

Workshop on supporting evidence-based Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and SDG reporting: data and statistics innovations

6-7 December 2023, SESCRIIC Headquarters, Ankara, Türkiye

Concept Note

I. Introduction

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 this challenge, 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. In addition, they are utilizing online SDG platforms and portals to ensure transparency, enhance stakeholder participation, empower data users, enhance coordination of the national statistical system (NSS), collect and disseminate SDG data, as well as aid in streamlining SDG reporting and VNR review processes.

II. Objective and Target Audience

The workshop is organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in collaboration with international agencies. This workshop will be hosted by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in Istanbul, Turkey from 6-7 December 2023, SESCRIIC, Ankara, Türkiye. The objective of the workshop is to bring together representatives from national statistical offices (NSOs) engaged in work on SDG reporting and the VNR process to discuss available tools and resources for data innovation, develop a data roadmap for the VNR and share best practices for developing an evidence-based VNR and SDG reporting.

The target audience for the workshop includes 20-30 participants from countries that will participate in the 2024 VNRs. Each country will have a representative from its national statistics office that is involved in the preparation of the countries' upcoming VNR and overall SDG reporting.

Resource persons and experts will be available from international organizations and regional organizations that focus on SDG monitoring and tools.

III. Workshop Topics

The workshop will be organized around the following broad themes (*TBC*):

a) Data Roadmap for developing VNRs and SDG reporting

DESA has developed a *Practical Guide for Evidence-based VNRs* using a roadmap approach and good practice examples, with key stages in the national VNR process that can enhance the use of data for evidence-based VNRs. The session will explain the stages, from identification of needs and planning to post-evaluation of the data aspects of the VNR process with practical exercises for participants to implement for their own planning.

b) Data innovations and non-traditional data sources for VNRs and SDG reporting

For the SDGs, many countries collaborate with actors outside government and therefore rely on the use of non-traditional data sources to fully assess the progress of SDG implementation at the national level. This can include citizen-generated data, mobile phone data, geo-spatial data and remote sensing data, among others. The session will focus on best practices and experiences with using new and non-traditional data sources as well as processes for incorporating alternative data sources in SDG reporting and the VNR.

c) Tools for ‘leaving no one behind’

The guiding principle to ‘leave no one behind’ of the 2030 Agenda comes with opportunities and challenges for countries to better incorporate disaggregated data in monitoring SDG implementation and address the situations of vulnerable populations. 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.

d) How to use and present data in SDG reporting and VNRs (data storytelling and visualization)

Data and statistics play the main 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 policy-making and reporting. This session will highlight those tools and others for presenting and incorporating data in VNRs and SDG reporting.