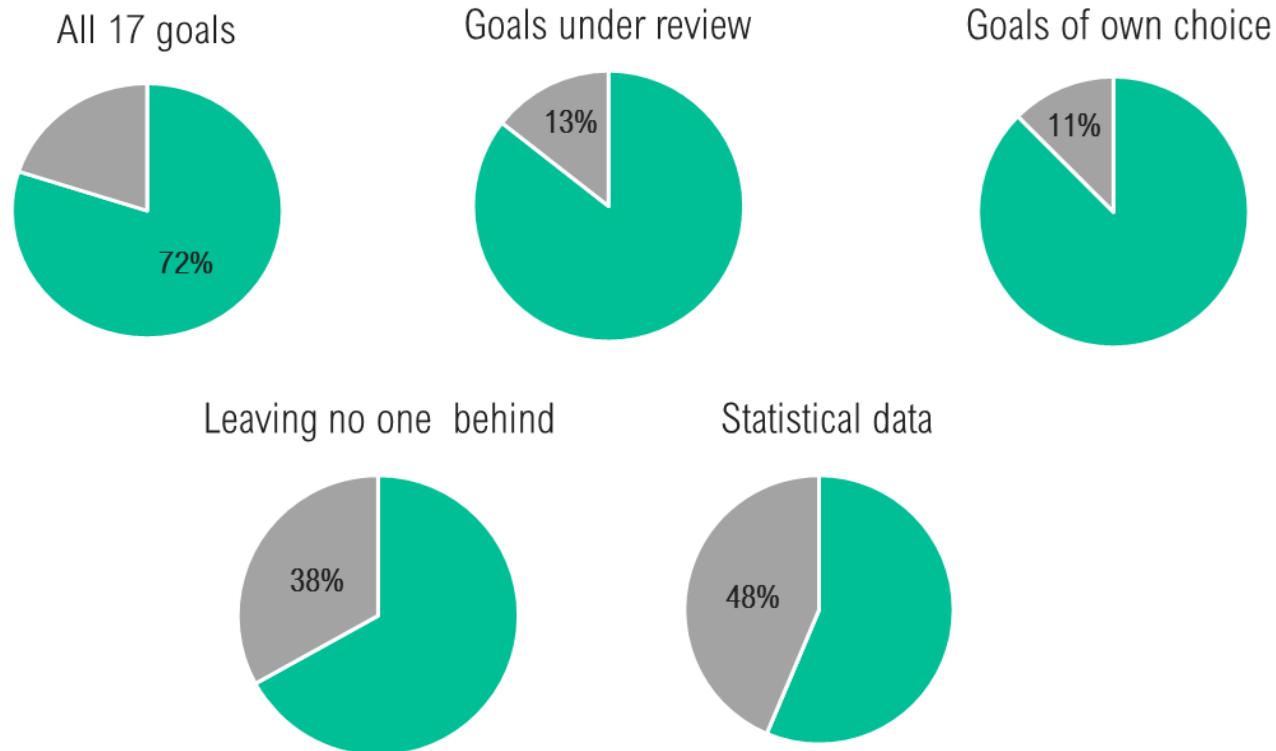
1. Armenia(2018)
2. Bangladesh (2017)
3. Georgia (2016)
4. India(2017)
5. Nepal (2017)
6. Samoa (2016)

VNRs in the Asia Pacific



VNR as a Tool

What do VNRs report on?



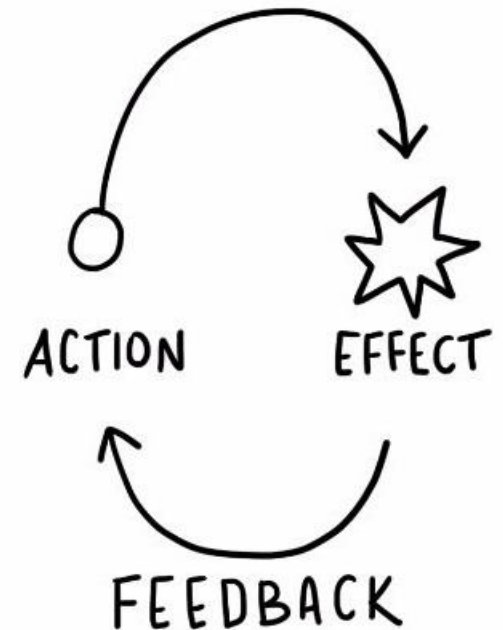
Analysis of goals and targets:

- a snapshot of the status of the goals and targets;
- achievements and good practices;
- the impact of country interventions at home and abroad;
- gaps and challenges;
- SDG interlinkages:
- emerging issues;
- future implementation plans.

