



Introduction to Voluntary National Reviews: Major Groups and other Stakeholders

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

1 February 2019





What is a Voluntary National Review (VNR)?

- Voluntary National Reviews are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's follow-up and review mechanism.
- The 2030 Agenda encourages Member States to "conduct regular and inclusive **reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels**, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79)

Principles of Voluntary National Reviews

Voluntary

encourage reporting and include developed and developing countries

State-led

country driven reviews of progress at national and sub-national levels

Platform for partnerships

including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders

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, Transparent

Facilitates communication with all stakeholders

Benefits of VNRs

- CATALYZER
- STOCKTAKING
- COORDINATION
- “WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT” APPROACH
- “WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY” APPROACH
- AREAS FOR SUPPORT
- COMMUNICATION TOOL

What can be done to maximize benefits from the VNRs?

- ✓ Embed VNRs into institutions and link the VNRs to report to other mechanisms and conventions
- ✓ Undertake costing analysis for SDGs and align with national budgets
- ✓ Strengthen policy coherence, interlinkages among SDGs and assess trade-offs
- ✓ Monitor SDG implementation including through parliaments and supreme audit institutions
- ✓ Measure impacts of strategies and policies put in place
- ✓ Report at the national level before **and after** a VNR has been presented at the HLPF
- ✓ Strengthen VNR follow-up by implementing lessons learned from other countries at HLPF
- ✓ Take actions in the executive and legislative branches of government

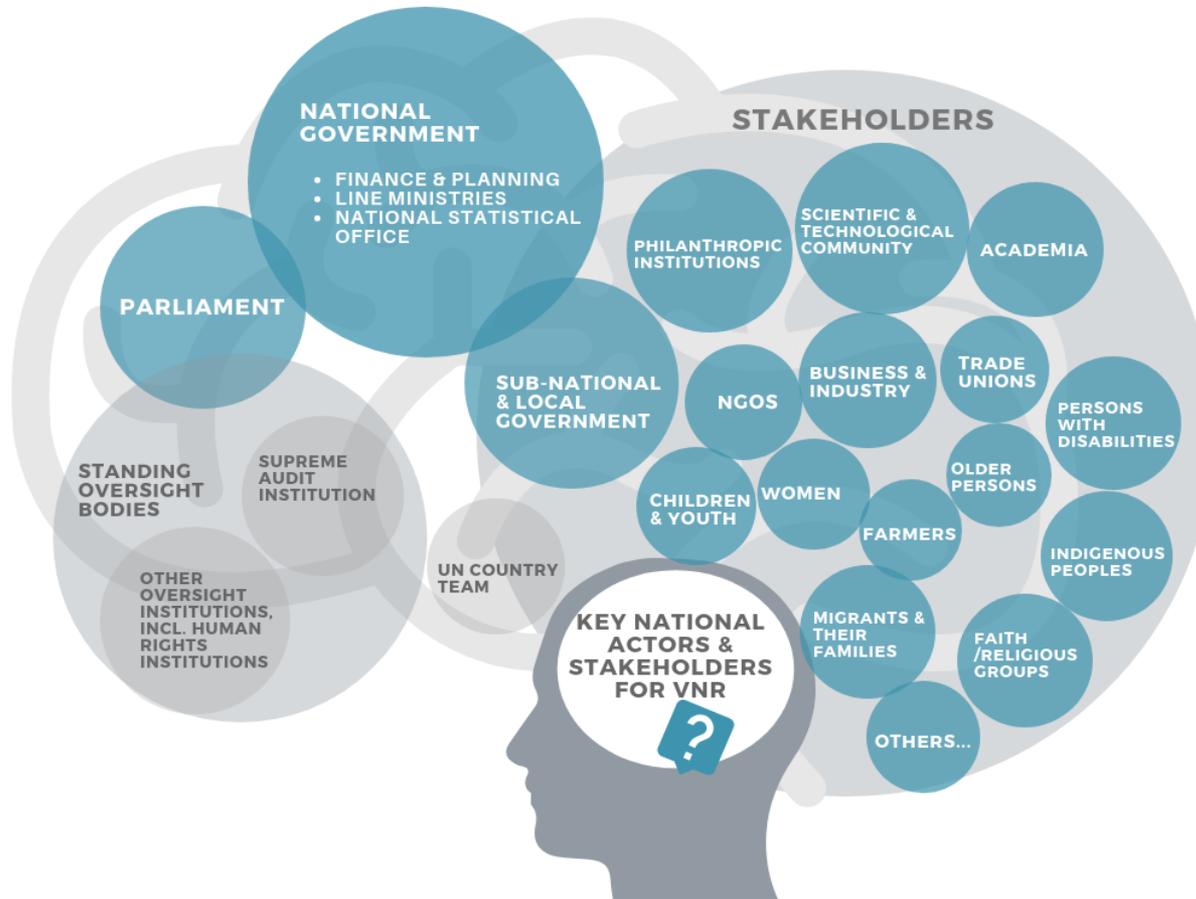
How can the VNR process support national implementation of the 2030 Agenda?



