First Global Workshop for 2025 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): Supporting Evidence-based VNRs
Incheon, Republic of Korea
3-5 December 2024

Objective:

This workshop is intended for government officials engaged in coordinating and preparing voluntary national reviews (VNRs) in countries conducting review at the July 2025 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF). The workshop will facilitate practical exchange of experiences and knowledge among countries, as well as explore specific issues and challenges related to the VNR preparations.

To ensure a meaningful assessment of progress on the SDGs, reliable data and statistics are a crucial foundation for evidence-based VNRs and SDG reporting. Since adoption of the 2030 Agenda, countries have made significant strides in enhancing their monitoring frameworks for the SDGs, leading to improved inclusion of data and progress assessments in VNRs and overall SDG reporting. However, countries repeatedly point to the challenges of limited evidence, highlighting problems of data availability, data disaggregation, data collection as well as various human and financial constraints for SDG monitoring overall. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises, such as conflict and climate change. As a result, the breadth of analysis accessible for the VNRs and SDG reporting is impacted. To help address these challenges, countries are improving data integration, exploring data innovation, alternative and non-traditional data sources and enhancing coordination across government for better SDG reporting and information for VNRs. The workshop intends to provide guidance and exchange best practices on how to prepare evidence-based VNRs.

The workshop is organized by UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and hosted by the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) from 3-5 December 2024, in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The workshop will be held in person, with limited options for remote participation.

Participants:

The objective of the workshop is to bring together representatives responsible for the coordination and preparation of the VNR and from national statistical offices (NSOs) engaged in work on SDG reporting and the VNR process to share best practices for developing an evidence-based VNR and SDG reporting. The meeting will be open only to representatives of VNR countries and the UN Secretariat (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN regional commissions).

Draft Agenda

Day 1 Tuesday, 3 December 2024	
08:00 – 09:00	**Registration**
09:00 – 10:00	**Opening** • Opening remarks by President of ECOSOC (video message) (tbc)

	• Welcome remarks by UNOSD (tbc) • Remarks and overview by DESA **Tour de table** • *Participants will introduce themselves and describe their role in SDG reporting and in the current and past VNR process(es).*
10:00 – 11:30	**Session 1: *Overview of Voluntary National Review Process*** **Objective:** This session will provide a reminder of the key expectations, principles and steps for the preparation and presentation of the VNRs. The session will also include an interactive portion where countries can take steps towards preparing meaningful and evidence-based VNRs. Lessons learned by countries from previous VNR processes will also be featured in this session. *Country experiences* *Q&A*
11:30 – 12:00	**Break**
12:00 – 13:00	**Session 2: *Data Roadmap for developing VNRs & Lessons Learned*** **Objective:** The session will utilize the data roadmap for developing evidence-based VNRs developed by UNSD and will explain the stages, from identification of needs and planning to post-evaluation of the VNR process with practical exercises for participants to implement for their own planning for the first three steps. The session will also review lessons learned as almost all countries are presenting for a subsequent time.
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 2: *Data Roadmap for developing VNRs & Lessons Learned (continued)*** *Country experiences* *Country partner work* *Q&A*
15:00 – 15:30	**Break**

15:30 – 17:00	**Session 3 A (parallel session- VNR coordinators): Institutional frameworks the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** In this session the participants will discuss the development and evolution of their institutional frameworks for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They will reflect on how VNRs can help to assess the impact of plans and policies on the SDGs and to identify areas for policy improvements and new solutions. Countries will also discuss how they	**Session 3 B (parallel session - NSOs): Data Roadmaps for VNRs II** The session will provide an in-depth review on developing the data roadmap for the VNR process, focusing on the first three steps (Planning and Preparation, Data Assessment and Data Compilation). This practical session will address any questions related to the data roadmap and provide opportunities for country presentations and exchange.

	intend to mobilize the whole-of-government in the VNR exercise. **_Group work_**	**_Group work_**
17:00 – 17:15	Day 1: Reporting back and closing	

Day 2 **Wednesday, 4 December 2024**	
09:00 – 10:30	**Session 4: Policies and t*ools for 'leaving no one behind'*** **Objective:** This session will focus on how countries identify national data disaggregation priorities, tools and practices to improve the collection of disaggregated data as well as how to analyze and use these data. The session will also provide an overview of the policies and initiatives that countries have implemented in order to leave no one behind. *Guided interactive discussion and presentations*
10:30 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 13:00	**Session 5: *Whole of society coordination for implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Stakeholder engagement and Voluntary Local Reviews*** A key principle of the VNRs is that they should be inclusive and serve as a platform for launching partnerships for implementing the SDGs. Countries are encouraged to consult and engage non-state actors and civil society in their VNRs. They may also use their VNR to analyze barriers and obstacles to stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the SDGs as well as to improve mechanisms for consultation and participation. This session will provide guidance on how to effectively mobilize stakeholders throughout the VNR, including through mapping of stakeholder engagement in the VNRs. Localization of the 2030 Agenda is important in order to ensure ownership and implementation. Increasingly local governments and municipalities are preparing Voluntary Local Reviews. This session will provide guidance and share best practices on how VLRs can complement and support the VNR process. The session will also provide an opportunity for countries to engage in data mapping using a data ecosystem approach to support the whole of society approach, stakeholder engagement and VLRs.
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 – 15:00	**Session 5: Whole of society coordination for implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Stakeholder engagement and Voluntary Local Reviews (continued)** *Interactive guided discussion*
15:00 – 15:30	**Break**

15:30 – 17:00	Session 6A (parallel session - VNR coordinators): *Financing and means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* **Objective:** There have been persistent challenges to mobilize adequate financial and technical resources for implementing the SDGs. VNRs allow countries to assess financial and technical resources needed toward achieving the SDGs nationally. They can help to improve existing budgeting processes and create new strategies for mobilizing adequate resources. This session will provide some practical examples. Changes in the global financial environment will also be discussed. *Country presentations* *Group work*	Session 6 B (parallel session - NSOs): *Data innovation and non-traditional data sources* **Objective:** The session will focus on best practices and experiences using new and non-traditional data sources as well as innovative and alternative data sources in SDG reporting and the VNR. *Country presentations* *Group work*
17:00 – 17:15	Day 2: Reporting back and closing	

Day 3 Thursday, 5 December 2024
09:00 – 10:30	**Session 7:** *Regional Commissions and regional support for the VNRs* **Objective:** Presentations by all five Regional Commissions on possible technical support, tools and resources for countries developing their VNR – both on overall support and statistical support.
10:30 – 11:00	**Break**
11:00 – 13:00	**Session 8:** *Communication for the VNRs: Building the narrative, data storytelling and data visualization* The Voluntary National Reviews are not only an assessment of the progress towards the goals, but a review of the whole of government and whole of society's approach and efforts towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is therefore important that countries can effectively communicate their country's vision, approach and progress towards implementation. The session will discuss strategies for the pre-VNR, during VNR and post-VNR stages. Data and statistics play the key role in providing evidence of progress towards achieving the SDGs. Without the effective communication of data and statistics, it can be difficult to convey key messages and analysis of progress in SDG

	implementation. To this end, many countries have developed national reporting platforms and other tools and solutions to incorporate data in policymaking and reporting. This session will highlight those tools and others for presenting and incorporating data in VNRs and SDG reporting. *Interactive guided discussion and presentations*
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch**
14:00 – 15:30	**Session 8: *Communication for the VNRs: Building the narrative, data storytelling and data visualization*** (continued) *Group work and discussions*
15:30 – 16:15	**Session 9: *Next step in VNR process and Way Forward to the HLPF***
16:15 – 16:30	**Closing**