VNR as a Tool

VNRs as a MEANS to ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION

- ☐ VNR as part of the policy cycle
- ☐ Dissemination - How to reach the broad public?
- ☐ How to address the challenges highlighted with the VNR process?
- ☐ How to institutionalize the monitoring and review process?
- ☐ Share the findings at regional level to enhance peer learning and regional cooperation.



Why doing a VNR: opportunities

**CREATING MULTI
STAKEHOLDER
PARTNERSHIPS**

**HIGHLIGHT COUNTRY
PRIORITIES**

**ENHANCED
MONITORING
ACCOUNTABILITY,
EVALUATION,
REPORTING**

**STRENGTHENING
POLICY
INTEGRATION &
COHERENCE**



**FINANCING
PRIORITIZING
INVESTMENTS,
MULTIPLYING
INVESTORS POOL**

**STAKEHOLDER BUY IN
OWNERSHIP &
ACTIVATION**

**AWARENESS RAISING,
& ADVOCACY**

**LEAVING NO
ONE BEHIND**

Intended benefits of the VNRs

- **CATALYZER** – the preparatory process provides a great chance for including all relevant stakeholders in the SDG implementation
- **STOCKTAKING** – for many countries the VNR has been a kick-starter for mapping existing policies and their compatibility with the SDGs, implementation gaps and data availability
- **COORDINATION** – VNR preparation requires a coordinated effort and for many countries the institutional arrangements made have proved useful also for SDG implementation
- **“WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT” APPROACH** – VNR provides a chance for obtaining buy-in in from civil servants and creating incentives for integrated policy-making and service delivery
- **AREAS FOR SUPPORT** – the report can be a great tool for identifying and communicating the areas in which the country requires additional support for implementation
- **COMMUNICATION TOOL** of the agenda to citizens, civil society, academia, sub-national and local governments etc.

LESSONS LEARNED

Decide what purpose the report will serve – awareness? Baselineing? Aspirational?

Engage a broad range of stakeholders early on

Focus on quality, not quantity

Include a statistical annex, if suitable

Include analysis, lessons learned and detailed examples

Avoid mere listings of strategies and programmes

Show both strengths and weaknesses

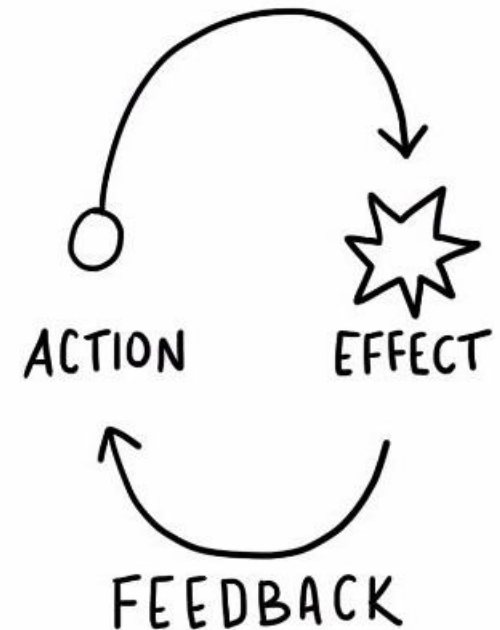
Identify areas where additional support is needed

Spell out the next steps in implementation

Beyond the VNR

VNRs as a **MEAN** to **ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION**

- ☐ VNR Dissemination - How to reach the broad public?
- ☐ How to address the challenges highlighted with the VNR process?
- ☐ How to institutionalize the monitoring and review process?
- ☐ Share the findings at regional level to enhance peer learning and regional cooperation.



VNR presentation at the HLPF

- ☐ Simplify complex messages through videos, infographics, data visualizations
- ☐ Highlight key messages
- ☐ Touch on critical issues on implementation
- ☐ Share best practices
- ☐ Provide space for stakeholders' views
- ☐ Team up with other reporting countries



ESCAP's and UN support for the VNRs

Strengthening the VNR process through support to **stakeholder engagement, policy coherence** and **data & statistics**



SDG Rapid Response Facility

Respond to requests from countries and UN country teams to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Technical assistance is provided in ESCAP's core areas of expertise



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
HELP DESK

SDG Help Desk

One-stop online gateway to tools, knowledge products, expertise, good practices, advice and opportunities for peer-learning and regional South-South cooperation

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THANK
YOU!