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Strengthens political will, national ownership, institutions and coordination
- Identifies areas where support is needed
- Provides an important communication tool
- Changes mindsets
- Draws lessons and provides critical reflections on the process
- Provides impetus to continue national implementation after the VNR has been presented at the HLPF

Who is engaged in the VNRs?

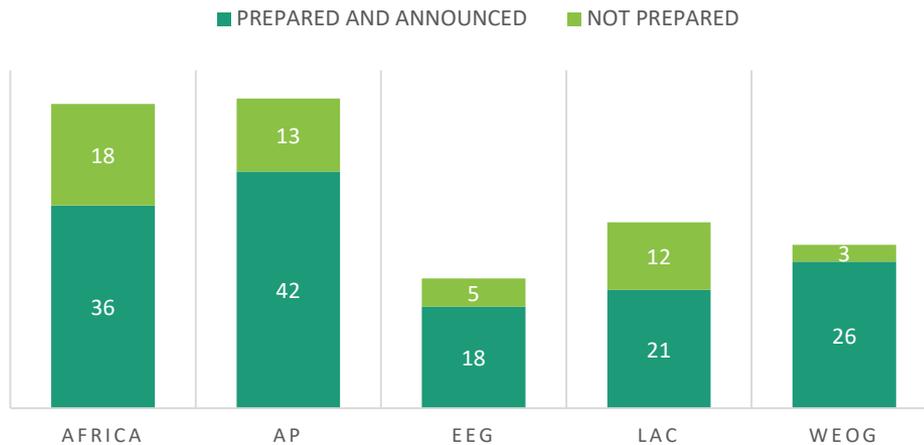


Global Status of VNRs

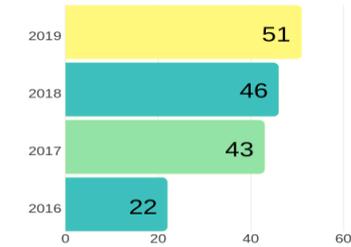
Voluntary National Reviews



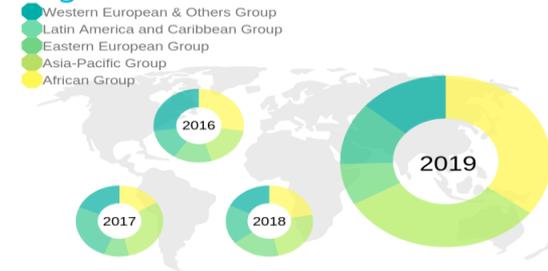
STATUS OF VNRs 2016 - 2019



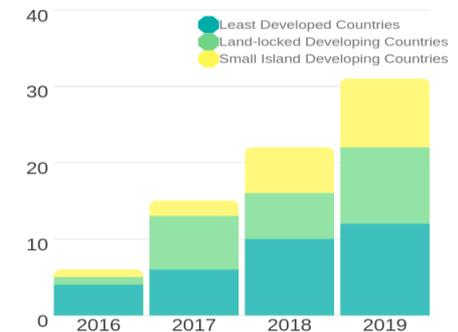
Number of Countries



Regional Distribution



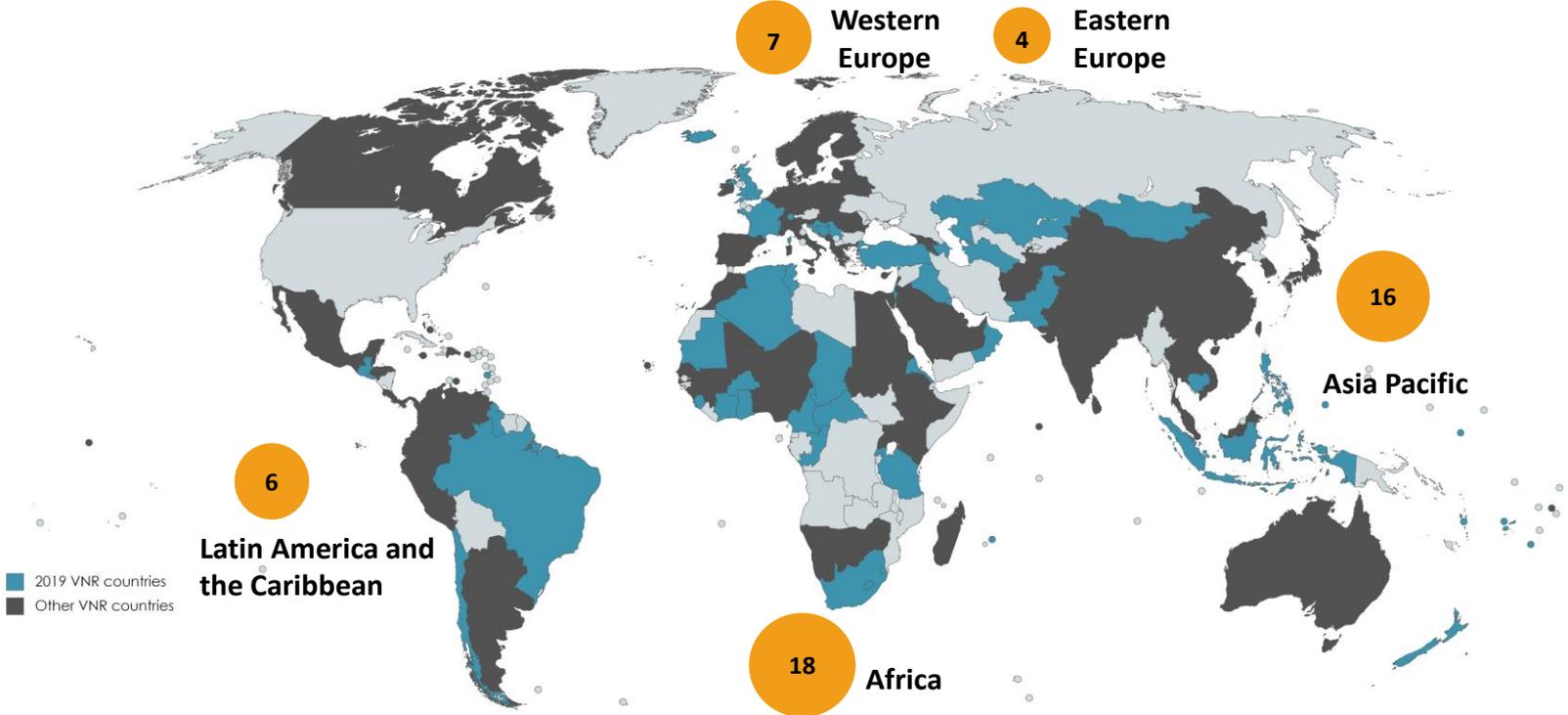
Countries in Special Situations





**What is the
Voluntary
National
Review (VNR)
process for
2019?**

Regional Division of 2019 VNRs



2019 VNRs

VNR
Countries
at the
HLPF
in
2019

FIRST TIME PRESENTERS (41)			SECOND TIME PRESENTERS (10)
Algeria	Iceland	Rwanda	Azerbaijan
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Iraq	Saint Lucia	Brazil
Burkina Faso	Israel	Serbia	Chile
Cambodia	Kazakhstan	South Africa	El Salvador
Cameroon	Kuwait	Timor-Leste	France
CAR	Lesotho	Tonga	Guatemala
Chad	Liechtenstein	Tunisia	Indonesia
Congo	Mauritania	Turkmenistan	Philippines
Cote d'Ivoire	Mauritius	UK	Sierra Leone
Croatia	Mongolia	Tanzania	Turkey
Eritrea	Nauru	Vanuatu	
Eswatini	New Zealand		
Fiji	Oman		
Ghana	Pakistan		
Guyana	Palau		

TIMELINE FOR 2019 VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS

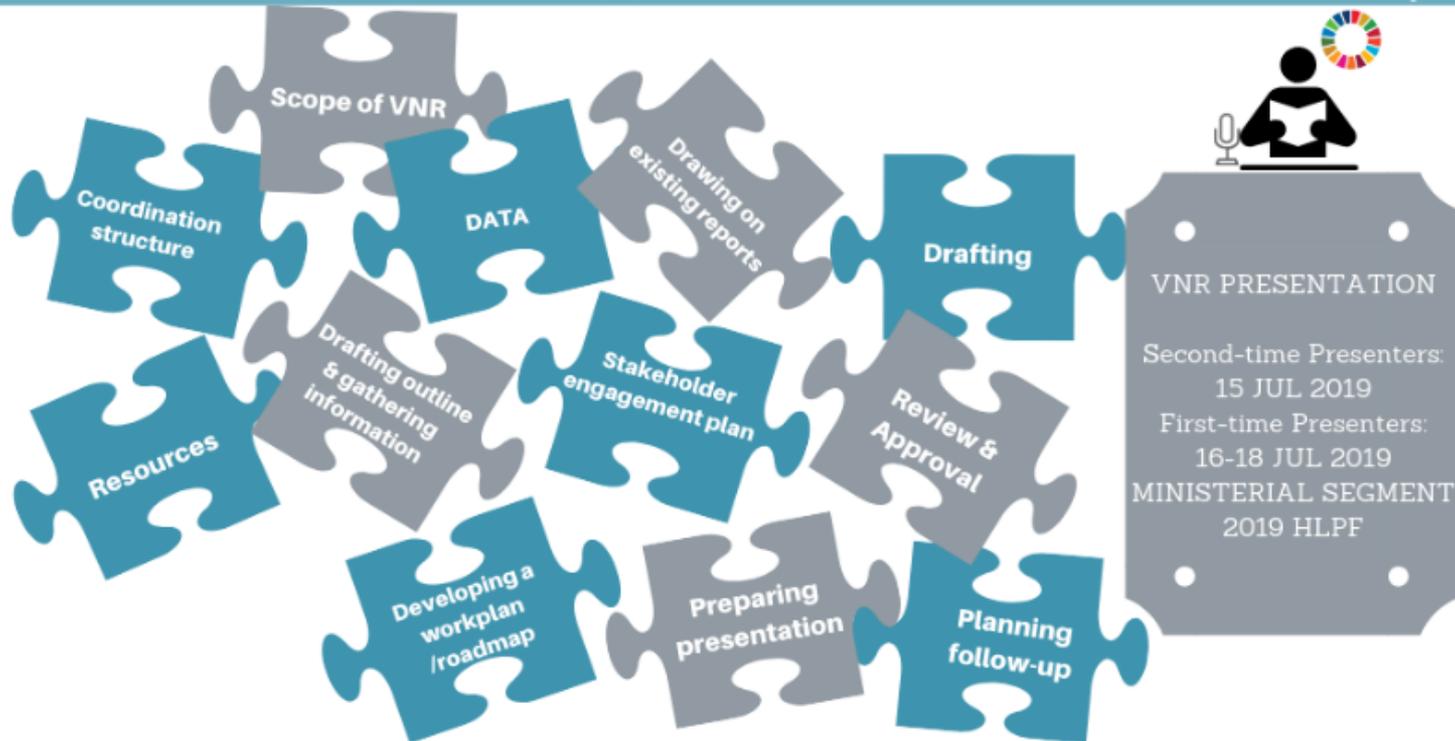


KEY ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER FOR NATIONAL REVIEWS

OFFICIAL
INDICATION
OF INTEREST

SUBMISSION OF
MAIN MESSAGES
17 MAY 2019

SUBMISSION OF
FINAL REPORTS
14 JUN 2019



VNR PRESENTATION

Second-time Presenters:
15 JUL 2019

First-time Presenters:
16-18 JUL 2019

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT
2019 HLPF



Q&A



What should
be included
in a VNR?

UN Secretary-General's voluntary common reporting guidelines

- To promote comparability and consistency and help countries structure their VNRs, the Secretary General has developed a set of common reporting guidelines.



SG's Guideline Highlights

VNRs should:

- ✓ be **open, inclusive, participatory and transparent** for all people and will **support reporting by all relevant stakeholders.**
- ✓ be **people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights** and have a particular focus on the **poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.**
- ✓ maintain a **longer-term orientation, identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors** and support countries in making informed policy choices.
- ✓ Help to **mobilize the necessary means of implementation and partnerships, support the identification of solutions and best practices** and promote the coordination and effectiveness of the international development system.

Components of a VNR

- Highlights (summary)
 - overall progress, best practices, lessons learned, key challenges and support needed
- Introduction
 - context and objectives of the review, key features of the country context, **policy architecture and policy tools for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development**
- Methodology of the review
 - discuss the process for preparation of the national review
 - whole-of-government approach and mechanisms for stakeholder engagement

Components of a VNR

- Policy and Enabling Environment

- a) **Creating ownership of the SDGs;**

- efforts made towards all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the SDGs

- b) **Incorporation of the SDGs in national framework;**

- initiatives undertaken to adapt the SDGs and targets to its national circumstances
 - policy coherence and interlinkages
 - implementation challenges and way forward

- c) **Integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development**

- d) **Leaving no one behind**

- e) **Institutional mechanisms**

- how the country has adapted its institutional framework in light of the 2030 Agenda, coordination and integration to achieve policy coherence

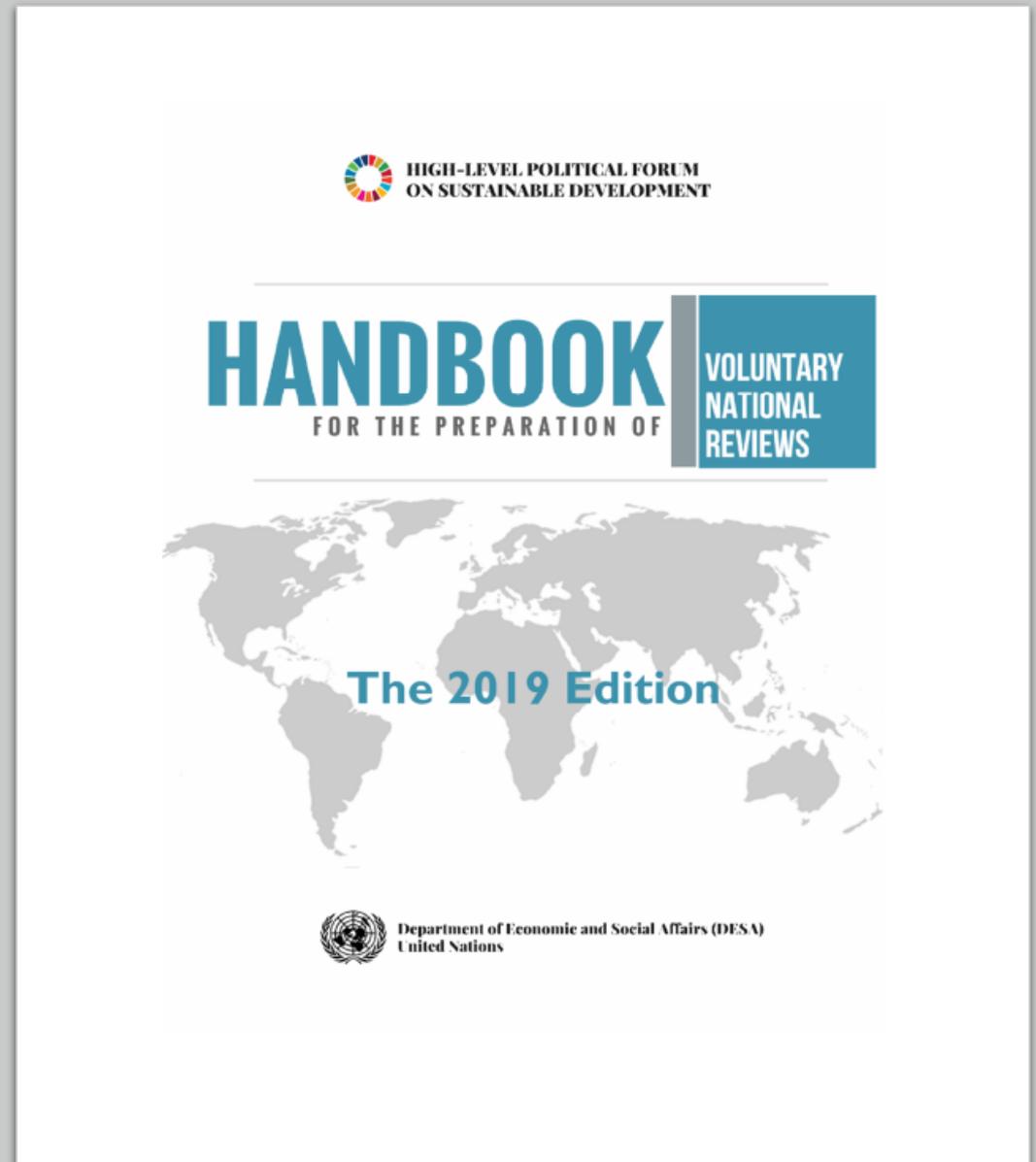
- f) **Structural issues**

Components of a VNR

- **Goals and targets**
 - Brief information on progress and the status of all **17 SDGs**
 - Critical difficulties in reaching goals and how they have been addressed
- **Means of implementation**
 - How MOI are mobilized, difficulties, and what additional resources are needed.
 - **How financial systems and resource allocations are aligned with 2030 Agenda**
 - **Technology; capacity development and data needs; multi-stakeholder partnerships**
- **Next steps**
 - Next steps to enhance implementation, **national and sub-national level, dissemination**
- **Conclusion**
 - summary of analysis, findings and policy implications and **how to apply lessons learned in the future**
- **Annex**
 - statistical annex with data and/or **annexes to showcase best practices or comments from stakeholders**

VNR Handbook

- Supplement to the SG's guidelines
- Provides basic, practical information on the steps that countries may take when preparing VNRs
- Available in English, Arabic, Chinese, French, and Spanish



Best Practices in VNR Development

- Start early
- Designate coordinator(s) and the “penholder(s)”
- Engage a broad range of stakeholders early on
- Focus on quality, not quantity
- Include a statistical annex, if suitable
- Address implementation of all 17 SDGs
- Include analysis, lessons learned and detailed examples
- Avoid mere listings of strategies and programmes
- Showcase both strengths and weaknesses
- Identify areas where additional support is needed
- Spell out the next steps in implementation



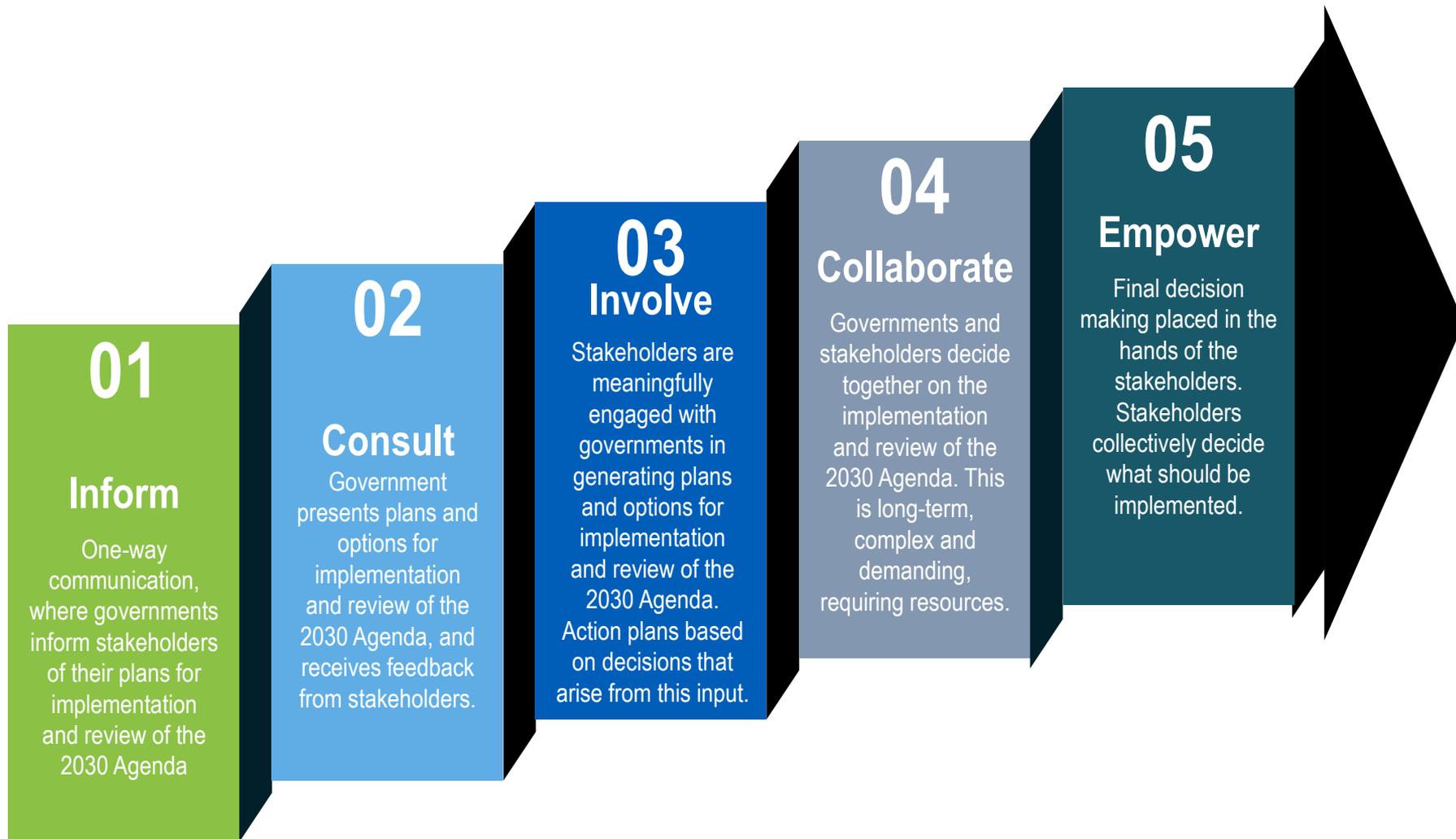


Q&A

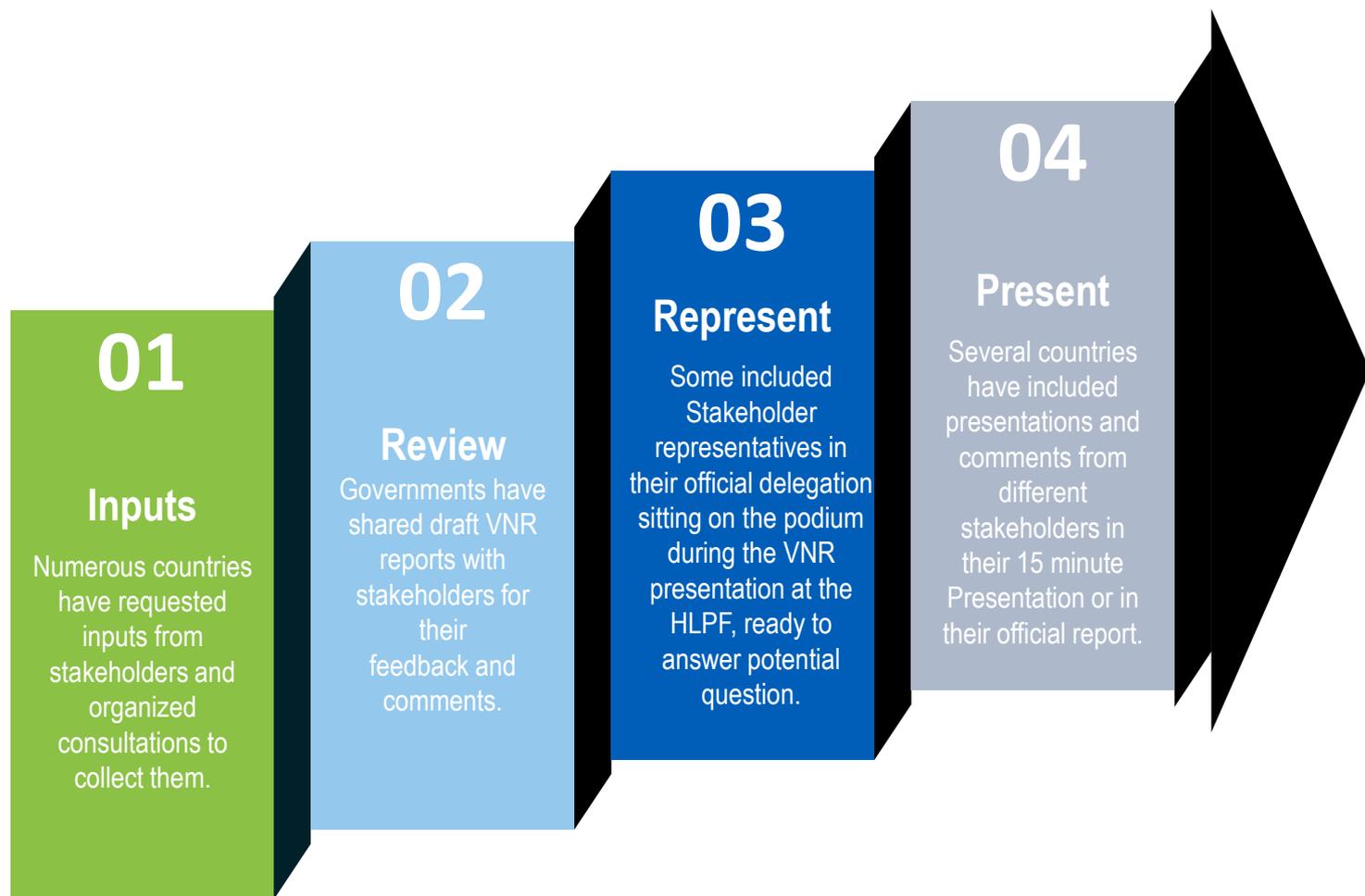


Stakeholder Engagement in the VNR Process

2030 Agenda-Levels of Stakeholder Participation



Stakeholder Engagement in VNR Process



Levels of Participation - Inform



In the **Maldives**, the government works with the official “Public Service Media” in disseminating information related to the SDGs. Capacity building workshops have been organized for journalists from various media in order to enhance and develop their skills to report on the SDGs.



In the **Netherlands**, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) launched the Municipalities4Global Goals campaign to promote awareness of the SDGs among municipalities and help them contribute to the goals.

Levels of Participation - Consult



In **Sierra Leone**, consultations were held both in the capital and in each of the country's districts. The consultations engaged officials from the federal government, parliament, local governments, the private sector, trade unions, civil society and universities on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country.



Brazil established the online portal "Participa.br", a social media instrument providing participation tools for citizens, networks, social movements and organizations, enabling dialogue among governmental bodies and society, through public consultations, debates, conferences and online events.



Chile, in cooperation with UNDP, designed focus groups that sought to prioritize the voice and participation of different populations such as persons with disabilities, immigrants, and indigenous peoples.

Levels of Participation – Consult/Involve



About us The Goals Projects Partners Resources News [+ Add your project](#)

The **Australian government** along with **Global Compact Network Australia**, have set up a website to provide Australia with a live and ongoing platform to centralize and showcase action being taken across government, business, civil society and academia to advance the SDGs in the Australian context.

Organizations that are undertaking concrete initiatives to help Australia deliver on the Sustainable Development goals are invited to submit case studies to the platform's database which include the initiatives' impact.



Find out how Australian organisations are doing their part to help Australia meet the Sustainable Development Goals, or [add your own case study](#).



For More Information- <https://sdgs.org.au/>

Levels of Participation- Involve/Collaborate



The **Estonian** Sustainable Development Commission is an advisory body consisting of civil society umbrella organizations and covers different fields of sustainable development. The Commission meets 4-5 times per year to discuss drafts of strategic action plans before they are adopted by the government and to publish focus reports with policy recommendations.



In **Norway**, the indigenous peoples' assembly, the Sámeddigi (Sami Parliament) engages in dialogues on the 2030 Agenda with line ministries and formal consultation mechanisms. Consultations have strengthened the Sámediggi's role as a representative voice for the Sami people and increased the awareness of Sami issues within the government. Sami culture is taken into consideration in policies particularly for fisheries and ecosystems protection, restoration and sustainable use of natural resources.

Stakeholder engagement in VNRs at the HLPF

- MGoS participation in VNR presentations at the HLPF
 - Each country has 10-15 minutes to present
 - After presentations, there is time for Q&A, in which Major Groups and other Stakeholders can participate
 - Participation in the VNR sessions is coordinated by the MGoS HLPF Coordination Mechanism
- There are also a number of “**VNR labs**” which occur during the HLPF, and provide room for informal dialogue between Member States and Major Groups and other Stakeholders on specific topics related to the VNRs



How to get engaged when your country is presenting a VNR

VNR focal points on website

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

- Find out about opportunities for engagement (coordination structures, stakeholder engagement plans)
- Plan engagement with other civil society organisations
- Participate in national consultations
- Review the VNR report
- Engage at the HLPF
- Follow-up with government – call for a dialogue



Voluntary National Reviews

Engaging in national implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals
- a civil society quick guide



Q&A

Resources



- UN Secretary-General's updated [voluntary common reporting guidelines](#) for VNRs at the HLPF
- [Handbook](#) for VNR Preparations
- [Q&A](#) for VNRs at the 2019 HLPF
- VNR Synthesis Report [2018](#), [2017](#) and [2016](#)
- Register to join the Major Groups and other Stakeholders HLPF Coordination Mechanism [here](#)
- All the above can be found at HLPF VNR database <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>
- Together2030 [Report on civil society engagement in VNRs](#)
- [“Progressing National SDGs Implementation: An Independent Assessment of the Voluntary National Review Reports Submitted to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018”](#) by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC)

Regional Preparatory Meetings in Spring 2019



ECE

**Geneva, 21-22
March 2019**

ESCAP

**Bangkok, 27-
29 March 2019**

ECLAC

**Santiago, 22-26
April 2019**

ESCWA

**Beirut, 9-11
April 2019**

ECA

**Tangier, 16-18
April 2019**

Regional Sustainable Development Forums
organized by Regional Commissions

Upcoming Webinars



DESA will host two more webinars for Major Groups and other Stakeholders in preparation for the 2019 HLPF on the topics of:

- Global level preparations- Documents and inputs to the HLPF, Expert Group Meetings, Political Declaration
- Opportunities for attendance and participation at the HLPF

Dates to be announced

Thank you!



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

We look forward to your participation!
For the latest information and to register (April
2019), visit

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

Contact link on website